

Ontario Workman

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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Labour Notes.

The iron manufacturers of the Cleveland District are taking preliminary measures for having the wages question reviewed, with a view to a reduction, by the Board of Conciliation and Arbitration.

The London engineers resolved, at a meeting held recently to ask a rise of 2s. per week on their wages, and if this is not conceded, to cease work in all the workshops on the 1st January.

The Greenock house-joiners agreed on Friday night to request an increase of wages from 1st April next; but a larger meeting is to be called before presenting the memorial, which asks payment of 3d. instead of 7d. per hour.

One thousand five hundred men, employed by Messrs. John Brown & Co., Sheffield, in the Bessemer steel department, have received notice of a reduction of 10 per cent. in their wages. The reason of this is that Continental makers are underselling English 10 per cent.

The strike in the central districts of Belgium has now terminated to the advantage of the workmen whose organization proved more powerful than the employers had anticipated. The assistance derived from societies in different parts of the country contributed greatly to bring this result, for the Belgium workmen are daily realizing the importance of helping each other throughout the whole country, instead of limiting their efforts to merely local struggles.

The example of the strike, or rather lockout, set by the housewives of Cassel, promises to be followed in many German towns. The women of Cassel, it may be remembered, indignantly at the extortion practised on the daily market, combined to taboo that market altogether, and now purchase butter, eggs, and all sorts of victuals elsewhere, wherever they can get them, or do without, till the market vendors shall reduce their prices to a fair standard. The women of Dortmund have now resolved to take the same course; moreover, in order to give greater force to a united effort, they have convoked a woman's congress to their city.

At a special meeting of the Machinists' and Blacksmiths' Union, No. 1, of Connecticut, held in Tyler's Hall, New Haven, on Dec. 27., the following gentlemen were elected to fill the offices for the ensuing year: Mr. James Mawn, President; George Hadley, Vice-President; John Fleether, Treasurer; George H. Thomas, Recording Secretary; John Bulger, Financial Secretary; James Minty, Conductor. This Union enters on the third year of its existence in a flourishing condition. Meetings: the second and fourth Thursdays of the month.

A meeting of the Leicester carpenters, was held on Monday evening December 1st, at the Temperance Hall, at which a goodly muster attended. The cause was well advocated by several members, which amounted to this:—About eight years ago, the standard wages here were 29s. per week of 5½ hours, which so remained until the commencement of 1871, when an agitation commenced for a reduction of time to 54 hours, and 6½d. per hour, amounting to only 3d. advance per week, namely 29s. 3d., which was gained after a struggle of two months. During the past summer, much dissatisfaction has been expressed, but no steps taken until about three months ago, when a meeting was held in the above place, which ended in an adjournment for three months. This meeting has decided to send to the employers for an advance of 1d. per hour, to commence on the first Saturday in April, 1874. A committee of six non-society men, three Amalgamated, and three General Union men were chosen to carry out the above object.

In Spain, notwithstanding the confusion attendant on the present grave political dissensions, the trades are still persevering in their efforts to obtain better wages. The federation of all the sections of the dyers which forms one of the branches of the "Union of the Spanish Manufacturers," has recently held a congress at San's in Catalonia. Here resolutions of a purely business character were at first discussed and adopted; all tending to knit the bonds of union more firmly. Another congress has also been held at Barcelona convoked by the federation of the "three steam sections." This is a name given by the Spaniards to the workmen employed in preparing, spinning, and weaving cloths, etc. The chief matter of debate related to the numerous strikes which have recently occurred in this trade and especially the strike of the men employed by a notorious Carlist manufacturer

named Puig y Llagostera. Twenty sections were represented at the congress and it was estimated that there was about 1,500 men on strike. The federation decided to support them to the best of its ability.

