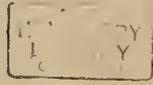


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THE COMPARATIVE METHOD.

BY ALFRED H. PETERS.

NO MAN whose recitation days were over when the present century entered upon the last third of its existence can look through a current scientific or historical text book without feeling that something very old is attached to him, although his hair be yet unfrosted and the springs of life as forceful within him as in the days of his youth. This feeling comes not so much by reason of what has been added to these departments of knowledge, great as are the achievements therein, but by reason of the contrast in method and tone between the text-book of thirty years ago and the one of the present time. For during this interval the predominating intellectual habit has undergone a change which, unless one has changed along with it, puts one farther away from one's own children than from the men of the seventeenth century. This change consists in the substitution of the comparative in place of the dogmatic method of thought. By this method all knowledge in anywise related is made to undergo one and the same test of criticism. The sharpest of lines is drawn between what is and what may be fact. Every alleged cause or event is subjected on all sides to a most rigid scrutiny, wherefrom it must emerge either proven or not proven; half proof or anything short of whole proof, in so far as establishing the fact, being tantamount to no proof. With the major part of all statement is involved more or less of qualifying statement, and in place of much hitherto affirmative statement there is a silence, of all evidence in proof of the changed mode of thought the strongest. Inquirers, while never more eager for facts are less confident of what is fact. Human movements and institutions, all forms of life, and inanimate nature are being studied as never before in order to obtain data, not for postulates but for propositions. Knowledge thus becomes a kind of graded movement towards truth, bearing all shades of relation thereto from remote possibility to indisputable certitude.

Under this method the definition of terms as well as fixing the determinate degree of evidence, in the most part of inquiry, becomes a difficult undertaking—so much so that in either case the teacher shrinks from

positive declaration and rests with declaring his own opinion along with the opinions of those others who are accepted as most competent authorities upon the subject. No single authority as formerly can establish a definition for such words as virtue, or wisdom, or conscience, or light, or elasticity, or force. The same may be said respecting the sufficiency of whatsoever evidence is adduced in favor of any theory or belief—thinkers and observers being able to do little more than to set it forth as clearly as they may and leave the correctness of it for time to decide. This breaking down of dogmatic lines has precipitated such a deluge of opinion and accompanying criticism upon every manner of problem that no one any longer may take all learning for his province. So many soundings are there of the ever-widening sea of thought that a man despairs of making himself familiar with them all. He must needs either limit his study to special waters, or eschew all charts and push off into the deep on a voyage of his own.

The world of intellectual creation, as of science and scholarship, is however a limited world wherewith the majority is little concerned. Whatever confusion and indetermination may exist herein, the great world of action commonly is supposed to be uninfluenced thereby. But not thus is the world of action independent of the world of thought. The time spirit—that mystic power before which as before fate bow the sons of men, is created or at least set in motion forever by the thinkers, thought being to man as is to all nature the element of light. The middle-aged observer therefore in order to perceive the change which has come over men's minds since his school days need contrast neither scientific nor historical treatises; he may find well nigh as radical a change wrought through application of the comparative method in the world of action as in the world of thought.

Consider the province of industry—the province wherein men have most in common—how are the lines destroyed which formerly determined the conditions therein. Who now can lay down any rules for business success? To what man is perpetual readaptation so much a necessity as to the business man. To what a degree of subdivision and interdependence is

all industry become refined. What device of science or of art; what genius, or courage, or cunning, is there that this modern warfare does not employ? Nothing so well exhibits the application of the comparative principle to business as the enormous expansion of speculation in values—speculation being the natural outcome of uncertainty in things both material and immaterial. Formerly speculation as an element of the business life was confined to a few venturesome spirits among the purely trading class in one or two great centres of trade. Now every business man is a speculator whether he will or no. No one can calculate with any certainty upon the conditions of supply and demand for a single week, nor upon the conditions of production nor the conditions of credit. The life of the modern man of business is one long exercise in comparison—a balancing of fates against fates in the latter-day epic of which he is himself the hero.

One needs hardly to speak of the application of the comparative method to the province of politics. Such a diversity of views regarding both means and ends upon the problem of government was never before known. Every system of rule and interpretation thereof; every manner of economic and philanthropic measure has its advocates and expounders if not its longer or shorter period of trial. Legislation is mainly a succession of repeals and amendments, the shibboleth of to-day becoming anathema to-morrow, whereof concerning the most part the best that can be said is:—they were well-meaning experiments. Such a din is there over how to govern one another satisfactorily that men are in danger of abandoning individual self-government, as if liberty in its modern meaning had proved too hard for them and must needs have its ancient definition restored. Meantime the callous old world makes such shift as it may with the deluge of opposing counsel, swinging along its course and fulfilling its destiny maugre the hubbub of man and all his works.

