

ウェストン『作業場からの火花』：『賃銀，価格および利潤』におけるマルクスの論敵-

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<https://doi.org/10.15017/4474822>

出版情報：経済学研究. 45 (1), pp.107-127, 1979-12-10. 九州大学経済学会
バージョン：
権利関係：

ウェストン『作業場からの火花』

——『賃銀、価格および利潤』におけるマルクスの論敵——

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ここに紹介するのは、J・ウェストン『作業場からの火花』(J. Weston, Sparks From The Workshop)である。イギリスの週刊新聞『ビーハイブ・ニューズペーパー』(Bee-Hive Newspaper)の1864年10月8日号、10月22日号、12月3日号、1865年3月11日号、3月25日号、5月6日号にW. という署名で執筆し掲載されたものである。

1865年5月27日号にも『作業場からの火花』があるが、暗殺されたリンカーン大統領に關説したもので、主題が全く異なるので、ここでは省略に委ねた。したがって7回連載された『作業場からの火花』のうち6回分をここに紹介するのであるが、『ビーハイブ・ニューズペーパー』編集部の手落ちから、第1回——10月8日、第2回——10月22日、第3回——12月3日、第4回——3月11日と続いて、その後「第5回——3月25日」「第6回——5月6日」となるべきところが、回数がひとつ飛んで、第6回——3月25日、第7回——5月6日となっている。「第6回めの掲載号は65年3月18日付以外には考えられないが、同日付に当該論文はみあたらず、代わりに同じ『火花』の表題をかかげたタガートなる読者の反論が『投書』欄にのっている。編集者はこれをあとでWの5回めと勘違いしそのために次号掲載分を6回めとしたのかもしれない」¹⁾と、推察される。

『作業場からの火花』は、マルクスに『賃銀、価格および利潤』を執筆せしめるきっかけを作ったものであると同時に、『賃銀、価格および利潤』においてマルクスの批判対象となったものである、と考えられる。

『賃銀、価格および利潤』は、1865年6月20日と27日に、マルクスが、国際労働者協会の中央評議会でおこなった演説の草稿である。

マルクスのこの演説に先立つこと2ヶ月、1865年4

月4日の中央評議会で、イギリス代表ジョン・ウェストン(John Weston)から、次のような提案がなされた。残されている議事録によると、——

「ウェストン君は、次の問題を討論するように提案した。

第一、労働者階級の社会的物質的繁栄は一般に賃銀引上げによって高められるか。

第二、賃銀引上げのための労働組合の努力は、他の職業部門に対して有害な作用を及ぼさないか。

提案者は、第一の命題については否認の、第二の命題については是認の立場をとる旨言明した。²⁾

これによってみると、ウェストンの主張は、一般に賃銀引上げによっては労働者の生活は改善されないし、特定の部門で賃銀引上げが達成されてもそれは他の部門の労働者の犠牲のうえに成り立つものだ、というものであった。

その主張のもつ重大性の故に、5月から8月にかけて中央評議会はこのウェストンの提案を継続的に討論している。5月20日には、5月9日の中央評議会の決定を受けて、ウェストン提案討論のための臨時会議が開かれた。この日の議事録は現存していないが、同日付マルクスのエンゲルス宛書簡は、この間の事情の一端を伝えている。

「今晚は『国際労働者協会』の臨時会議が開かれる。善良な呑み助おやじで古いオーエン主義者のウェストン(大工)が二つの命題を提出した。それは彼が常日頃『ビーハイブ』で擁護しているものだ。(一)賃銀率の一般的な上昇は労働者にとっては何らの利益ももたらさないだろうということ。(二)それ故、労働組合は有害な作用をするものだということ。これら二つの命題は、われわれの協会ではただ彼だけが信じているのだが、もしこれが承認されるような

1) 平井規之「〈古典研究〉マルクス『賃金・価格・利潤』」雑誌『経済』1976年5月号、157-158頁。

2) The General Council of the First International, 1864-1866. The London Conference, 1865. Minutes. Moscow, n. d. p. 88.

ことでもあれば、われわれは、当地の労働組合に関しても、いま大陸で一般的にみられるストライキの蔓延に関しても、完全な敗北に陥るだろう。今度の機会に彼は——この会議には非会員も出席することができるので——一人の生来のイギリス人によって支持されるだろう。この男は同じ趣旨で小冊子を一冊書いているのだ。人々はもちろんぼくからの反論を期待している。だから、本来は今晚のためにぼくの返答を作り上げるべきなのだが、それよりもぼくの本（『資本論』を指す——引用者）を書き進めるほうが大事だと思うので、今晚は即席でやるよりほかはない。

もちろんぼくにはあらかじめ次のような二つの要点はわかっている。(一)労賃が商品の価値を規定するという。(二)もし資本家がきょう4シリングのかわりに5シリングを支払うとすれば、あすは（需要の増大によって可能にされて）彼らの商品を4シリングではなく5シリングで売らうということ。これは全くつまらないことで、ただ現象の最も表面的な上っつらにしがみついているだけだとはいえ、その場合に関連する経済問題のすべてを学問してない人たちに説明するということは、決して簡単ではない。経済学の課程を1時間に圧縮することは、君にだってできないだろう。だが、全力を尽くすこととしよう。³⁾

