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Hamilton, Oct. 22, 1863.

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THE CANADIAN

Illustrated News.

HAMILTON, DECEMBER 26, 1863.

H. GREGORY & Co. Proprietor.

TO OUR READERS, ONE AND ALL.—We hope you have already enjoyed a good old-fashioned Merry Christmas; and we do most cordially wish you a happy New Year. Show the youngsters our picture of Santa Claus and his surroundings, from a design by our own Artist, Mr. G. A. Binkert, which appears on our centre page this week.

CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN ENGLAND.

From a long, able, and interesting article in the last "London Quarterly Review," we make extracts on another page of our present number, which may serve to give our readers here some idea of the Co-operative industrial system recently inaugurated in England, which bids fair to attain ere long, an extent and influence far beyond the expectations of its original founders. That much ignorance and misapprehension prevail in England with reference to Canada is frequently and truly enough remarked. But it is also true, that a little better and more accurate acquaintance with the facts of the day in England would be desirable on the part of Canadians. To be sure most of us here, especially those who were born on the other side of the great ocean, and who remember the spot in the "old country" from which we came, think we know all about England, or Ireland, or Scotland, as the case may be, and that we do not require any telling. It may be remarked, however, how much we all are, unconsciously perhaps, the subjects of a certain tendency, very powerfully and constantly operative upon us, strong to carry us along with it, and yet so subtle that we scarcely know of our being carried. The tendency to which we refer, is that in virtue of which we are so apt to think of England, not as it is, but as it was. It is particularly to be observed in native Canadians of the "old settler" variety, with whom traditions of the past, (as far as England is concerned, though perhaps in no other respect whatever,) stand largely in lieu of accurate acquaintance with the present. Take almost any native Canadian who can fairly be regarded as a proper type or specimen of the mass of the people, and draw from him what you can of his ideas of England and the English. In a

vast majority of cases you will find that the England which rises up before his mental vision at the mention of the word, is not the England of Queen Victoria's reign. It is most likely something very different in many respects, the England of the time of George the Third, when the "Fourth of June" was kept as the national holiday—the old Provincial "training day," as it was called in Canada. To say that the people of the Province are ignorant or uninformed of the immense and sweeping changes of the last thirty years or so, would be literally incorrect. But it is certain that in the case of but very few here amongst us is the bare knowledge of these changes as matters of fact, accompanied by an appropriate realization in the mind of their effect and significance. And if this be true of political changes, which are heralded abroad as if on the four winds of heaven, much more is it true of those comparatively quiet and silent social changes, at once the result and the evidences of genuine progress among the toiling millions of our mother country. The truth is, that both Canada and England, (speaking of the people of each as a whole,) are sorely in need of light and knowledge concerning each other. After all, it is scarcely doubtful that the advantage in this respect lies with Canada; and we opine there are but few who are equally and well acquainted with matters on both sides of the sea, who will not pronounce that England is better known in Canada than Canada is in England; a fact nowise difficult of explanation, when we consider how many old country people there are here, and how few Canadians there. Both departments of knowledge require very much to be cultivated—the one here, and the other there—as is sufficiently obvious. As to which of the two the Canadian journalist is more particularly called upon to address himself to, the question may be said to carry its own answer with it. It is to Canadians mainly that he speaks; and his proper task is to elucidate whatever is most specially needful for them to know. Not the mere dissemination of knowledge, simply as such, but the diligent cultivation of that sort which is most noticeably wanting, should be his principal aim. Towards the making up of that which is, in mathematical language, the complement or other part yet lacking to complete a symmetrical whole, should his energies be directed. Believing, as we do, that a proper acquaintance with the mother country and its people, their ways and works, is a much needed complement to the existing and rather incomplete sum of popular knowledge here, we shall endeavor to make this journal an efficient vehicle of information for the people of Canada concerning England. And in accordance with the "principle of selection" just recommended, we shall make our contributions to the general sum, as much as possible complementary to what others than ourselves are mostly furnishing. What they appear to us to omit, we shall chiefly endeavor to supply.