Confusing as is the effect of the comparative method in business and politics, it is even more confusing in its application to that province second only to the province of morals—the province of taste. Taste or the perceptive faculty is a matter about which in a double sense there was for a long time said to be no disputing. The few who were supposed to have any taste either followed the lead of some school of masters or accepted institution, or had their standards set for them before they were born, as had the multitude in so far as the little to which it aspired. But with the advance of the comparative idea taste in all things whatsoever is become a matter with which the whole of civilisation has to do; vexing the souls of mortals with no end of different standards, not only evanescent

and fleeting of themselves, but with the difference of degree therein multiplied a hundred fold. Taste being when of high order of such eminent value socially, every one desires to be considered in correct taste, and as real taste is largely a possession beyond ourselves the most part of what is called taste is mere imitation. The question continually is: Whose taste is it safest to affect? a question hard to determine as the choice of a woman's heart or the principles of a professional politician. The element of personality appears to be stronger in taste than in any other department of human opinion. Accuse a man of false politics or false philosophy and he may still remain your friend, but accuse a man, or still more a woman, of false taste and they immediately become your enemy. The modern man of the world is as techy of any imputation against his taste as was the old-time man of any imputation against his honor.

But of all provinces of human action the one wherein the influence of the comparative method has told most is the province of morals, since this province is as it were the spring from whence all other streams of action proceed. Herein the human mind, anchored for so many centuries, is more or less adrift. Everywhere one finds a diversity of opinion regarding the principle which should determine human conduct. Upon what foundation is to rest man's conception of duty? To what extent is custom to be accepted as a moral criterion? In how far may conscience be trusted or judgment be left to decide the right relation between individuals? Who shall draw the line between justice and mercy, between prudence and generosity, between self assertion and forbearance? Questions like these are now forced upon every thinking man and woman of whom some have one answer and some another, and many no answer at all. The old question underlying all morality, the question of necessity or free will, appears to divide men more than ever, those viewing human existence from the standpoint of materialism differing among themselves no less than those viewing it from the standpoint of supernaturalism.

The immediate effect of the comparative method being subversive rather than constructive, many would willingly regard it as no method at all but only a new phase of the effort to do away with the difference between good and evil. Its disciples are accused of vagueness, inconstancy, indifference, superciliousness, and what is absurdly called dilettanteism. Man knows not what to make of a gospel which neither blesses nor curses. He cannot appreciate a faith which contains any doubts nor give ear to one who puts the advocate after the judge. More however than all such opposition to it is the dead weight of human inertia—that pathetic reverence of men for anything which saves them the labor of thought. But although frowned

upon in every stronghold of tradition or of privilege and assailed by many alike among the wise and the foolish, the comparative estimate of things is every day entering more and more into the world's life and thought. And inasmuch as our age more than any thus far known must reckon with new methods, it behooves men to inquire diligently into the nature of this time-ruling one, when perchance it may be found to rest upon no hap-hazard theory but upon a principle of approved truth, the same as has every other time-spirit since society began.

This approved truth is the determinating quality of degree. Whether in morals or in taste; whether in science, art, politics, society, or business, the comparative method makes degree to be the measuring principle. Under this method "All or Nothing" gives place to "If not All, Something"—wherein has consisted man's real rule of life as far back as any record of him exists. The comparative method is an effort to procure the just measure of things. It does not admit anything to be false which is partly true, nor anything to be true which is partly false. It endeavors as far as may be to sift the true from the false, but at the same time insists when this cannot wholly be done that the true shall not be cast out on account of the false. Rather it would for the sake of the true bear yet awhile with the false, lest haply some portion of truth be cast out therewith. The comparative method is the latest wave of that tide which began in Europe five hundred years ago, known in history as the revival of learning. It is a perpetual weighing of testimony in things past and a perpetual weighing of probabilities in things to come. It endeavors to trace all events to rational causes and is impatient of all alleged causes that are not revealed in the event. An interrogation point is writ large after all its conclusions and its every successful experiment is but a prelude to wider experiment. Suspense therefore is its natural element inasmuch as with it "nothing ever is, but is always becoming." Its golden age is not in some far back past but forever in the future, how little soever the present may warrant the expectation. Its energy is active rather than passive, grappling with instead of enduring evils—the Occidental as opposed to the Oriental spirit—all that distinguishes a centrifugal from a centripetal civilisation.