この書簡中に、「それは彼が常日頃『ビーハイブ』で擁護しているものだ」とあるのが、ここに紹介を試みる『作業場からの火花』ではないかと考えられる。

「全力を尽くすこととしよう」(We shall do our best)という言葉を守って、マルクスは、『資本論』草稿作成の傍、ウェストンの議論に対する反論を執筆する。5月20日の臨時会議では、「即席で」やるより仕方なかったが、6月20日と6月27日の会議では執筆草稿に基づいて反論演説をおこなっている。

前掲議事録によると、

「1865年6月20日。

マルクス君が、ウェストン提案に応じて、賃銀問題を巡る報告の一部を読み上げた。

ウェストン君が、マルクス君の報告では、自分の主張した原理を改めなければならないようなことは何もないと思う旨発言した。

クレマー君が、マルクス君は二、三の有効な例示しないし事実を明らかにして、ウェストン君の主張する案を完全に葬り去ったと思う旨発言した。

この問題は6月27日9時まで延期された。その際にマルクスが報告の後半を読み上げ、反対提案を出す予定である。⁴⁾

「1865年6月27日。

マルクス君が、前回読み上げられた報告の第一部分の要旨を述べた後、後半部分を読み上げた。それが終わったところで、クレマー君が、ウェストン報告、マルクス報告のふたつの印刷刊行を希望する者が多いと述べた。ただ費用の支弁をどうするか妙案はなかった。

ウェストン君は、マルクス君の報告中、農業労働者に関連した説明に誤りははないかと質問した。

エカリウス君の動議に基づいて、討論はエカリウス君司会の次の会議まで延期された。⁵⁾

6月24日付、マルクスのエンゲルス宛の書簡のなかにも、次のような文章がある。

「次の点について君の意見を聞きたい。ぼくは、ウェストン君が提出した問題、賃銀の一般的上昇はどのように作用するかについて中央評議会で報告を読み上げた。(印刷すればおそらく2ボーゲンになるだろう。)そのうちの第一の部分はウェストンの出鱈目な言説に対する反論であり、第二の部分は時宜に適するかぎりでの理論的説明である。いま人々はそれを印刷させたいと言っている。一面では、それはぼくにとってたぶん有益なことだろう。というのは、彼らはJ・S・ミルやビーズリー教授やハリソンなどと連がりがあるからだ。他面では、ぼくは躊躇している。というのは、(一)ウェストン君は論敵として非常に好ましいというほどのものではないから。(二)その報告は、第二の部分で、極度に圧縮されているとはいえ、比較的に大衆向きの形で、ぼくの本（『資本論』のこと——引用者）から先取りされた多くの新しいものを含んでいるが、他方で同時に不可避免的に種々の問題のうえを軽く滑り通らねばならないのである。質問したいことは、この種のことをそういうやり方で先取りすることが得策かどうかということである。君のほう事態をより以上に静かな遠方から注視しているのだから、この点についてぼくよりも君のほうの方がより的確に判断できると

3) Marx, *Briefe an Engels*, 20. Mai 1865, *Karl Marx-Friedrich Engels-Werke* Bd. 31, 1965, S. 124.

4) 注2)に同じ, pp. 109-110.

5) 注2)に同じ, pp. 111-112.

思う。』⁶⁾

『賃銀、価格および利潤』と『作業場からの火花』は、以上のように、1865年の春から夏にかけて、ロンドンの第一インターナショナル中央評議会でおこなわれたマルクスとウェストンの論争に密接に関連している。マルクスの報告もウェストンの報告も、議事録から詳細はつかみえない。ただマルクスの側は、そこでの報告草稿が残っていて、その死後、1898年に公刊された。『賃銀、価格および利潤』が、それである。ウェストンの側は、その報告草稿がどうなったか、目下のところ皆目明らかなでない。したがって、ウェストンの主張については、前掲議事録の簡単な記事と、『賃銀、価格および利潤』でマルクスが反論するにあたってその前提として簡単な理論的表現に要約した形で紹介したものから、間接的にしか、知ることができなかったのである。

前出のように、ウェストンの主張は、『ビーハイヴ』紙上に出ていることを、マルクスが明らかにしていた。このことを手掛かりに、一橋大学に『ビーハイヴ』のマイクロフィルム複写があることを探知し、ウェストン執筆部分を検索されたのは、平井規之氏（一橋大学経済研究所）である。これによって、われわれは、ウェストンの議論を直接知ることができることとなったわけである。