For the last six months the bottle makers of Bordeaux have been contending against their employers. These are the conditions for which they at first stipulated:—1. The right to leave work after giving a month's notice. That this rule be observed without the necessity of any written engagement. 2. That the ornamentation of the bottles should be paid extra. 3. That all bottles with a flaw should be immediately broken up. 4. The abolition of the £12 caution money which the workmen are now obliged to pay to the employers. They further demanded the regular payment of their salaries on the 10th of each month and an augmentation of two pence half-penny per hundred bottles. This proposed regulation was emphatically refused by the employers, and after much discussion and several meetings the workmen resolved to moderate their terms. They acquiesced in the necessity of written engagements, but insisted on suppressing a clause introduced by the masters to the effect that two workmen could work where it has always been customary to employ three. They offered to do ornamentation to the extent of three per cent. where they formerly worked to the extent of six per cent. without extra pay. They abandoned their clause with regard to the bottles with flaws. They also consented to continue paying the £12 caution money, and only demanded the increase of pay of 2½d. on bottles that hold 70 centilitres and upwards. Notwithstanding this very considerable modification of the original demand the employers have not yet shown the slightest disposition to effect a compromise.

THE FACTORY ACTS.

The reports of Messrs. Rodgrave and Baker, Inspectors of Factories, have just been issued for the half-year ending 30th April last, supplying us with a mass of interesting details as to the operations of the Acts limiting the hours of work of women and children in workshops and factories, besides statistics of the number and quality of the injuries to workers reported in their respective divisions. Taking the last mentioned portion of the report first, we find that in the half-year there were reported 2,731 accidents to females, and 909 to males, giving a total of 3,640. A large number of the injuries were sustained by young persons and children, namely 1,425 of the former and 866 of the latter. A comparatively small proportion of the accidents, however, were fatal, the total number of deaths being 154 males and 9 females; and of these, again, the greater portion were adults. Though the totals are high, Mr. Rodgrave shows that the proportion of accidents, in spite of the constantly increasing number of factories and workshops, is lessening. Comparing the accidents which occurred 20 years ago in cotton, woollen, worsted, flax, hemp, and other factories, the only kind of works which have been under the Factory Acts for more than ten years, we find that in 1850, though the number of accidents was slightly less—4,158 as compared with 4,230—than in 1870, the number of persons employed in the last mentioned year was 892,106, as compared with 596,082, and the proportion of accidents to persons employed 1 to 143 in 1850, against 1 to 210 in 1870. Thus, with constantly increasing occasions of accidents in the multiplication of workshops and workers, we have a steadily decreasing ratio in the number of accidents. This is doubtless due to the strict enforcement, by the inspectors, of the restrictions as to the fencing of machinery, restrictions which every day seems to be more necessary, in order to keep pace with the increased speed and complexity of manufacturing machinery. Mr. Baker observes that there is a tendency to revive the practice once so common and so dangerous, of allowing children to pass between fixed and traversing parts of machinery; but several prosecutions which he instituted will, he hopes, lessen the danger from that source. The most interesting parts of the reports are perhaps those which refer to the observance or non-observance, of the clauses of the Factory Acts with reference to the employment of women and children. The number of informations lodged during the six months was 800, and the number of convictions 595. Mr. Baker cannot say that in his division the restrictive clauses of the Act are fairly observed. The factories, he says, have been to some extent neglected, owing to the great increase in workshop visitation—an argument,