Half the dispute and much more than half the disappointment attendant upon the application of the comparative method arises from man's slowness to accept degree as the determinative principle. Man continues to dogmatise even in making comparisons and insists upon finality under the new method as under the old. This indeed holds less true in the province of industry than in the province of morals or the province of politics or the province of taste. In-

dustry is confessedly a constant experiment. Whatsoever methods serve its end better than do existing methods very soon supplant them despite all theory tradition or established interests. There is less dogmatism in business than in any other sphere of human activity, wherefore it were well if every thinker as well as every man of action might serve a period of apprenticeship to the business life. For herein the lesson invariably taught is that individuals and ideas go only for what they may be worth toward the end in view. Nowhere else is the matter of degree so uniformly abided by as the determinating quantity. Silently for the most part men herein fall into the places where they naturally belong. He who attempts to do otherwise either is flung aside or ground into powder by the resistless machinery whose direction tends by natural law into the fittest hands.

Very different is the application of the comparative method in the other fields of human activity. Our political, social, and moral life is still very largely an effort to invalidate the law of degree. The modern theory of politics is as intolerant of the true comparative principle as was the old. The contest between the ins and the outs is indeed participated in by the many instead of the few, but the matter of individual fitness or worthiness for office is as little regarded as ever, if true application of the comparative method in politics would bring about as in industry and trade the elevation of those most fitted for the business in hand. Only however when the state is in extremity are these called upon who being mainly in private station are at such juncture rarely discovered in time to do much more than repair the damage wrought by the demagogues and incompetents upon whom leadership at first devolves. The curse of politics and the perpetual obstacle to the comparative method therein is the invincible tendency of human nature to extremes. When an institution has outlived its usefulness, or when men are disappointed in the working of any new institution they almost surely attempt to set up in its stead something which is its moral or economical antithesis. They cannot be made to believe that every principle when carried to an extreme, produces a state of affairs no more satisfactory than the one produced by the opposite principle. In the matters of law and government men forever expect and demand too much.

To this same spirit is due the confusion everywhere prevailing in matters of taste. Men refuse to measure one another's progress in culture by the standard of degree, even while they are thus secretly measuring their own perceptive capacity. It appears to be a continual injustice of refined human society either to ignore or despise those who have made some measure of progress toward their own attainment more than

those who have made no progress. It is the old antipathy of the aristocracy against the middle class—a feeling that cannot be returned in kind inasmuch as in one case it proceeds from envy and in the other case from contempt. There is to be sure a reason for this injustice—the incorrigible vanity of the most part of such as occupy an intermediate position between the bottom and the top. He who has made little progress in culture would be esteemed equally with him who has made more, and he who has made more with him who has made most. If pride was the chief sin of the old order vanity is the chief sin of the new. The comparative principle requires that culture be estimated according to degree. Every grade of culture would then receive just recognition, those of a higher grade neither despising nor those of a lower grade envying one another, and most of all, those of the intermediate grades resting not upon what they would be but upon what they are.

The strongest opposition however to the comparative method comes from the province of morals, that is to say from that large majority of men and women holding to the traditional sanction of morals, represented by the various religious communions and all whomsoever that believe in an absolute criterion of right. To the comparative principle in morals, however much they may approve of its application elsewhere, these are unalterably opposed. They acknowledge no degree either in right or wrong, the highest in the one case standing upon the same level as the lowest, and the lowest in the other case being equally reprehensible with the highest. To many such the dogmatic is the only consistent method and "All or Nothing" the argument supreme. It has been ever man's practice to apply this method collectively rather than individually—to require that the whole shall be better than the units whereof it is composed. While always providing for the limitations of individuals the dogmatic method in morals knows nothing of limitations on the part of society or the state. Men therefore when they would lift a weight of immorality or injustice, instead of putting forth their strength at the middle, invariably seize it by one end, thereby causing the other end to press heavier than before. One portion of society is perhaps relieved or improved at the expense of another portion. Thus reform is too often but a shifting of the burden, conservative and radical usually changing names wherever their respective positions are reversed. There is both a political and a moral economy. Men are slowly conceding a possibility of the first. They are yet far from conceding a possibility of the last.

Nevertheless the comparative principle is gradually transforming our whole existing structure of morals. The traditional structure exteriorly is indeed but

little altered and above it still fly the historic standards, but in obedience to the time-spirit its defenders are striving to put themselves in harmony therewith. Both contemporary religion and politics are mainly endeavors to amalgamate the dogmatic and the comparative methods, a process invariably ending in the absorption of the first by the last. In every political convention and in every religious council the burden of discussion is upon how to make the old bottles hold the new wine without bursting, a long-time occupation to be sure among doctors of every sort—man's effort to compromise with the law of development; in itself a perpetual application of the principle of degree. Men in fact are everywhere applying the comparative method unawares. Under the forms of the old method are working the principles of the new. The prevailing sense of the imperfection of existing institutions is an assertion of the new spirit. The belief that new institutions only are needed to remedy such imperfections is an assertion of the old. Of dogmatic specifics for the promotion of human welfare no end of trial has been made, yet the poor old world remains a hospital for incurables as before. Still, from the comparative point of view—looking back over the ages, this struggling race of ours has made some improvement. Had it not on the whole done so from the beginning it would have perished thousands of years ago, like the gigantic sloths and flying serpents. Time is the only true reformer working always, where man does not attempt to force it, in true order, true justice, and true taste.