この『作業場からの火花』でのウェストンの議論は、中央評議会でのウェストン報告そのものでは、

無論ない。しかし、試みに『作業場の火花』第3回（1864年12月3日付）をみると、労働者階級の窮乏の主因を低賃銀にありとして、その解決を労働組合と折々のストライキ（trade associations and occasional strikes）に求める一般の考え方に対して、ウェストンは強く反対しており、その反対論は、1865年4月4日付議事録、あるいは5月20日付マルクス書簡に紹介されている趣旨と著しく似ている。同一趣旨としても過言ではないだろう。『作業場からの火花』の要旨は、平井規之稿「〈古典研究〉『賃金・価格・利潤』」に簡潔にまとめられているが、それによっても、議論の基調が、議事録やマルクスによる紹介を通じて知られていたウェストンの見解と、軌を一にするものだと、容易に判明するだろう。

なお賃銀を中心とした経済問題についての実質的議論は第3回（1864年12月3日付）、第4回（1865年3月11日付）、第6回（1865年3月25日付）でなされており、第7回（1865年5月6日付）は読者の反論に対する回答にあてられている。第1回（1864年10月8日付）、第2回（1864年10月22日付）は賃労働者の利害の独自性を説き労働者固有の機関誌の必要性を主張しており、全体の序論部分とみなすことができよう。

以上が、ウェストン『作業場からの火花』原文を再録紹介したいと考えた所以である。前出マイクロフィルムからタイプに移したものであるが、不鮮明な個所が多く、文字の形と前後関係から推測しなければならなかった。各行の配置は、原文通りである。

（1979年8月20日）

6) Marx, *Briefe an Engels*, 24. Juni 1865, a. a. O., S. 124.

(Oct. 8, 1864)

SPARKS FROM THE WORKSHOP

What are the essentials for a working man's paper, "an organ of industry," worthy the support of the industrial classes? To answer this question correctly, we must first consider why and for what purpose they require an organ devoted to their exclusive interest. If that interest is, as many affirm, "identical with the interest of capitalists," whose organs may be counted by hundreds, so that if the identity of interest was real, the one would be as well looked after as the other, and there could be no need of a separate organ to watch the interest of industrial classes. But the general feeling appears to be in favour of such necessity, which implies a doubt or disbelief of the truth of what is affirmed. Inquiry will confirm the disbelief. Capitalists are interested in the employment of their capital because of the interest it brings, but that is regardless of whether its employment insures the employment of labour, and if more interest could be made by using it in a way which gave less employment to labour, or none at all, the larger income is the only question that would have any weight with the capitalist. Here is no identity of interest.

Manufacturers employ labour for the sake of the profit they shall make of its produce, for which purpose they require to obtain it as cheaply as possible, while the labourer is desirous of obtaining the highest possible price for his labour. His object is best attained when there are none in want of employment; theirs when there are many. Here are opposite interests.

Provisiondealers are interested in his employment from a similar cause. They anticipate serving him with goods. The desire arises from the consideration of the profits to be made out of his purchase, in view of which they will ask the highest price they can obtain, while his interest lies in being supplied at the lowest, even at a loss to the dealers. Here the parties are mutually interested in each other's loss. The *opposite* of "identical."

Landlords are interested in his employment, if he be houseless because of the greater certainty of receiving their rents. His interest lies in having no rent to pay. Publicans are interested in his employment, if he be given to drunken and improvident habits, because of his greater ability to throw money into their coffers. His and his family's interest lies in his becoming provident and sober, and in ceasing to patronise publicans and sinners. Theirs in conserving his drunken and improvident habits. Here both the moral and pecuniary interest are in direct antagonism.

We might pursue the investigation further, but with no better result; the fact is, the pretended harmony of interest is a falsehood and a delusion. There is no class in the community, who live without useful labour, but whose interest is in direct antagonism with his who lives by its performance.

The publicans are not the only parties interested in both the moral and social degradation of the so-called "lower orders"—policemen, magistrates, lawyers, judges, and jailers, and all who go to make up the great government men-trap are directly interested in their moral degradation. They know, or must be awful blockheads if they don't know, that a farthing in the pound of their aggregate incomes, judiciously employed in suppressing the breed and cultivation of criminals, would be infinitely more efficacious than their united labours ever can be; but that is against *their* interest; it would jeopardise their occupation and their incomes.

Nor do these include the only parties interested in the moral and social degradation of the working classes. All who live without useful labour are interested in their downward tendency, because it favours the perpetuation of such mode of living, whereas an upward course would have an opposite effect.

It is then because of their having to withstand this mighty phalanx of opposing interest, all powerfully represented in the press, that the working classes, whose interest being non-identical and opposed to theirs, and therefore impossible to be advocated in their press, require an organ of their own to counteract the effect of the bewildering contradictions, the shameful lying, and false representations of the "enemies"

press, and for the purpose of aiding and directing their effort, to bring about a wiser and better state of things, taking its stand upon Truth and making Justice its guiding star. There are the primary essentials for an "organ of industry" capable of re-animating industrial apathy, of collecting and re-uniting the scattered and dissevered elements of former movements, and of marshalling them on to greater achievements than have ever yet been accomplished by the horny handed sons of toil.

