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We shall be pleased to receive items of interest pertaining to Trade Societies from all parts of the Dominion for publication. Officers of Trades Unions, Secretaries of Leagues, etc., are invited to send us news relating to their organizations, condition of trade, etc.

Our columns are open for the discussion of all questions affecting the working classes. All communications must be accompanied by the names of the writers, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

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(INVARIABLE IN ADVANCE.)

Per Annum	\$2 00
Six Months	1 00
Single copies	5c

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The Ontario Workman.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, SEPT. 19, 1872

THE AGRICULTURAL MOVEMENT.

The question of all others that is at the present time engaging public attention in the old country, and one in which is involved the gravest and most momentous issues, is the great labor revolution in connection with the agricultural classes of England. During the past summer "strikes" have not been "few nor far between," and trade disputes have been nearly of every day occurrence, till it would almost seem as if labor was getting completely disorganized the world over; but, perhaps, the wide-spread agitation amongst the English peasantry, from its very novelty and unlooked for occurrence, has been regarded more as a matter for surprise than condemnation. The normal condition of the English agricultural laborer is but too well known. Toiling from early morn till dewy eve for the veriest pittance that was barely sufficient to keep soul and body together, ground down under a system of serfdom that was but one remove from absolute slavery, it was deemed a thing incredible that by a popular outburst the stolid and blunted natures of this class could be moved—their pent-up passion for a better lot aroused—and that they could be inspired with a manly resolution to dare the peril of self-assertion. But the events of the past few months have demonstrated the fact that this could be—and has been—done,—and accomplished to such extent that the statesmen and press of England have now to deal with a state of affairs that is causing, in the minds of many, the gravest apprehensions. The London Spectator, in an article discussing the situation, confesses that the prospects for the coming winter are almost alarming, and states that everything seems to tend towards a social struggle in the agricultural districts which must be disastrous, and may not be altogether peaceful. The position of affairs may appear to be dangerous indeed; but we

confess we fail to see the efficacy of the remedies that some appear anxious to apply. First of all, the farmers, irritated by the advanced prices demanded for getting in the harvest, and driven beyond all self-control in view of the fact that in future they will have to deal with strong combinations instead of isolated, and, therefore, powerless seekers of bread, seem to have come to the conclusion that they would take advantage of the first opportunity to break up the newly-formed combinations. This opportunity they expect to find during the coming winter, when the demand for laborers will be small, and meat, bread, and, in fact, all the necessaries of life, will be dear—then, rendered elated and enriched by such dearth, they intend to "try conclusions" with their laborers, and see if they cannot "read them a lesson" on the advantages of suffering quietly, whatever it may suit employers to inflict. To back the farmers up in their praiseworthy and humane course of action, comes the counsel offered by Mr. Sothran Eastcourt, who is represented as "a man of mark and Parliamentary capacity," and who gives evidence of that capacity by advising farmers to treat all who join the Union as "strangers," to withdraw all perquisites, to take away the potato grounds, and to raise the rents of the cottages. In the frame of mind in which the farmers are represented as being at present, it is not hard to conceive that they will be only too willing to act upon this well-timed counsel. But we have other counsellors. A Bishop stands forward and offers advice, and surely the voice of "Christ's ambassador" will be raised on behalf of the poor, down-trodden, long-suffering laborer, and his words will be as oil poured upon the wild and surging passions of men, and there will be a great calm. We pause to listen to the words of wisdom that fall from the lips of this representative of "apostolic succession." What are they? That every effort should be made to bring about a re-adjustment of the difficulties; that the question should be referred to a board of arbitration; that the statesmen of the country should take the matter into their serious consideration? No such measures as these were hinted at, but simply that "the leaders of the movement should be ducked in a horse-pond." That the farmers will attempt to carry out this eminently Christian advice we have our doubts, because the laborers being twenty to one, and perhaps inferring from the Bishop of Gloucester's counsel that physical violence is a proper weapon to employ, might "duck" the farmers; but that, unless better counsels prevail, they will endeavor to carry their intentions into practice, and attempt to starve the men into submission, we fully believe.

When such remedies as these are the only ones that can be suggested—or rather, so far as we have read, have been suggested—it is no wonder that the coming winter is regarded as being charged with destructive elements, the prospect looked upon with "grave apprehensions," and the struggle looked forward to with "a sickening dread of the misery it must produce." But it is not yet too late to obviate these difficulties, and if the excellent advice tendered by the London Standard be acted upon with anything like earnestness, the storm that now threatens such destruction in the agricultural districts of England, may be happily averted, and the social atmosphere rendered all the clearer for the "rumbling thunder" that now agitates and disturbs it.

STABBING AFFRAY.