Many thinkers are accustomed to speak of our time as a transition age—a passing period of unrest and confusion between institutions outworn and institutions in process of formation which shall eventually be established to abide for many generations as have the institutions now crumbling away. The idea of rest has ever been one of mankind's comforting fictions. It's a matter of fact however there is for nothing possessing life any such state. There is but one rest in this world for either nations or individuals—the rest of death. Our civilisation may after a while fall into certain lines which shall ensure it a larger measure of emotional and intellectual peace, but as soon as it does so it will cease to be a progressive and dominant civilisation. In such event the dogmatic will supersede the comparative method of thought, which is but another name for constant transition. Criticism, competition, and experiment, the disturbing forces of western civilisation, form the very essence of the comparative method. But should our civilisation ever weary of these forces and substitute in their stead the forces of tradition usage and assent, the comparative method will by no means perish—it will begin to ferment in some other part of the world, perhaps in those

parts which have been wrapped in the mantle of dogmatism during the whole length of their history. For the comparative spirit—the effort to get at the just measure and the true understanding of things will endure as long as life continues upon the earth. If one civilisation wearies of it another will take it up.

THE SUNSET CLUB ON THE EIGHT HOUR DAY.

A REVIEW OF THE DEBATE.

WORK is the great educator of mankind ; every progress made is the product of labor, and howsoever much favorable conditions may contribute to the general advance, no growth of the human soul is possible except by work. Let humanity grow ten times richer than it is to-day, men will nevertheless have to work, and it is quite possible that they will work just as hard as now and just as long as now, even though the eight hour day—perhaps a six hour day—may then be the rule for manual labor.

The debate on the subject was opened by Mr. Salter, who representing the affirmative side of the question, briefly stated his reason why he was in favor of a reduction of the hours of labor. It is, he said, "that the working men may have a chance to come nearer living the life of human beings. If we hold that the only purpose of man's being here is work, (i. e. manual work) then of course we should have no quarrel with existing conditions, but if we believe that man has a spiritual nature, then we cannot wish that his whole time aside from eating and sleeping and perchance a little recreation shall be taken up by manual labor." This is a good argument and we should say it is generally recognised, so much so that one entire day in every week has been set aside as a day of rest in which it is expected that man should attend to the wants of his spiritual nature. The question is whether the present industrial situation admits of a reduction in the hours of work or not. Mr. Salter says it does. Referring to the labor saving machinery, he says, "it by no means follows that because the laborer works less, less will be produced."

Mr. Murry Nelson who was introduced as the advocate of the negative side declared that nobody set himself up as unqualifiedly against the eight hour day ; the matter is one of present expediency only. Work is a means and not an end. That end is the advancement of the race, the making of better men and women. The question is not a new one. The working day has been cut down before. Before we cut down the hours of the working day another notch, let us be sure that we are taking a step toward the advancement of the race. It is right for labor to band together to further its interests and protect its right ; but when men band together and say to an outside individual : You must do this and must not do that, then the world will rightly call upon such an organisation to give good reasons why it interferes with the individual. The time of working should not be limited by law ; if a man wishes to work over time, he ought to be allowed to do so.

The debate on the subject grew very lively. Mr. Franklin McVeagh said that he for practical reasons had reduced the ten hours' manual work of his employees to nine ; and he declares that the experiment has not cost him a penny. When he started the business a good many years ago, the men lived very near to the place. But with the growth of the city they were pressed back into the outskirts of the city ; and it was forced upon his mind, that if these men had children who went to bed when they ought to go, they would never see them except on Sunday. So he decided, if it did not cost too much, to make the experiment of cutting down the time, so as to give them a chance of one hour with their

family, and he had the gratifying result that, so far as his investigations went, it cost him not a penny.

Professor Orchardson objected to Mr. Nelson's idea of liberty that a man should not be compelled to work less than he wishes ; and he then spoke of the thousands of plants that lie idle and the hundreds of thousands of idle workmen willing and ready to work them. He denounced the drones, and the plutocrats and the aristocracy that live in idleness. Mr. Brown said that the laborers were not free because the natural opportunities that God had given to all men were monopolised by a few.

