
W A G E S

Can we accept the services of another for less than they are worth to us, other things being equal? We are all prone to employ the man who will do our work for the least money. If one man demands a dollar and a half for certain work, and another man offers to do it for a dollar, we give him the job. We say wages are fixed by supply and demand.

They are regulated by competition. But competition is determined by the necessities of the competitors. In competition, the weak are driven to the wall, and are obliged to underbid. Thus are they forced to a lower and lower status.

If we take advantage of these necessities, and pay them less than their labor is worth to us because it is in our power to do so, we are helping to push them down. We are helping to lower the status of their children, and to increase the vice and wretchedness of the future.

The Cost of Something for Nothing

Can we expect our children to be happy, and free from inherited blight, if we give them the money we have made from underpaying the labor that helped us amass a fortune?

If we keep that which, under the eternal equities, was earned by another, the poison of injustice will enter our households. This law of equivalents must be respected, or we must pay the penalty.

The fact that we could have got an indefinite number of other men to do the same work for the same money, does not make a good plea at the bar of conscience. The equities are not changed by the fact that we have many men at our mercy.