My hope is that the BEEHIVE, the property of working men, will become such an organ, one really and truly advocating the interests of the industrial classes, conducted in a manly, earnest, and dignified spirit, which alone is capable of arousing the masses from their lethargy and infusing into their minds a determination to submit no longer to the degradation of political serfdom under which they at present subsist. It was not O'Conner's superior talent or intelligence that placed him in the front ranks of the great Chartist movement of 1818, but his earnestness, his thorough belief in the Charter, and in the same now as then—they are not dead but asleep, because no one awakes them; they are not indifferent, but patiently awaiting the call to arms of an honest, earnest, general, and will promptly respond to that call when it is properly made. Meanwhile it behoves all who desire to advance the social and political elevation of the masses to exhibit a little more earnestness, more life, more heart, more soul; for,

"Without heart no cause is led;
Without soul the best is dead,
Life gives life where it had fled,
And Earnest stands in Grammar's stead." W.

(Oct. 22, 1864)

SPARKS FROM THE WORKSHOP.

No. II

I have said the people are the same now as formerly
that they are neither dead nor indifferent in regard

to their social and political right, but simply awaitig the call to arms of an honest, earnest, general, and I again reiterate that statement; but lest some of my readers should be disposed in the absence of corroborative evidence, to doubt the truth of the assertion I will refer briefly to one or two events of comparatively recent date, which, to my mind, fully demonstrate its correctness. Every one will remember that the nine hours movement of the London operative builders of 1859 was met by the associated masters with a lock out, followed by a document the most tyrannical and oppressive that could well have been conceived by the most tyrannical despot. And how was that document met by the men? By the laying aside for the time being the nine hours' question, and concentrating their whole energies against the "odious document," and never did working men exhibit themselves to better advantage than in their manly and heroic determination to resist that base, though futile, attempt of would-be despots to degrade and enslave them; and though the struggle was long and desperate, and the cost in time and money enormous, still, as the victory was complete and decisive, one cannot help feeling that the moral results secured by that victory far outweigh the pecuniary cost of its consummation. What saintly Petees will again think of insulting the nobler natures of their humbler fellow subjects with documents dictated by their superior insolence? If no other good has come out of that evil, this fact, at least, has been proved to demonstration, viz., that the operative classes set a far higher value on the few liberties they do possess than on the amount of their weekly income or the duration of their daily toil. For the latter they modestly saked for a slight mitigation and improvement so ridiculously insignificant as to be altogether below what, by reason of their enormously increased powers of production by the aid of machinery they were clearly entitled to demand (and will yet secure), and tamely submitted to a haughty negative, while, sooner than barter their freedom for the brand of slavery they were prepared to meet starvation and death, which doubtless some did do in that struggle; thus proving that they are still made of the same indomitable courage whenever they shall have made

up their minds to exhibit it, and that there exists in them a latent energy, which only await some one to awaken and give a wise direction to, to make it irresistible.

It was this glorious feature in moral character of my fellow operatives which shone so conspicuously in that struggle which gives me hope and confidence in the future, and which, however unworthy of notice by our present soulless brick-and-mortar House of Commons and death-striking House of Lords, must have been supremely gratifying to all true Reformers who sincerely desire the social and political elevation of the masses, and inspired them with the conviction that the time is at hand when intelligence and moral worth shall rule, and those presumptuous old building materials be in their turn treated as moral débris.

Again, at a more recent date, we had a splendid opportunity of satisfying ourselves that notwithstanding the tremendous efforts of a vile and degraded press, with the great leading liar of Printing-house square at its head, there has been no process of moral degeneration at work amongst the working classes within the last fifteen years; but the contrary, their meetings at Exter Hall and St. James's Hall, and elsewhere, to protest against any participation in the shameful sympathies of the educated drones of this country, with their order—the man-stealers and soul-murderers of South America in their hell-inspired attempt to overthrow the finest and most liberal Government in the world, and found on its ruins one based on slavery and human bondage, are a sufficient refutation of that idea; the sentiments expressed at those meetings, and the enthusiasm with which they were received, coupled with the noble conduct of the cotton operatives, who could not be starved into sympathy with the hellish cause of the governing classes, prove incontestably that, so far from having degenerated, the moral tendency of the operative classes has of late been decidedly upwards, as under fair opportunities it necessarily would be. It is but the natural consequence of useful and productive labour under favourable conditions to elevate and dignify the heart of the worker, and it is equally natural that pampered idleness should result in damaging and corrupting the mind, and in destroying

all the nobler qualities of humanity; it is therefore not difficult to account for the conduct of the self-styled upper classes in respect to American question.

These instances, I maintain, prove that whenever the right time comes, the working classes will not be found wanting in their support of genuine reforms, that they were in no hurry to shout hurrah at the birth of Lord John's little abortion, or the equally deformed bantling of Mr. Bright, ought to surprise no one. Silent contempt was the reception both merited and met, and for my own part I should have been not only disappointed, but grieved, had it been otherwise; unless, indeed, it had been to give audible expression to the feelings of indignation which must have been inspired in the minds of many of the working classes, by the insult offered to their intelligence and sense of justice, by those paltry and unprincipled measures. What proof of moral superiority does the payment of (原文ノママ) of a six-pound rental, or the possession of a forty shilling freehold, established? None, whatever; and yet it was because the working classes gave the cold shoulder to measures founded on that supposition that they have been pronounced to be indiffernt about reform.

