

THE REVOLUTION.

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CAPITAL AND LABOR.

A CORRESPONDENT last week or the week before, signing himself A., took exceptions to some strictures of ours in "THE REVOLUTION" on the boasted "largest store in the world," and how it became so. As we consider our "Financial Department" a current constantly sweeping away all such views as those of Mr. A., we did not refer to him in special, but gave him space to express his dissent as we do others. Another correspondent, however, wishes to be heard on Mr. A.'s criticisms, and we cheerfully clear a corner for him, as below :

Editors of the Revolution :

Your correspondent "A." says, "Capital is not, nor can it be antagonistic to the interests of labor," which in a certain sense is true ; that is to say, there ought to be no antagonism, and when the laborer owns the capital, as he should and will do when he becomes wise enough, there will be no oppression of laborer by the capitalist. But now practically, the capitalist owns the laborer; for whose owns the means whereby I live owns me. "A." might as well say that because the interests of labor and capital are identical there is not and never was such a thing as chattel slavery, as to assert that under existing circumstances the relations of capital and labor are rightly adjusted.

The starting point is for the capitalist to pretend to own the laborer under some more or less patriarchal form of slavery, the final goal is at last reached when the laborer owns the capital, which in fact he alone has created.

Doubtless the tendency is to leave more and more of the products of labor in the hands of the laborer, as he becomes more intelligent and less dependent on the capitalist, but so long as the land and tools are substantially in the hands of one class, and another has only its labor, there must be antagonism of interests.

Does "A" or any other letter to Z believe that there is such a real, natural difference in the productive capacity of A. T. Stewart and the average workingman that the former is justly entitled to receive ten thousand times as much for his year's labor as the latter ?

A man is justly entitled to be paid for his labor, or in other words to own what he produces and nothing more, except what may be given to him by his fellows as a free gift. As for instance, a poet or artist may justly receive whatever the admiration of the world may freely offer as a testimony to the pleasure he has given, and so any benefactor may justly be freely rewarded by his fellows for the good he has done, to any extent they choose. But the simple producer is only entitled to what he actually produces. Now, A. T. Stewart began with nothing, and if he is fairly and scientifically entitled to the immense property he holds, he must have produced it all, or its equivalent, or he must have received it as a testimonial for the benefit he has conferred.

No one will maintain that A. T. S., or any other of our rich men, has produced his wealth by his own labor. Neither are our rich men usually those who do the most to advance the interests of their fellow-men. It is true the capital they hold is useful, but it would be much more so, if held by those who really produced it. Only think how much more useful it would be to have A. T. Stewart's great warehouses and merchandise owned in shares by the men and women, whose labor built and made them. And if the men and women who do the world's work will be wise and co-operate with one another, the time is not far distant when they will do their own buying and selling for their own benefit, instead of paying a few men thousands of times more for distributing the products of labor, than the laborer is paid for the less agreeable work of producing the same. "A." says "capital cultivates refined taste," by which he means doubtless that a certain amount of leisure ensured by possession of capital is necessary to the cultivation of the taste. This being true, every one should have capital in order to cultivate taste ; and as the laborers produce the capital, there is no reason except their failures to co-operate, why they should not have the capital. Free suffrage must be a failure, as compared with an ideal success, so long as the masses of the people fail to understand the relations of capital and labor. Money is not capital, but the representative of capital, nor is it more powerful than human wisdom ; but the cunning of the capitalist is far more powerful than the simplicity of the laborer.

F. S. C.

A. T. STEWART, AGAIN.

NEW YORK, Oct. 31st, 1868.

Editors of the Revolution:

Does your correspondent "A.," under "Woman and Finance" in "REVOLUTION" of the 29th, mean to say that the condition of men, when some have not near enough and others have far more than enough is what it ought to be? If not, then what produces this difference? Do not the laws in the interest of capital help to do it? The poor want what they can not sufficiently get. And *greed* and *dishonesty* are the "fundamental principles of finance, trade, and political economy generally," which your correspondent "A." would have the editors of "THE REVOLUTION" "comprehend." If, as he says, "infinite wisdom cannot make human intellect a unit in capacity and desire to make and to spend money," suffering can be stopped. Therefore I would say to the laboring classes, hereafter keep what properly belongs to you. If, as is sometimes said, the laborer is dependent on the capitalist, I would ask, how was it that the first laborer who ever lived made headway, if he had no capital to go upon? "A." says, "if a seller sells for less, or a buyer buy for more than the article demands, then the said seller, or the said buyer, as the case may be, suffers the just penalty of his own folly." I reply that the article should demand that the seller sell for what will enable him to live economically, and not to build a house in Fifth avenue, worth \$200,000 or \$2,000,000. But we will try and come out ahead of your correspondent by not believing all that is told us; and, as workingmen, for one thing we will refuse to do military service for debt-incurring and impoverishing governments. The suffering which "A." remarks does not change, no one will presume that God sent, but it is imposed by the forms of society; or if not, society which represents the wealthy, is responsible for it not being removed—for its removal is all reformers at present are after if they ever desire to go beyond that.

H.