we should say, for an increase of the inspecting staff. The prosecutions embraced nearly all classes of violations of the Factory Acts; children employed without proof of physical fitness, or amongst dangerous machines; and children employed during the night or employed without proof of attendance at school. In some cases the children were found working after 8 o'clock at night on Saturdays; and, in one case, prosecution was instituted against a master for employing a child only eight years of age. No part of the report is more saddening to read than this. In one case we find a child ten years of age engaged in flower-making from 8.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.; in another, a boy of twelve, working full time in a manufacturing chemist's workshop in Manchester, and, of course, without any school attendance. Birmingham, and the black country generally, are spoken of as districts where there is a great neglect of education. Both masters and parents seem to connive at the systematic working of overtime. The number of children who are working half time is increasing rapidly in Manchester and Birmingham; but that would not matter so much, if the free portion of the time was directed to the education of the children. This, however, is by no means the case; and we trust our own School Board will take note of the fact that in Birmingham, where in 1869 the children working half-time were numbered by hundreds, at the close of the present year they will be numbered by thousands; and the vast proportion of them, though employed on a system providing for time to attend school, simply run wild when work hours are over. Mr. Baker also directs attention to milliners, whose case is peculiarly sad, from the fact that those who are victims of oppressive employers fear to come forward as prosecuting witnesses lest they should be dismissed from employment altogether. The workers, says Mr. Baker, when asked, uniformly protest against working more than ten and a half hours a day, for, with few exceptions, when these hours are exceeded the gains go entirely to the employers, who pay nothing for overwork, but set it off against short days in the dull season, when the aggregate hours of work are not more than seven or eight. The difficulty in the case of the milliners is to obtain convictions, owing as we have said to the reluctance of the girls to give evidence. Speaking on this point, Mr. Baker says:—"I have myself had so many letters and personal calls by milliners' girls who have been employed into the small hours of the morning, and on visitation have found the statements to be correct, that I could fain have endeavored to stop the practice by prosecutions; but such was the fear of dismissal that I have never yet found one daring to give evidence before the Justices in consequence of the certainty of being a marked character from day forwards, and out of employment as soon as it was convenient for her to be discharged." One of the most degrading instances of female night-work is given by Mr. Sub-Inspector Fitton in connection with the salt works at Droitwich, where the men work nearly nude, and where the women commence to work too often before six in the morning. Mr. Fitton reported a case to Mr. Baker as a matter for strict investigation, adding, however, "I cannot produce a witness, as every one of the twenty-four women employed at the six paces declared that she was not among the five stowed in the sheds at 5.25 in the morning. Put I can swear, and it is not denied, that I saw a woman stripped and ready for work at that hour, and all ran off and hid themselves as soon as I entered the shed; one of them had a salt-box in her hand. I should be glad," says the Sub-Inspector, "if the employment of women at salt work was altogether prohibited, as, although I by no means desire to see the employment of female labor in factories generally put an end to, I believe that the semi-nude working at salt factories is in every way bad for women, and it is especially injurious to nursing mothers and their infants, who are brought into the steaming sheds to be suckled." This is a picture of British female life that will match nearly anything that can be produced of the degradation of women in the most barbarous nations, and we commend it to the attention of Sir John Pakington, the member for the borough of Droitwich. From the two reports it is clear that a vast deal remains yet to be done for the protection of women and children in factories, and much, above all, to enforce the education of the half-time children. Birmingham, especially, is guilty with regard to the neglect of her young; but we have little fear that by the efforts of the energetic men who now control our School Board, our Factory

Inspectors will have a different story to tell during the next three years.—*English Paper.*

CURRENT EVENTS.

It is said that Mr. Disraeli proposes to make an American tour next Spring.

The Over Darwen Co-operative Society has a library of 2,400 volumes.

Mr. Nicholas Balline has established a co-operative store and bazaar at Kharkof, in Russia.

It appears that the co-operators of Rochdale, devoted £1,000 a year to educational purposes.

General Pavia, who led the troops into the halls of the Cortes, and dispersed that body, is to be tried by Court-Martial for rebellion.

The Spanish Government has been defeated by a majority of twenty on a test vote, and a new Cabinet, with Marshall Serrano as chief, has been formed.

The Duke of Edinburgh and his Russian bride, the Grand Duchesse Marie, will, after their arrival in England, occupy apartments in Buckingham Palace until the completion of Clarence House.

In Mayo county, Ireland, intense feeling has been excited by the suicide of a farmer named Hurst. He had been threatened with eviction, and to avoid ruin he drowned himself.

Contributions are being taken up in New York for the families of the late Professor Fronter, of Geneva, and the Rev. A. Carageo, of Madrid, members of the Evangelical Alliance, who were lost on the Ville de Havre.

Mr. Thomas Baring who died recently, has left one year's salary to all the clerks and servants in the employment of the firm of Baring Brothers. The sum which will have to be paid under this provision, is upwards of £40,000.

The Royal Society has made a grant to Professor Ferrier for the purpose of enabling him to conduct a series of experiments upon the brains of monkeys. Professor Ferrier will shortly submit a paper to the society embodying the results of his investigations.

Colonel Gordon, R. E., the English delegate on the Danube commission from Constantinople to Egypt, has accepted the offer made him by the Khedive to continue the exploration of Central Africa, begun by Sir Samuel Baker, and has started on his perilous journey.

The Russian General Kauffman is under the shadow of imperial displeasure for his manner of conducting the Khivan war, especially for his attack on the Turkomans, his premature publication of the treaty with Khiva, and his wasteful and corrupt administration in Turkestan.