I have felt it to be a duty to expose the utter erroneousness of this conclusion, because I am aware that it operate to deter persons of influence and position from taking up a cause, the success of which mainly depends on the hearty co-operation and zeal displayed by the working classes; and I am confident that were any influential member of Parliament, whose antecedents had not rendered him obnoxious to, or caused him to be looked upon, with distrust by the working classes, to come boldly out, and declare in favour of an honest measure of reform, one based on the principle of political equality, and intimate his intention to introduce such a measure into the next session of Parliament, and canvass the country in its support, that he would everywhere meet with an enthusiastic reception by the working classes, who are sick and disgusted with shams and deception, but who are not slow to appreciate truth and sincerity. It was to this principle they did homage when they went out in millions to meet

the great Italian Liberator, who is its embodiment, "before the resplendent grandeur of whose late reception home grown tyranny was awed, and foreign despot stood appalled;" and shall it be said that out of the six hundred and fifty professing Christians who constitute our legislature, there is not one amongst them who believe in truth, justice, and sincerity? W.

(Dec. 3, 1864)

SPARKS FROM THE WORKSHOP

No. III

"While friends and foes on strikes discourse,
Who'll trace the evil to its source?
Or, pointing out the woes of force,
Suggest a simpler, wiser course."

When we discover an evil in a machine, or a defect in the principle of its construction, we generally set our heads to work to devise a remedy or an improvement, and seldom fail to accomplish our object; the task being entered on without prejudice, with our minds cool and collected, no one being blamed for the existence of the evil, or interested in its continuance; and could we pursue the investigation of social or societarian evils and imperfections in the same calm and quiet frame of mind, our labours would, doubtless, be rewarded with similar results. There is, I am aware, a difficulty in doing so, arising from the fact that whatever the evil or imperfection may be, there will be some who have a vested interest in its continuance, and who, unlike the defective parts of an inanimate machine, will offer active and determined opposition to any alteration, and which opposition, becoming the apparent or visible cause of the evil, is apt to entirely divert the attention of those who seek its removal from the investigation of the real or primitive cause, and lead them to an angry and personal contention with the parties for the time being interested in their retention; and to this cause, more than to any other, may be attributed the result, that while immense progress has been made in the

application of scientific knowledge for the creation of wealth, none whatever has been effected in our relation with each other, or in ameliorating the general condition of humanity. Free and unfettered science has progressed at lightning speed, and multiplied our powers of producing material wealth far beyond our wants, while conflicting interest and blind selfishness has opposed an insurmountable barrier to the progress of civilisation, and converted the blessing into a curse. Machinery has come to the aid of the workman, but not to lessen his toil; it has doubled and trebled his power of production, but only to increase his prospect of starvation; for it is an undoubted fact that, in proportion as the necessities of life are increased in abundance, so does the prospect of starvation of those whose labour has assisted to produce them increase; and this anomalous state of things will inevitably continue until we can bring ourselves up to that exalted standard of moral dignity which shall enable us to enter upon the investigation of social and political question in the same calm and unprejudiced frame of mind as that in which we approach question of a purely scientific character. But while it is admittedly difficult, perhaps at present impossible, for the working classes who suffer from existing evils to discuss in calmness the question of their removal with those who, from being interested in their continuance, impiously pretend to believe that their existence is the decree of heaven, there is no reason why they should not maintain a perfect unanimity of feeling when discussing those questions amongst themselves where at present no clear and well defined knowledge or conception as to the real cause of those appears to exist, but which may possibly be arrived at by a little frank and friendly discussion.

The prevailing belief amongst the working classes as to the cause of their distress is that it arises partly from the want of regular employment, for which they conceive that a reduction of the hours of labour would be a partial remedy, but principally from inadequate wages, for which they conceive the remedy lies in trade associations and occasional strikes. That a wellorganised trade association of any section of the operative classes would be able to maintain, or even to advance the wages of that particular section, no one, I should

think, who has paid any attention to the subject, will for a moment doubt, and were it not that the increase in the cost of an article is usually followed by a diminished consumption, the advance in wages, if confined to one particular section of the working classes, would be a clear gain to them, only it would be at the expense of other sections of workmen.