Mr. Langworthy hinted that, if some are hungry to-night, who are willing to work, it is because others have what does not belong to them. By letting everybody work sufficiently long to earn a living for himself and his family, he hoped to abolish both the millionaire and the tramp. What advantage will accrue to the poor from the abolition of the rich he did not tell, but I fear the poor would be little benefited by this change. The same speaker revealed the remarkable fact that with every advance in the direction of less labor, there had been an advance in the productive power of the world. Did not the idea suggest itself to him that the truth might be exactly the reverse ?

Mr. Rosenthal thought that the old domestic relations had vanished, and workmen had become members.

"Mr. Geo. A. Schilling said : I am not an orthodox eight hour man. I am a short hour man. I think the time will come when humanity will regard eight hours as entirely too long to work. But I do think that in the present state of economic development the eight hour day is what we should make the contest for. The statesmanship among workmen is not always the best. It is not reasonable to expect that it should be. The larger number of the labor leaders work eight or ten hours a day at the bench, and whatever they attempt to do for the benefit of their class must be done after their work is over. They are liable to make mistakes. There was a strike recently in our city in the furniture trade. Mr. Alex. H. Revell, the senior member of one of the largest firms involved, met me in his store a few days before the strike and showed me a circular which he had received from the Furniture Workers' Union, notifying him that they desired eight hours to be a day's work on and after a certain date, and that if their demand was not granted there would be a general strike in that industry. He called me into his private office and endeavored to show me that it was utterly impossible for the employers in this city to make so great a concession. He called my attention to Rockford, and Grand Rapids, and various points in Michigan where labor was cheaper than in Chicago and claimed that all these were competing points. Having learned by experience—that is, defeats—I was willing to work along the lines of least resistance, and I made a fervent appeal to Mr. Revell to do what he could, notwithstanding the situation he had described to me, to convince his men that he was an eight hour man. I suggested to him the idea of adopting this change one half hour at a time each six months, thus bringing in the eight hour day in two years. He sent for his men and made this proposition. They said, 'We will take it to the Union.' They did so ; and the statesmanship or generalship of that body did not 'see the cat' in that form. Some of them questioned the motives of Mr. Revell. Some said that it was the first sign of a general victory and that Mr. Revell was resorting to this means to head them off. They rejected his proposal. The result was a general defeat of the organization in that contest. I think the leaders of the workmen should recognise the fact that great results cannot be attained in too short a time."

Mr. Schilling objected to state-regulation. "I believe," he said, "that along the lines of voluntary co-operation the most good can be accomplished ; and the whole history of the eight hour movement proves it, and I state to you frankly that I would sooner

spend ten weeks with an influential employer of labor to convince him of the feasibility and practicability of the short hour movement than I would spend five minutes with any politician in the state of Illinois."

Mr. Darrow thought that Mr. Schilling was too much afraid of the state and was of opinion that an eight hour law could be enforced. The eight hour law which actually exists in the state of Illinois is not enforced, because it was made by politicians to fool the people, not to accomplish anything. Competition, he thought, had nothing to do with the matter, and he remarks with some humor:

"It seems to me that this club is bringing about some queer results, Mr. Schilling growing conservative and Mr. Nelson and Mr. McVeigh growing radical. It may be a good thing, but it is a little surprising."

Mr. Frederick Greeley gave the following story which even without comments is full of instruction: "I have a farm," he said, "near the city and have for neighbors two gentlemen, one a manufacturer, and the other I may describe as a philanthropist or labor leader. But we are all Farmers Mutual Benefit Alliance men. Now these Farmers Alliance men pastured their cows in one lot. The cows pastured there in peace for a long time until the philanthropist adopted the eight hour system. It worked admirably on his farm. But at the end of the eight hours the philanthropist came and led down the bars of the pasture and led his herd of cows to his barn. When this had been done two or three times the other cows belonging to the manufacturer and myself began to understand the operation and they joined the union. They insisted on an application of the eight hour plan in their case and even went so far as to employ force, breaking the fences. Our only recourse was a lockout, and we disposed of the entire herd of cows—three in all. The manufacturer and myself placed our cows on the market at a great loss. We then applied for fresh cows on the understanding that they were not to belong to this eight hour union. We have secured such cows to the exclusion of the philanthropist's cows and he practices the eight hour system on his own domain."