On Saturday night a horrible stabbing affray took place on Mutual street, in which a young man named Thomas Barley received five stabs at the hands of a young man named Mills. Some of the stabs are very severe, and are likely to prove fatal. A young lady was in the case. Mills has been arrested.

A complimentary supper was tendered to Bro. Hugh Gillis, District Master of the Orange Young Britons, by a number of his friends, on Tuesday night last, at the Fox and Hounds Hotel. It was a very pleasant and social gathering.

THE GENEVA ARBITRATION.

The final results of the arbitrators' award have been made known, and the settlement of the question that has for so long threatened to cause a rupture between the two great English-speaking nations cannot fail to be a source of satisfaction to all.

The arbitrators find that England is responsible, primarily, for the escape and subsequent deceptions committed by the Alabama, Florida, Shenandoah (after she reached Melbourne), and, secondarily, for the acts of their tenders, the Tuscaloosa, Clarence, Taconey, and Archer. They also find that she is not responsible for any acts committed by the Retribution, Georgia, Sumpter, Nashville, Tallahassee, and Chicamauga; and that so far as the Sallie, Jeff. Davis, Music, Boston, and Joy are concerned, they are excluded for want of evidence. They also declare that the indemnity for the cost of pursuing the cruisers, as well as for prospective injuries, are not good grounds for award, and, therefore, rule them out. Exercising the authority conferred upon them by Article VII. of the Treaty of Washington, they refrain from submitting the question of the amount of damages for which Great Britain is responsible to another Commission, and give a bulk sum to the United States of \$15,500,000. This award is payable within twelve months from the time of adjudication, and the London Times says it will be cheerfully paid, "as tending to obviate difficulties in the future."

There are, however, counter claims of British subjects for losses sustained during the war from the action of the United States Government, and these will, we suppose, be considered at Washington, and will likely prove to some extent a set-off against the award made at Geneva.

The fact that great questions of moment, affecting the relations between Great Britain and the United States, have forever been set at rest by such peaceable means, cannot but be a source of gratification to all; and while a precedent, as a means of settling international disputes in the future has thus been established, we fail to see why a similar plan could not be adopted whereby to arrange and settle the questions that are now so widely agitating the social world. The subject is certainly worthy of the most serious consideration, and it is to be hoped that a solution of the pending troubles may be attempted in some such manner. Where "peaceful arbitration" has been employed with so much success in the settlement of so intricate and delicate a subject as the Alabama question, surely the same principles can hardly fail of accomplishing good in the settlement of the "labor question."

PREPARING FOR THE CONTEST.

From every city and every manufacturing district in the country comes the note of preparation upon the part of employes and manufacturers, and it is very evident that a conflict between the classes—employer and employe—is imminent, and may at any time break out. The power of the trades' unions is becoming too strong, and it must be broken; and to this end is directed private enterprise, capital, and legislation. What are our workmen doing? Are they, too, preparing for the contest? or will they suffer themselves to be caught napping? Are they reorganizing their unions—local, state and national? Let us have a thorough reorganizing and unification of all our unions. Let the workmen in every section of the Union—North, South, East and West—unite, and where there is no union, organize one, and march into line in the grand army of labor.

At the next meeting of the National Labor Union we hope to see a large gathering of the representative men of labor unions throughout the country, whether they come from the field, forge or bench.

Every union ought to send its delegate, for by the number of delegates will the strength of the Union movement throughout the country be judged.

And it is here the work of reorganization and unification should take place.

We see no reason why the farmers and persons engaged in agricultural pursuits should not unite themselves with the mechanics in their efforts to lift the toiler a step higher in the scale of civilization. The wants and necessities of the farmer and mechanic are alike. They are the INTEREST PAYING portion of the populace, and compose fully two-thirds of the people. They have all the toiling to do, while the other third—or idle class—live off what we produce; as an exchange truly says:—

"Now, the toilers toil on from youth to age, with no prospect of ever having anything gathered for old age, for sickness, or what is called a 'rainy day.' Their wages, when at work, merely keep them fed from hand to mouth, and when their strength is worked out their latter end is fringed with a poorhouse vista. So here is labor, the highest, the most valuable element in 'society,' condemned from youth to age as a recognized sort of slavery, which the laws dare not meddle with, for are not lawmakers composed chiefly of the idle faction? Labor, then, has no hope of elevation from the lawmakers. Labor must still pay all the taxes. Labor still live in dark, unwholesome dens and garrets, in back slums, and narrow, dirty lanes. Labor must still sleep three or four in one bed, five or six in one room. Labor must still rise with the lark, breakfast hastily upon a slice of butterless bread and a cup of milkless, sugarless coffee. Labor must delve away or hammer away all the day, and every day, and at the end of the week find himself about as rich as he was on Monday morning. Labor has a wife and family. Why not? His children increase in number, in size and in appetite. They want more food, more clothes, more everything, as they grow on and increase. The 'rent,' the 'doctor's bill,' the 'shop-keeper's bill,' the 'baker's' and the 'butcher's bill!' How is labor to meet those demands?"