Sir Lambert Loraine, Bart., R. N., commander of Her Britannic Majesty's war steamer Niobe, has received an address from British subjects resident in Central America, thanking him for the service he rendered his fellow-countrymen by the prompt measures he adopted against General Streber in Honduras.

We see it stated that the Allan steamers Polynesian and Scandinavian, in addition to the Sarmatius, formerly reported, have been chartered by the British Government to act as transports to the seat of war on the Gold Coast. The price to be paid for their services is given at £10,000 to each steamer.

The Peculiar people, an English sect, have again come into conflict with the law. Emma Barlow, of Plaistow, Essex, was taken sick, and trusted in the Lord, but failed to call a doctor. Her husband, who also belonged to the sect, would have summoned a physician had she requested it, and the coroner's jury on that ground exonerated him from criminal responsibility.

A young Frenchman of Manchester, N. H., met a deaf and dumb and friendless young lady from some where, and wooed and won her. She could not even write her name, but had to be fitted out with a temporary appellation to go through the marriage service with; and the husband only found out who she was the other day, after two years of remarkable quiet life.

The agents of the General Trans-Atlantic Steamship Company received a despatch yesterday announcing that the French Admiralty court has pronounced judgment in the Ville du Havre case, declaring the manoeuvre of the Ville du Havre to have been blameless, and holding the bad management on the part of

the Loch Earn to have been the cause of the disaster. Captain Surmount was exonerated by the court.

Steps are being taken, says a recent report of the Leeds Industrial and Co-operative Society, by the educational committee by means of lectures at the centre and various districts, by opening reading rooms, forming branch libraries, &c., to bring the co-operative education of the members on a level with and even superior to their material prosperity.

It is reported that the Hot Springs and Big Valley Indians, some eight hundred men, women and children, in Siskiyou county, California, are in danger of starvation in consequence of their vegetable means of subsistence being overrun by cattle; and we hear that the U. S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs has authorized a committee to act for the relief of these poor Indians.

Mr. J. Arch, the president of the Agricultural Laborers' Union, had an interview with Mr. Gladstone recently. According to a correspondent of the Leeds Mercury, the interview was at the Premier's request. Mr. Arch narrated his recent Canadian experiences, and informed Mr. Gladstone that the only way to stop the threatened exodus of laborers from that country is to concede household suffrage in counties, and to induce landowners by legislation or otherwise to improve cottages and grant leases of two or three acres of land on the same terms as are given to farmers.

Lord Aberdare recently distributed the prizes to the successful students of the School of Art at South Kensington museum, and in the course of his remarks took occasion to commend the establishment of such institutions as tending to promote the study of a higher standard of art throughout the country. He was much gratified that the Goldsmiths' company had out of its riches distributed sums of money to artists for the best designs, and during the last year it was noteworthy that nine of these prizes had been given. Out of these he was glad to find seven had been won either by students of this school or those who had been its students in former times.

THE FAMINE IN BENGAL.—The prospects of the spring crop are better, but the Tirthoot planters expect worse times than in 1866. There is distress in Sarun and Chumpanum, and the people are crowding to the Relief works in parts of Patna, Dinapore, and Rajshah, but not yet elsewhere. The Calcutta rainfall is 25 inches short. The native press takes a gloomy view of future prospects. English opinions are conflicting. Sir G. Campbell has admonished the zemindars to give help to their tenantry, and bestows praise upon three large landholders who have done so. The famine officially reported at Marwar and Jeyulmere.

The New Haven Union says:—The Rhode Island State Prison is rapidly taking rank as a manufacturing institution. Last year, it sold \$90,000 worth of manufactured articles, and the year before, \$82,000 worth. As the number of criminals was about the same in both years, it would naturally follow the increase in sales was owing to superior workmanship on the part of the prisoners. If the State would only offer a little inducement for crime, now and then, so as to materially increase the number of involuntary workmen under her control, she might do an immense thing with her prison trade. The suggestion is worth consideration.

The strikes of the American railway engineers, it now appears, are ended, or, with hardly an exception, are under the control of the several companies concerned. Now, would it not be well for the railway companies generally, and their engineers and other employes to hold council together and enter into some general agreement by which the interests of both sides will be secured with the interests of the public? Between capital and labor, surely, from all these disagreements, the rights and interests of both sides can be more cheaply secured by reciprocal concessions than by war.

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