Mr. Frank H. Scott, the last speaker, said: "We all agree that the hours necessary for each man to earn a living should be made as short as possible. The only question left is whether it shall be done by law, by enactment of the legislature, or by the hand of time itself. I think that it cannot be done by law, for there is no law which affords a remedy that is not founded in the sense of justice of the community or in the interests of the community to which it is to apply. It is not true that the workmen have no weapons in their hands. They have, and by their association they have compelled concessions. And they will in the future. A law enforcing this eight hour system would be a hardship in many cases. I know of industries which are blessings not only to the persons engaged in them, but to those also to whom they bring the happiness and joys of life. I know of one that if blotted out would destroy to an extent the prosperity of an entire section, and I know that that industry cannot be run on a basis of less than ten or twelve hours a day. If such a law were enacted it would blot out that industry; and would that not be an injustice to the men engaged in it who are very willing to go on as they are now? I think that time is bringing about the solution of this problem. But I also think that there are obstacles in the way that ought not to be in the way. It is true that some men live in idleness, but that class is very small. Is it not so in your own experience? You are all business men. How many of your acquaintances are drones and parasites? If, therefore, this stirring up of ill feeling were done away with, and by patient teaching, by conference, we learn where each man's own interest lies, then I believe the question would come to its proper solution."

THE SUNSET CLUB ON THE EIGHT HOUR DAY.

COMMENTS ON THE DEBATE.

BY M. M. TRUMBULL.

LOOKING at it as a sentimental question, the advocates of the eight hour day had a great advantage in the discussion at the Sunset Club; even Mr. Murry Nelson, the chief debater on the negative side, confessed that his feelings were antagonistic to his argument, so he treated the subject in its practical form as one of social convenience, or as he himself expressed it as "a matter of present expediency only."

Mr. William M. Salter, who opened the debate on the affirmative side, took a higher and more spiritual view of it, advocating the eight hour day as a measure of justice to the working men, deprived under the present system of the time and opportunity for moral and mental elevation, a claim which it is the interest and the duty of society to concede. He said, "I favor the reduction of the hours of labor, so that the working men may come nearer living the life of human beings." This reason was purely ethical and sentimental, as Mr. Salter evidently saw, for he tried to give it material strength and substance by showing that the reduction might be economically made. He contended that, "working men may actually do as much in shorter hours as in longer ones"; and he said, "The hours of labor might be reduced without injuring production"; but in this he was unfortunately in opposition to the claim and purpose of the working men themselves.

One of the chief reasons given by the working men for demanding the eight hour day is that a reduction of the hours of labor *will* reduce production, and by so doing increase the demand for men to make up the deficiency. They bring this to a mathematical demonstration, and make it visible by this easy sum in the rule of three, "If twenty men can do a job of work in ten hours, how many men will it require to do it in eight hours?" They say that the answer triumphantly proves the truth of the doctrine "less hours, more men."

The rule of three argument, though so candid in form is fallacious because all the terms of the problem are not given. The relation of all the product of all the labor in the community to the demand for laborers is concealed; and the arithmetic assumes that the job of work *must* be done, and that the employer can just as easily pay twenty-five men as twenty for doing it. The American working men claim as its meritorious effect that fewer hours employ more men by decreasing products; and this claim was also made by the Trades Unions of England in the congress held at Newcastle in October.

Mr. Salter placed himself on the minority side of the working men when he said that it was "a side issue whether an eight hour working day should be, or can be got by legislation." Although an intelligent and respectable minority of the working men agree with Mr. Salter in that opinion, yet the demand of the great majority is vehement for an eight hour day *established by law*; and this also, while not the unanimous feeling, was the overwhelming sentiment of the English Trades Unionists at Newcastle.

As an ethical and humanitarian plea, Mr. Salter's address was inspiring, and very strong, as for instance, when he said, "If machinery is introduced into any business, all of those employed in it ought to have some benefit therefrom," and in other places it was even more potential as an appeal to the consciences of men; but as an economic argument it was deficient in evidence, and it was effectively challenged by Mr. Eastman who said in referring to the claim that a reduction of hours would not reduce products, "When that is proven the question is settled." Certainly, for there can be no sense in requiring men to work ten hours a day, for a result that may be achieved in eight hours.

Mr. Murry Nelson, while patronising the sentimental side

enough to concede that the eight hour day is something that perhaps "ought to be," treated the subject as one of expedient economics, and he measured every bit of Mr. Salter's argument with an inexorable two foot rule. The strength of his position was that "no interference by statute or any other regulation can be sustained in the labor market or in any other market against the law of supply and demand"; which was as much as to say that it is as easy to shorten the natural day by statute as the working day. Mr. Nelson is evidently of opinion that the supply of product, and the demand for laborers, are so closely related that they must rise or fall together; and under our present social system I think that he is economically right.