A great social change, of which the Co-operative industrial system, described in the *London Quarterly*, is but a very small part,—to a certain extent an *outside indication* merely,—has been for some time progressing, almost unheeded, among the "skilled artisans," as they are sometimes called, of England. The change itself may be said to consist in a better and sounder appreciation, on the part of the workmen, of the true means by which they may legitimately better their condition. Thirty years ago, and even only twenty years ago, they were largely actuated by the conviction that political power and privileges were to be sought as the sure and only cure for all the evils of toil and poverty together; of hard work and little pay. That they should have erred in their first attempt to comprehend the exigencies of a complicated national, social, and political situation, which was really a new one, not only to themselves, but to the world, need not be wondered at. It is scarcely to be imputed to them as a fault, that they failed to understand that which puzzled the wisest heads and the best educated minds in the three kingdoms. What marvel that plain, hard-working men should blunder, when noblemen and gentlemen, Cabinet Ministers and professed political economists, ran full tilt against each other with contradictory solutions of the most perplexing problems, and incompatible remedies for acknowledged evils. But mark the result. After many errors, and many blunders, they begin now to get on the right path, by

dint of the stern lessons of experience operating on that hard, sound common sense, which is what we may call a bottom characteristic of the British workman. Not without sacrifice, however, was this attained. It took two—yes, we may say it took three generations to learn the lesson. But it has been learned at last, on the part of numbers already, and is now efficiently learned by numbers more in every succeeding year. That lesson is, that not by political changes, so much as by an individual, moral, social change amongst themselves, is their condition in life to be improved. The spread of this conviction amongst them is the true explanation of the apparent indifference of the masses to what is called Parliamentary Reform; an indifference wondered at by some, who think to find the life and history of a nation wholly in speeches of honourable members, and articles in "leading journals." Of the real force and tangible results of this conviction, let the large amounts accumulated in the Savings' Banks previous to the cotton famine, the general good behaviour evinced under that calamity, and the success of the prosperous, even wealthy, co-operative societies, of which the *Quarterly* tells us, bear witness. The importance of the existence and operation of these societies can hardly be over-rated. Their importance does not so much lie in the mere numbers or accumulations of their members,—though these are rapidly enough increasing,—but in the fact of the growing ability and competence in the management of their own affairs, of working men; of an increasing internal, moral and social force, of which the societies are but an outward and visible sign. Here is the real vital point in the whole matter, which most deserves to be considered. Not so much what the societies are, as what their existence and prosperity shew the men themselves to be, is the feature in the case, which may and will most strongly impress itself upon the mind of the moralist, the philanthropist, and the statesman.

The elaborate consideration and hearty approval of the Working Men's Co-Operative Societies, by the leading organ of Conservative and aristocratic opinion in England, is something worthy of more than a passing notice. To be sure, the *Quarterly* is careful to inform its readers that its present attitude is quite in accordance with what it maintained in former days; and that it never confounded honest working societies with bands of communistic swindlers. It even takes comfort, and perhaps on good grounds too, from the anticipation expressed by it, that the people will become more and more Conservative in politics, as they rise in social standing and increase in property and wealth. Very clearly does the *Quarterly* perceive that the rise of large numbers of working men to a certain degree of pecuniary independence, must be followed by the attainment of actual *bona fide* power in the State; not the sham which is sometimes conceded as a blind merely, but the thing itself. Seeing before him a certain something which cannot be evaded or turned back, the Conservative reviewer neither shrinks from it as dangerous, nor denounces it as impracticable. He boldly accepts it, not as inevitable merely, but even desirable. A Conservatism of the People, a vision brighter, we venture to say, than most of his party in England have for a long time indulged in, looms up before him as the sure result of the upward social movement which he so heartily encourages. When working men come to be shareholders in the capital stock of the country they will cease to be radicals and revolutionists. So charmed is he with these anticipations, that he fairly feasts his eyes upon the delightful prospect. Mean while, it is perhaps safe to say, that to the majority of the working men themselves, the *Quarterly* will appear rather in the light of a new convert than of an old friend. But let this be as it may, the introduction and successful operation of that little heaven which shall yet go far to lighten the whole mass of British society, may be looked upon as a most remarkable fact, and confirmed by authority that, in this case at least, need not be questioned.

A great and palpable fact has been proved, namely, that there are in England hard-headed working men, who are capable of transacting their own business, and of managing the same, even on a tolerably large scale, with ability and discretion. That they will in due time proceed to take a hand in affairs of more public importance need not be doubted; though every one must in the meantime commend them for beginning at the right end first. And all true