By uniting and demanding a revision of our financial and commercial laws. The farmer, and all who surround him, feel the crushing weight of interest. He is bowed down with taxation, and sighs for relief. This relief can come only through united action. Let all join and push forward the unification of Labor.—Workingman's Advocate.

HIGH PRICES.

Prices have risen, are rising, and will continue to rise. Every one is conscious of this, and the enquiry on all hands is, What is the cause of a state of things so startling as to amount to a social revolution? People are finding out that money is not a thing of value in itself, but simply a representative of value, and that coins, whatever may be stamped on them, have only a relative worth. Years ago Sir Robert Peel asked, "What is a pound?" Well, it may at least be affirmed that a pound of our day is only worth about half as much as it was in his. With rents, coals, clothes, food, and necessaries and luxuries of all kinds at an advanced price, two hundred a year is worth little more than a hundred formerly was, and so on in proportion; and this fact having dawned on those most interested in making the discovery, they are beginning to act upon it with an earnestness which will turn society upside down.

Still the question remains, Why is everything so dear? Politicians are busy explaining it according to their party theories, the statisticians have entered the field with figures, and every one is ready to account for that not easily to be accounted for, even when all is said and done. Take coals, in England, for example. They have gone up to an extent wholly without precedent. Why? Several reasons are assigned. One is that the colliers, the hundred thousand in number, are masters of the situation, and will only work at their own prices, and for as many days in the week as they think consistent with the dignity of labor. This, of course, has its effect; but the rise of 6d. or 1s. on the part of colliers, even in conjunction with a decrease of produce, does not seem to warrant a rise in prices of from 5s. to 6s. a ton. Two other causes

are next dragged into the argument, first, the enormous extent of coal exportation; and secondly, the increase of activity in the iron trade. Well, doubtless both these points tell, but there is yet another cause for the effect, and that is the panic-consumption on the part of retail buyers. Every one is seized with the belief that coal will be at a prohibitory price during the coming winter, and so every one orders in as much as, by any possibility, he can afford to purchase. The demand being thus artificially in excess of supply, a rise in price is inevitable.

Another item in England is the high price of butchers' meat. Here again it is difficult to trace the causes of the evil, and here again they are complex. The Privy Council, with its "stamp it out" theory in reference to forms of cattle disease, and the consequent stoppage of supplies from abroad, has much to answer for. The disease itself is also to blame. The ever-increasing demand is one among other reasons which have induced the butchers to run up their prices; but here again the public have the matter entirely in their own hands. Many families have come to the conclusion to consume less butchers' meat, and the probability is that if this course were adopted to any great extent for a time, the natural result would be a decline in price.

It is only necessary to touch on these two points in relation to high prices. The whole tendency of things is toward dearth, to be compensated for to an extent by an increase of wages, and it is useless to talk of legislation or combination to bring things back to what they were ten years ago. But if people will only look this fact steadily in the face—if they will only convince themselves that money is not worth what it once was, and will never be so again, and see the necessity of adapting themselves to the altered state of circumstances, practising a little self-denial and exercising a little ingenuity, a beneficial result would soon be attained, and the welfare of the community considerably enhanced. Without legislation, combination or any other formal dealing with the matter, it is quite possible that individual effort may greatly mitigate the serious consequences of high prices.

LORD DERBY ON THE LABOR QUESTION.

English statesmen have had their best attention directed chiefly to social as distinct from diplomatic questions during the last ten years, and the two great political parties of the mother country now join issue on home rather than on foreign policy. The Alabama question, in its latest development, has shown us that, in the main, all parties are agreed as to the course which Great Britain should pursue, and the Opposition only blame the Government for the bungling manner in which the Washington negotiations were arranged, as it left open a question sufficient to jeopardize the whole affair. We augur well from this disposition to direct political intelligence to the solution of social problems, in which are bound up the chief well-being of the British people. Among the many social questions which are engaging the attention of leading Englishmen, that of the condition of the agricultural population claims no small prominence.

At a dinner of the Agricultural Association at Bury, near Manchester, Lord Derby has been expressing himself upon this topic. Some of the propositions he laid down commend themselves to our readers, especially in their application to the labor crisis through which Canada has lately passed. He says: "Masters have a right to get their labor as cheaply as they can; the employed have a right to sell their labor as dear as they can; and both have a perfect legal and moral right to combine for their several purposes, provided always that, in doing so, they do not molest or annoy those who refused to join." Those economies are sound, and are just such as we have all along argued for. The "moral right" has been on the side of the Trades' Unionists whom the managing-director of the "Globe" has arraigned, and for the future, the legal right will be on