

AN IDEA FROM THE MAN AT THE BENCH

Story Illustrating How Hardship is Imposed Upon and Injustice Done the Real Workman in Our Modern Factory System

Jack Burns, One of the "Filing Gang" Makes a Valuable Suggestion and is "Fired" by Superintendent Who Steals the Idea

"I've found a way to prevent favoritism in my factory," said the president of the International Air Engine company.

"In the old days," he went on, "when every little shop manufactured its own goods, the proprietor had at most a couple of apprentices. He knew them well, of course, and watched them every day at their work.

"This is the way it came about: Into every International air engine go twenty-seven pieces which are exactly alike. They are stamped out of sheet metal by a punch press at the rate of fifty a minute.

"One day a man on the file job got an idea. He knew that the pieces he was filing were no longer the close-working parts of the machine.

"What's the use," he said "of doing all this work by hand when it might as well all be done at the same time by the punch press?"

"The foreman knew perfectly well that he ought to have thought of that same thing months before, and he was not pleased with the suggestion.

"If you'd work harder and spend less time thinking about why we do things the way we do you'd get along better," he said.

"At the same time he cherished the suggestion and he went to work and figured out that if it was adopted the company would save at least \$5,000 a year.

"It happened that we had a new superintendent at the time. Naturally, he was anxious to make a good showing.

"Here's a little idea of mine," the foreman said, as he laid his plan before the superintendent, "which I hope you'll appreciate.

"Just here the old monarch, the last of the nineteenth century, grip in hand, touched the button and dropped out. Then the bells rang merrily, bonfires blazed and cannon boomed a welcome to 1901, the first autocrat of the twentieth century.

He ascended his throne like one born to rule, waved his scepter, as if to say, "business before pleasure," and courteously received The Herald's representative.

The representative of The Herald congratulated the new autocrat, and, wishing him and Miss Luna a safe journey around Old Sol, without collision or other misadventure, bowed himself out of the august presence of the young monarch.

with the statement that he would look the matter over when he got time.

"He took time that evening to go over the thing carefully. Next day he went out into the shop and called down the foreman of the filing job for allowing his room to get so dirty.

"Of course, I was pleased with the idea. I ordered the superintendent to adopt it at once, and congratulated myself on the possession of a prize at the head of my factory.

"A couple of weeks later, after the new fixtures for the punch presses were completed, the nine filers, including the man who originally made the suggestion, were laid off.

"One night after dinner the former foreman of the filing job came to my house. He complained that the superintendent had stolen the suggestion and fired him in order to cover the theft.

"But you know," I said, "that suggestion was not original with you, either."

"Well," he answered, before he thought, "he's fired Jack Burns, too."

"So Burns, then," I answered, "is the man who really deserves credit. Where does he live?"

"I got Burns back again and got rid of both the foreman and the superintendent. Then I set to work to devise a plan by which I might be sure that every man in the factory who had a good idea might get proper credit for it.

"Complaints and Suggestions. If you have any complaint or suggestion to make, write it out on a piece of paper, sign it, and drop it in the slot. The key to this box is carried only by the president, who will personally read its contents."

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW

(Concluded from First Page)

tab on the proceedings. She was favorable to Bryan because of her large pile of silver bullion, which she would like to have coined into dollars of the daddies and stamped with the fool motto: 'In God we trust.'

"What do I think of the result of the campaign? Well, if Bryan had been elected your country would have seen a new herd of swine with all fours in the swill troughs of your government.

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CONCERNING VALUE FROM MARX'S STANDPOINT

Some Misconceptions About Different Forms of All Value Cleared Up With Special Reference to Theory That Labor is the Substance of Value

Surplus Value That Portion of Value Which the Worker Gives to the Capitalist Over the Value Expressed by His Wages

At first sight it would appear as if Marx had introduced the most abstruse portion of his theory first, but a closer examination shows that he really deals in the most elementary manner with his subject.

In accordance with his scientific method, Marx asks himself the question: What is the material basis of the capitalist system? "If we look around today," he writes, "we see that wealth is admitted to be an accumulation of commodities."

He finds that a commodity is a specific form of wealth, and that to understand it we must go to the more primitive form of barter. When tribes barter they do so because they have superfluous articles which they can well spare and exchange with another tribe.

Dr. Aveling, in his "Student's Marx," which is a summary of "Capital," is responsible for writing as if Marx dealt with three values only. As a matter of fact, Marx does not specifically mention any number of values, but, for the purposes of discussion, values may very well be made to fall in a category of three.

Use-value and exchange-value are values of a different kind, and the question which now concerns us is what is the value common to them both.

When we analyze value we find it to be a relative term which expresses a comparison we make between things on the basis of a common substance existing between them.

Marx says when we compare things we must express them in terms of the same unit; that is, we must use a common substance which both contain to measure one by the other.

Aristotle asked himself the same question, but he could not discover the substance, though his great intellectual powers told him it must be there.

The section in which he formulates this contribution to the analysis of exchange-value is considered by some rather difficult, but it is truly very elementary, for it is the A B C upon which all economy is built.

Marx, though the first to properly formulate the theory that labor was the substance of value, was not the first to proclaim that value was created by la-

bor. It had been repeatedly implied by various economists from time to time, more especially by Adam Smith and Benjamin Franklin. They never, however, put it forward more than tentatively, to be obscured and forsaken when inconvenient.

Marx takes great pains in analyzing labor as the substance of value, and lays stress on the fact that it must be regarded from the two standpoints of quantity and quality. When we speak of carpentering we are regarding a man's labor from the qualitative standpoint; when we speak of a man's labor or energy we are regarding it from the quantitative standpoint.

It may be asked, If the normal labor of one man creates as much value as the normal labor of another, how is it that one man receives 15s and another £15 for a week's work? The solution to such anomalies is to be found in the arbitrary distribution of wealth as embodied in the customs and conventions of society; which capitalism has recognized and translated into the price form of cost of production.

Because a man receives a high salary it does not prove that he creates a value equal to that amount; it only shows that he can, by his social position, command the power to consume the product of other people's labor to that amount,

as measured by money or the price form of value.

Production of wealth and its distribution are two quite different things, and so is taking a salary and earning it. Having once grasped the question of value, it then becomes easy to understand surplus-value, for the latter is only that portion of value which the worker gives to the capitalist over the value expressed by his wages.

A clear perception of value prepares the way for the understanding of surplus-value and how the capitalist thrives on exploitation of the worker, besides exposing the absurdity of the economists who attempt to justify the present capitalist system on the basis of value.

THE OLD DINNER PAIL

Though the moon cease to wax, The government to tax, And the winds hush their sorrowful wail, Keep a stiff upper lip, And with a deathlike grip Hold on to your old dinner pail.

A PRIMER OF SOCIALISM

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