Then, to effect a well organised trade association of any branch of industry, as every one who has had any experience in the matter is aware, would require such an amount of time and means for its accomplishment as none but the better paid trades could afford to devote; so that the advantages of trades' societies for maintaining wages must be confined to what has been termed the aristocracy of the working classes; but I am sure that every intelligent trades' unionist will admit that, in justice, that section of industry which is at present the worst paid, which I submit are the agricultural labourers—whose average wage is not more than a third, in many instances less than a fourth, of what is received by London mechanics—are first entitled to an advance of wages; and I am equally certain that they will as readily admit that the establishment of a well organised trade association amongst the agricultural populations of Great Britain would be an utterly hopeless undertaking; the conclusion, therefore, must be that, for advancing the wages of the worst paid section of industry, the principle of trades' unions is practically unavailable. But supposing it were as available for the worst as for the best paid section of industry, suppose, further, that each section was so thoroughly and completely organised as to be able to raise at pleasure the wages of each and all of the several sections comprised (a thing which is barely possible and not at all probable), would the exercise of that power confer any real advantage on the working classes? Let us assume that such a state of things does exist and that it has been "fraternally" arranged that, in the first instance, the worst paid section, say the agricultural labourers is entitled to each an advance as, considering the difference in skill, &c, shall make their wages fairly proportionate to those received by the best paid mechanical sections of workmen; and

after them, or simultaneously with them, say the bakers and shoemakers; and suppose the rise in each of these sections to be say 50 per cent on their present wages, I presume it will be seen that the result would be a considerable, though perhaps not a corresponding, rise in the price of the articles they respectively assist to produce; and that as those articles, which they are large consumers of, would have to be purchased by them at the enhanced price, the rise would be very far from being all gain to themselves; and further, that, as all the other sections of industry would have to pay the advanced price, the supposed partial rise would place them in a decidedly worse position than they previously occupied. Still we will suppose they fraternally and patiently submit to what they, through faith in their principles, believe to be only a temporary evil and hopefully await the "good time coming" when it will be their turn to receive an advance, which we will assume it has been fraternally arranged and agreed shall not be till after a general equalization has been effected, which time we will suppose has now arrived.

Now, presuming the wages after this supposed equalization to be fairly and equitably apportioned to the (原文へ lization) several sections of industry, it is clear that after that any advance of wages, to be just, must be general, and, if general, where will be the advantage? Every one, I should think, will at once see that the effect of a general rise in wages would be to increase the price of everything produced by labour in a corresponding degree; not only would this be the case with articles produced after the rise had taken place, but it would also stamp previously existing wealth with a similar addition to its former value, and for this simple reason, viz., that other similar articles of wealth could not then be produced only at the additional price. Then, as every working man would have to pay an additional price for every article of consumption equal to the advance in his wages, how is it possible he can derive any advantage from the change—a change which could only be effected at an enormous cost of time and means, and which, when effected, as I think I have shone, is or would be utterly worthless. The delusiveness of high wages has probably been effectually shrouded

from mental view by its extreme plausibility; every one knows that individually the more money he gets the better for himself, and it was very natural to conclude that the higher the general wage the better for those who receive them; but that it is a complete delusion it is hoped has been sufficiently proved; that it is more than a delusion I will attempt to prove in my next.

W.

(March 11, 1865)

SPARKS FROM THE WORKSHOP—No. 4

To The Editor of The Beehive

While friend and foes discourse
Who will trace the evil to its source,
Or, pointing out the waste of force,
Suggest a simpler, wiser course?

Many ingenious and clever men have spent years, and not a few a whole lifetime, in attempting to obtain, by means of mechanical appliances, what is termed perpetual motion, which a few hours' study of any treatise on mechanical science would have taught them was impossible; and a much larger number of comparatively intelligent men have spent large portion of their lives in attempting the equally impossible feat of improving the condition of the working classes by advocating higher wages, a proposition the extreme plausibility of which has deluded the working *en masse* into the belief of its correctness, and made them the willing and cheerful supporters of innumerable strikes, in which millions in time and money have been spent in furtherance of that object, but which on investigation will be found to be as utterly fallacious as the idea of perpetual motion.

First, it should be borne in mind that the purchasing power of money is not fixed and uniform, but unstable and varying; increasing with its general scarcity, and diminishing with its general abundance; and that, consequently, the sum which at different periods and

places has been, is, or may be received for a day's work, may vary from a penny to a pound, without any material variation in the necessities of life which its recipients were, are, or may be enabled to command.

I have heard, it stated that at the time of the building of St. Paul's Cathedral men worked for one penny per day. The statement may be erroneous; but it is certain that at the first introduction of money payment the wages given were but a fraction of the present amounts and it is quite probable did not exceed a penny a day; but does any one imagine that the purchasing power of that penny was limited to the two ounces of bread contained in our present penny loaf? or that the London mechanics of the present day have sixty or seventy times the luxuries enjoyed by the penny-a-day men of former days? The idea is too preposterously improbable to be for a moment entertained; it is much more probable that, so far as the solid necessities of life are concerned, working men of that day fared as well as we of the present, with sixty or seventy times their amount of wages, thus showing that the purchasing power of money has declined in the same, or nearly the same, ratio as wages have advanced, which, it appears to me, may be considered as an established law.

About twelve or thirteen years ago the wages paid in Adelaide and other parts of South Australia were from 14 to 16 shillings per day for mechanics in the building trades, being three times the wages at that time in London, a temptation which proved too strong for the believers in high wages, and caused a considerable number to emigrate, some of whom have returned disappointed, and others would follow if they had the means.