Mr. Nelson took the individualistic side, and insisted that every man should own and control his own time; and he said, "There can be no greater tyranny than limiting or increasing the hours of labor against the will of the laborer." Allowing proper discount for the exaggeration, it seems difficult to assail this position either, unless we abandon the principle of individual freedom. At the same time, it is easy for us to soothe ourselves into conscientious repose by the aid of an abstract principle wrenched away from the actual facts of life, out of which principles grow, and by which they must be qualified. There is a communism of labor, wherein it is also a principle that as there is only so much work to be done, and a superabundance of men to do it, that work should be fairly shared among all the laborers, and workers ought not to throw others out of employment by monopolising more than their own ration. To enforce this doctrine by law is undoubtedly tyrannical, and so are hundreds of other laws passed in restraint of individual freedom; and which laws we bring within the principle of special circumstance. This communism of labor may be a mistake according to the rules of political economy, but it must be considered when we are discussing the labor problem.

Mr. Nelson further said that "the question as to how the laborer will spend his leisure time gained by shorter hours is important"; meaning of course, important as affecting the justice or expediency of the eight hour day. In this I think that Mr. Nelson was clearly wrong, and inconsistent with his own demand that the laborer shall be free. The question as to how a workman will spend his money never enters into the wages contract between the hirer and the hired; nor is the matter of a man's right to certain hours of leisure to be affected by the impertinent question, How will he spend those hours?

The most practical and important revelation that appeared in the whole debate was the following statement made by Mr. Franklin McVeagh, "In the wholesale merchandise business ten hours has for a long time been the regulation for manual labor. I have tried the experiment during the past two years of nine hours, and I am obliged to say that to the best of my knowledge and belief it has not cost my firm a penny."

The testimony given by Mr. McVeagh, verified by actual experiment in a great business, was a strong reinforcement to Mr. Salter, for it was worth a batful of economic laws and speculative argury. Still, as a very exact and literal member of the club remarked, it was not an eight hour but a nine hour argument. While this was true, it was a surrender of one hour to Mr. Salter; and it was more than that; it was evidence that a humane cause even when politically or economically weak, may be morally very strong. Had there not been an eight hour agitation, it is not likely that Mr. McVeagh would ever have tried his nine hour plan, and the unscientific appeals of the eight hour agitators, may have reached the hearts of other men who mix conscience with business, and risk profits in moral experiments like that nine hour day.

The concession made by Mr. McVeagh ought to have been a consolation to at least two men who were present at the Sunset club, Mr. Salter himself, and Mr. George A. Schilling, for these were conspicuous agitators in the eight hour movement of 1886,

and the effect of their agitation on men like Mr. McVeagh is a testimonial that disastrous as their failure appeared to be, their work was not altogether lost.

It was remarked that both Mr. Salter and Mr. Schilling had modified their views, not as to the justice of the eight hour day, but as to the means of getting it; and there was great significance in Mr. Schilling's remark that "As to state regulation I am entirely in harmony with Mr. Nelson, but in that I believe I am in a minority among the working men. I think the general tendency of the thought of organized workmen is that if they could secure the enactment of a law regulating the hours of labor they would take it." As for himself he believed, "that along the lines of voluntary cooperation the most good can be accomplished"; and, said Mr. Schilling, "the whole history of the short hour movement proves it."

Mr. C. S. Darrow criticised Mr. Schilling for the conservative tone of his remarks, and said that an eight hour law could be enforced as well as any other law; and he inquired why, since the power of production had multiplied itself twenty times in fifty years, the working people had not received their share of the product of this power. He declared that competition had nothing to do with the perpetuation of the ten hour working day. He rejected all political and economic reasons for and against the eight hour day, and advocated it on ethical grounds only, saying, "Whether or not you believe in the eight hour day, is a question of sentiment alone, and depends solely on whether you believe in righteousness."

Like a ghost at the banquet came the declaration of Mr. Edward O. Brown, that the laborer was not free, and hence, all the previous reasoning was vain because it had no application to the exact status of the workmen. He scornfully swept away the freedom of contract argument by declaring that the laborer could not sell his labor in a free market because he was compelled to make his bargain under the duress of hunger. He contended in effect that both parties must trade under equal conditions to make it a free contract, and he said, "It is not a free contract which tells a man 'you must go to work for what you can get, or starve.'"

Mr. Brown made a very strong point of the fact that the Sunset club was discussing whether or not the eight hour day should be given to the workmen, and this, he said was proof in itself that the laborers were not free to decide. "Under our present social conditions," he said, "the workmen have no free choice; and this is the reason why employers discuss whether or not they will reduce the hours of labor."

Mr. Brown contended further that under the present system the hirer imposes conditions which the hired is compelled to accept, and this though in form a mutual agreement is not a free contract. On the one side is the ownership of the raw materials of all production, the very elements of life, and health, and comfort; on the other side is the ownership of nothing but muscle, and brawn, and brain. Here, according to the argument of Mr. Brown, the unequal relations of the parties to the subject matter of the agreement deprive it of all the qualities of a free contract. "If you look into this question," he said, "you will see that the reason why the workmen are not able to settle this question for themselves is because the gifts of God, the natural opportunities of the earth, which were intended for all men, have been taken for the few."

There was more discussion, but Mr. Brown's impeachment of the social arrangement which practically deprived the laborer of any voice in the decision, and made it all dependent on the conscience of the employer, puzzled the club, and left no basis of agreement between the sentimental and the economic side. Yet the feeling was almost unanimous, that in some way or other, in order to make society itself respectable, there ought to be some reduction in the length of the working day.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CONCILIATION OF SCIENCE WITH RELIGION.

To the Editor of *The Open Court*.—

In *The Open Court*, No. 226, Mr. John Burroughs remarked, "Our knowing faculties are certainly outstripping our intuitions and our devotional instincts," and inquires, "What will be the upshot?" "The upshot" will be that mankind will leave religion, which is but vagaries of the human mind, for pure science, just as fast as evolution goes on and fits mankind for it. Nature has no use for the useless; and religion is useless to the mind that is fitted for science. But you seem to have an idea that "the upshot" will lead to religion; for to what has been said about "fast approaching an era of irreligion, you say, "that is not so." . . . "The fact is that we begin to know what religion is." You admit that religious subjects have been deeply probed and that there is a conflict between science and religion, and that "if religion is to be considered as the superstitions contained in the old religions, this age certainly, . . . is the least religious of all."

Now if there is a conflict between science and religion, one side or the other must be victorious in the end. Do you mean to say that religion will be victorious? You say further: "But if religion is to be considered as the truth in the old religions, we are nearer to it (religion) than ever." If there is any truth in the old religions it is about time we had a little of it demonstrated, so that science can verify it. There is only one kind of truth; and that is scientific. I don't know of one single truth in religious literature but what has been taken from science. There are not two real views of the universe and man's relation to it, when one is opposed to the other. Religion has presented the false view, and science is slowly but surely eating religion up, so that Mr. Burroughs's question, "Will religion survive science," will be answered negatively. It will not do to assume that religion is something else than what all scholars have understood it to be. The re must be a credential to back up such an assertion. Assumption will not pass for authority now. The only pope in the domain of science is a natural credential, and if "we are approaching a new reformation which will be more radical and consistent than that of Luther," it must be seated upon a different basis than that reformation was. If it is to be original it cannot be founded upon a religious basis; it must have truth for authority—religion never had truth. If it should come to pass that the lowly Nazarene taught truth and that truth mixed with error is found in the scriptures that would not help religion any, because religion has expressed itself in dogmas, one conflicting with the other. If such should come to pass it would be a case of science being established. When Martin Luther set up the standard of justification by faith against the doctrine of justification by works, he did not set up science against religion; he simply laid more stress upon that religious dogma, and Rome laid greater weight upon the other. His movement was not so much a reformation as it was a change of religious base. The "new reformation" will indeed "be more radical and consistent than that of Luther," for it will be based upon science alone. Man's relation to the Universe is far different from the standpoint of evolution, than that which religion portrays. He is not a subject of probation, put here to see what he will do, according to the teachings of religion, but he is a sojourner undergoing development by the process of evolution. Religion is the expression of false states of consciousness which were intuitive and subjective, but they will all disappear before the rising sun of science. With science there is logical authority, but with religion there is none save in its anathemas. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" was born of subjective guess—came from a human mind that was not objectively acquainted with the difficulties that would have to be surmounted;

came from a mind that did not know that millions were locked up hard and fast in the embrace of other religions that might outline his own. All the gods, devils, and hells of religion were born of subjective guess also; the same is true of all its dogmas, not one of them relate to anything that is real. If I am mistaken I want to be corrected. If there is any truth in the old religions let it come to the front so that I can do them justice; so that they will not be defamed by this growing irreligious age.

JOHN MADDOCK.

[Mr. Maddock's definition of Religion differs widely from ours. The religion of a man as we understand the term is his world-conception regulating his conduct. The old religions are based upon the science of the past; to base religion upon the science of the present is the object of *The Open Court*.—ED.]

I AM.

BY VOLTAIRINE DE CLEYRE.

I AM! The ages on the ages roll;
And what I am, I was, and I shall be:
By slow growth filling higher Destiny,
And widening, ever, to the widening Goal.
I am the Stone that slept; down deep in me
That old, old sleep has left its centurine trace;
I am the Plant that dreamed; and lo! still see
That dream-life dwelling on the Human Face.
I slept, I dreamed, I wakened: I am Man!
The hut grows Palaces; the depths breed light;
Still on! *Forms* pass; but *Form* yields kinglier Might!
The singer, dying where his song began,
In Me yet lives; and yet again shall he
Unseal the lips of greater songs To Be;
For mine the thousand tongues of IMMORTALITY.

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