At the time when the wages were at the highest, a young married woman residing in the same house with myself and family, received a letter from her husband who had gone out to Australia to prepare for her to follow; in which letter it was stated that apartments which after his arrival in Adelaide had been let at five shillings a week, were then fetching thirty, with clothes and provisions proportionally high; and, as for vegetables, they were scarcely to be had at any price; that as much as half a crown a head had been given for cabbages, and that although mechanics got

from four to five pounds a week, those with families could not save anything. The wages had advanced 200 per cent, but the purchasing power of money had declined in precisely the same ratio, and left the deluded high wage recipient just where he was.

Amongst those who went out about that time there were at least a dozen with whom I was well acquainted (including several from the Progressive Society, who gave a farewell (?) tea party to their departing friends), several of them having promised me that on their arrival in Australia they would write and give me a faithful account of the real state of affairs; but to my great disappointment not one of them ever fulfilled his promise, or, if they did, I have not received the proof. They were doubtless disappointed and had no heart to write. They had been led away by the enchanting music of high wages, and had realised the bitter delusion, had discovered, when too late, that they had braved "the danger of the sea," and endured the monotony and discomfort of a long and tedious voyage, without in the least improving their prospects of material prosperity, and they were in no mood for writing.

Since then wages have declined, and now but little more than half what they were twelve years since, and, according to the advocates of high wages, the working men of Australia should be in a dreadfully depressed condition; but from letters and papers received about six months since from my son at Wallaroo Bay, who went out a youthful adventurer of eighteen, before the party I have spoken of—from these letters and papers there does not appear to be much, if any, difference. After giving an interesting and touching account of his "ups and downs," he says he is now working as carpenter at a mine at 8s. 6d. a day (the general wage being 8s.). Bread was 1s. 8d. a quartern, but having only a wife and one child he could manage to save a little to provide for future necessities, but concludes with expressing a wish that he was "safe back in old England," where he would get but two thirds of his then wages—an odd or an awkward way of showing his appreciation of the inestimable blessing of high wages. But the point to which I am desirous of directing especial attention is the fact that in Australia wages have suffered a decline of 50 per cent,

without the prosperity of the working classes being prejudicially affected by the change.

What will the supporters of "the four eights" panacea say to these facts? Here the parties had one eight (shilling) in addition to their utmost desires, and still retain the prescribed number, but which some of them have exchanged, and blessed the day when they did so, and others would if they could gladly exchange for the mixed number we so much despise. I do not expect that they will be all at once so convinced of the fallacy of the high wages doctrine as to turn round and commence agitating for a reduction; but were they to do so, though they probably might be pelted with quotations, not from the Latin, as Mr. Cobden apprehended from the Oxford scholars, but from the mortar-board, I am fully persuaded that they would find it not only a much shorter cut to the desired destination, the improvement of the condition of the working classes, but also incomparably smoother, and less strewn with impediment, unless it was by their own supporters (?), for I am decidedly of opinion that a general reduction rather than a general rise in wages would prove advantageous to the working class; at all events, there appears to me to be far less difficulty in establishing that proposition than the reverse one. W.

(March 25, 1865)

CORRESPONDENCE

(The Editor does not hold himself responsible for the opinions expressed by correspondents.)

SPARKS FROM THE WORKSHOP.

No. 6

As has already been shewn, and I submit demonstrated, that there exists a sort of law by which the benefits which are supposed to accrue from an upward tendency in wages are exactly counter-balanced by a corresponding advance in prices, and *vice versa*. Thus were new and inexhaustible mines of silver and gold to be discovered and money to become ten times as plentiful as

now, and wages ten times their present amount, the purchasing power of money would decline in exactly the same ratio, or in other words, one shilling or one sovereign would only purchase one tenth of what with those coins we can at present obtain; therefore were it possible by means of a thorough and complete organization of labour to force the general wage up fifty per cent., it will not be attended with the slightest gain to the working classes; but, as will presently be shown, with a loss to them and a gain to the capitalist. With that increase of wages the money value not only of articles of wealth or necessity to be created at the enhanced cost, but likewise of those at present existing, will be increased fifty per cent. Why? First, because they could not be replaced except at the additional cost and, second, because of the otherwise increased consumption by the working classes of fifty per cent. in excess of their present quota; for it must not be forgotten that the working classes as a rule live up to their income, and, consequently, with its increase their expenditure increase to the same extent. And this, in fact, is the reason why they remain simply and exclusively a working class, solely dependent on others for employment. And this increased consumption of fifty per cent, which would take place if prices remained the same as before the rise in wages, being a like per cent. in excess of the present supply, would produce a corresponding scarcity, and consequently raise the price in a similar ratio. From that cause alone, even though the articles had been or could be produced at their former cost it is, therefore, quite evident there would be no gain to the working classes by a general rise of fifty per cent.; but would there not be a loss?

Assuming the existing currency or circulating medium to be equal to, and it is clearly not in excess of our requirements, for money is not now going a begging, it is evident that an advance of wages and prices of 50 per cent. would necessitate a similar increase in the currency. Supposing the present currency to be fifty millions, we should require an addition of twenty-five millions, which, not being forthcoming, there would be a deficiency to that extent.

And what would be the effect of creating a deficiency or demand for capital of one third in excess of the supply, or the possibility of supply, with competition for employment annihilated, would it not demand a rise in wages? Would it be satisfied with less than double its present rates, and would not this increased prosperity of capital place us more completely under its dominion, and render us more subject to its galling "insolence" and "tyranny," of which some of us now with too good reason complain. Could employment at one half more wages be found for the same number of hands as are now employed with no additional currency, or would not the scarcity of money cause a similar scarcity of employment, and throw thousands helplessly, idle, and unproductive? In a word, would not the virtual decrease of one third in the circulating medium so cramp and fetter the nation's productive energies, as to enormously decrease the aggregate national produce.

On the other hand, would not an increase in the circulating medium produce the opposite result? and would not a general reduction of 50 per cent. in wages and prices be synonymous with such an increase? With its abundance would not capital be shorn of its despotism, its overbearing and high-handed haughtiness? With its humiliation would not its "insolence" and "tyranny" subside? Everywhere abundant and begging for employment could it resist a "reduction in wages?" With its easy terms would not employment become everywhere plentiful and productive? Finally, would not the complete removal of the golden break which at present retards the national energies and its conversion into an impelling force, so accelerate all the varied powers of production as prodigiously to increase the aggregate national produce?

And what would be the result to the working classes of such an increase or reduction? If more is produced, will they not share with the non-productive the increase? or, if less, in the reduction? It is self-evident they would. The working classes evidently consume some given portion or per centage of the aggregate produce and my betief is that per centage remains the same, or is not materially affected, whether the aggregate be increased or diminished. If that be so, it is evident

that that course which most tends to accelerate production is most calculated to promote the material prosperity of the working classes; and the artificial forcing of the wages of labour upwards, and thereby virtually increasing the scarcity of money, and thereby of employment, I claim to have proved is not the course most calculated to accelerate production, but to retard it, and is therefore not the course most calculated to improve the condition of the working classes, but to depreciate it and is therefore more than a delusion; and this being one of the principal objects of the trade associations, and the almost universal belief in its advantage one of the main sources of strikes, the exposure of its utter delusiveness may do something towards arresting those increasingly popular and expensive follies; and when to that something is added, a similar exposure of the main argument in favour of a reduction in the hours of labour—viz., that it would reduce the number of unemployed hands, the belief in which fallacy is another source of strikes—it is hoped that the strike movement will be so divested of its motive-power as to be brought to a dead's end and when the association will be free to consider "A simpler and wiser course." That exposure I will attempt in my next. W.

Erratum—In No. 4 for "Who will trace," & c., read who'll trace; for "working *en masse*" read classes *en masse*; and for "two ounces" & c., read eight ounces.

(May 6, 1865)

**SPARKS FROM THE WORKSHOP—No. VII
TO THE EDITOR OF THE BEEHIVE**

Sir—The empty and uncultivated mind of youth and infancy, as the priesthood are too well aware, can as readily be filled with errors as truths; but the eradication of errors bred and born in us, has been the high wage theory, is not so easy a matter. It was therefore never anticipated that that error would be eradicated by a couple or so of anti high wage pills; and if patients will only have a little patience, and take

the doses kindly, I have strong hopes that, except in a few of the very worse cases, a "perfect cure" will in time effected.

"J. T. S.'s" case is very encouraging. He is evidently more than "half persuaded" that a general or universal rise in wages would confer no advantage on its recipients, and was not indisposed to a universal reduction, even before taking the first reduction dose (No. 6), which, singularly enough, appeared side by side with his temperate and well-reasoned article, forming to me, and I doubt not to most of the readers of the BEEHIVE, a most agreeable contrast to much that appears in its columns, but which as it did not assail any cardinal proposition advanced by me, but rather endorsed them, does not appear to call for further notice from me.

I have next to congratulate "H. W.", who seems quite cured and ready to act as my "assistant". I can only say the smallest help will be "thankfully received".

I now come to notice Mr. Toggart, who, although he declares he will never cease advocating high wages, I feel quite certain of curing him of that malady, that is, if he will only continue the medicine as suggested above, and not put himself in such a pucker and throw up the pills without analysing them, and then put it about that they contained ingredients they did not, which he will find he has done, if he examines his letter commenting on "Sparks" No. 3 (which appeared in BEEHIVE, December 3rd, 1864), and, since that, No. 4 (which appeared March 11th, 1865)—see last paragraph but one.

No one, I presume, entertains an idea that more work would be done for the larger than for the smaller wage, or that the aggregate produce would be in the slightest degree increased by a rise in wages of 50 or any other per cent.; but either such increase must take place, or the non-producer's share of the produce be reduced, before any addition can be made to the producer's share; and the question to be answered is, will either of these results ensue from a general rise in wages? or, would not a considerable reduction, as indicated in "Sparks" No. 6 (which appeared March 25th, 1865), be the inevitable result? Until these questions are answered, it is not necessary to propound any new ones.

W.