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MONTREAL, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1891.

MEETINGS.

CENTRAL TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL OF MONTREAL.

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Meets in the Ville-Marie Hall, 1623 Notre Dame street, the first and third Thursdays of the month. Communications to be addressed to Jos. RENAUD, Corresponding Secretary, 198 Amherst street.

RIVER FRONT ASSEMBLY,

No. 7628.
Rooms K. of L. Hall, Chaboulliez square. Next meeting Sunday, Nov. 29, at 2.30. Address all correspondence to J. WARREN, Rec. Sec., P. O. Box 1456.

DOMINION ASSEMBLY,

No. 2436 K. of L.
Meets every FRIDAY evening at Eight o'clock in the K. of L. Hall, Chaboulliez square. Address all communications to H. J. BRINDLE, R.S., No. 11 St. Monique street.

PROGRESS ASSEMBLY,

No. 3852, K. of L.
Meets every First and Third Tuesday at Lomas' Hall, Point St. Charles.

BUILDERS' LABORERS' UNION.

Meets in Ville Marie Hall, 1623 Notre Dame street, every TUESDAY at 8 P. M. Address all communications to WM. JARVIS, Secretary, 111 St. Dominique street.

BLACK DIAMOND ASSEMBLY

1711, K. of L.

Meets next Sunday, in the K. of L. Hall, Chaboulliez square, at 7 o'clock.

Address all communications to WM. ROBERTSON, 7 Archambault street.

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THOUGHTS ON THE LABOR QUESTION.

Passages From Unpublished Chapters by Richard Jefferies.

Among the manuscripts left behind him by the late Richard Jefferies were several pages of a projected work on the labor question. He does not appear to have finished the work, nor is it clear to what definite conclusion, if any, it would have tended; but the spirit in which he took the subject up is sufficiently clear from the introductory pages, some portions of which have been placed in our hands for publication. These will be read with interest, says the Pall Mall Gazette, alike for the subject of them and for their author. "In writing this book, I am influenced," he says in his preface, "by no political bias. I take no interest in politics, and belong to no party or political body. I am simply a student of nature and human life, and I paint only what I see; the others must draw their conclusions."

CHAPTER I.

THE "LABOR QUESTION."

It is everywhere. That is the prime difficulty with this "Labor Question." You cannot meet it, fight it, even define it, because it is everywhere—all round, above, beneath. You cannot fix it to one spot, or one matter, and so discuss it conclusively, for innumerable links and threads bind and weave it in with every phase of life. Therefore in writing this phrase enclose it always with inverted commas to indicate that it is a conventional term used to express an unknown quantity—the x in the equation of the world.

If a man goes into business it confronts him on the threshold, and threatens him from the first entry in his ledger till the pen falls from his stiffened fingers at three score and ten. The ceaseless seesaw of capital and labor interferes with calculation and destroys all certainty. The boilers are strong and in good order, the engine works smoothly but the engine-driver—there is the terror and the trouble. It is literature in which a special interest is taken! Well, the major part of books and papers are carefully flavoured to suit the swaying opinions of the multitude, the masses who work. It is art! The palette and even the sculptor's chisel must pander to the passing taste, and are now to find their noblest aim in educating the great unwashed. Is it political? The hammer and trowel knock so loudly at the statesman's mahogany door that he must listen perforce. Is it religion? The pickaxe is already laid to the foundation of the church tower.

On the other hand, this omnipotent power breathes its influence over the whole world: from Europe to America, America to Asia, Africa, Australia, the Pacific Isles. The history of the last hundred years, not the mere bare chronicle of the movements of kings and armies, but the cause of the heavings and throbbings of the nations, has been written in blood by the workman's tool. The future, growing as inevitably out of the present as the tree from the acorn, will be shaped by the voices sounding from the bench, the mine, and the plough.

CHAPTER II.

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF CAPITAL.

Throw a golden sovereign upon the mahogany table, and listen. The circular disc of heavy metal rebounds and rings clear as a bell as a bell calling slaves to obey the behest of its owner. They crowd in troops holding up their hands: true, it may be only sufficient to engage one, but then while you retain it each individual among the thousand aspirants thinks he may be that fortunate one. And this is part of the power of money, however small the sum.

Now, returning to the sovereign which lies quiescent glittering on the dark mahogany, it is clear that it ought not to be permitted to remain thus, but must, if we believe the political economist, be made to add its atom of weight to the great pendulum which drives the clock of the world. It must buy something, even if it be only 5 per cent., a shilling additional per annum, and whatever that something may be—spend it, invest it in whatever manner—it will be the equivalent of human labor. When you spend it you purchase a man or woman; though possibly for a few hours only. Still these are for the time being yours absolutely. This is the primary step in the investigation; even if you pass it across the bank counter "to my credit" still you have bought somebody, somebody will come to the bank and say, "I want it—lend it to me," and that man really works for you to pay you your 5 per cent.

The only way to escape this inevitable result is to bury it, as the ancients did, in jars and caves.

It follows that the more money there is in circulation the more work is done, and the greater is the sum of human happiness according to the political economist. Perhaps it may presently dawn upon the mind of some one that the increasing protest of the rising "Labor Question" denies this, his proposition; which in effect is the proposition of Capital.

Meantime put the sovereign into circulation, and buy somebody.

Two pence to a boy to grovel on the dirty pavement and black your shoes. For five minutes your most obsequious slave.

Two shillings six pence for breakfast at the restaurant for eggs and ham and coffee, and a penny the waiter. This is more complicated, because you have bought not only the cringing waiter, the restaurant keeper, the cook, the servants, even the ultimate landlord, but also the agriculturist who fatted the ham, whose fowls produced the eggs.

Three pence to the omnibus conductor, buying him, the driver, and the whole body of shareholders: and time and space into the bargain.

Two shillings at the railway bookstand for a book while you wait for the train, buying the author, publisher, printer, compositor, "devils," and all.

One penny the newspaper, and the same process is repeated, including a fraction of the correspondent at the distant seat of war.

Five shillings railway ticket, the equivalent guard, porter, stationmaster, driver, plate-layer, &c.

Ten shillings for an article of merchandise to sell again, buying those who produced it, and those to whom you will sell it, since they must travel to re-sell and get their profit.

Or £1 in a lump to a creature decked in scarlet and fine linen, painted, soft of speech—but hush! That is buying a soul. This is absurd, says the political economist, there is no possible comparison between legitimate trade and the traffic in vice. In reply, stern fact points to 30,000 women avowedly earning a livelihood in this way in London alone: assuredly they do not do it from choice. They attend on Capital: squandered if you like.

FEMALE ROTHSCHILD.

She Makes Much Money and Gets Married and Divorced at Will.

Chief An-na-hootz is dead, James Jackson won't marry the widow so as to be chief, and Emaline Baker, the Princess Thom, has raised a ruction at Yakutat. Nothing in all this to startle the world, but to the Sitka Indians it is just as important as a revolution in France would be to Frenchmen, for their tribal government has gone to sticks and they are plunged into political anarchy.

An-na-hootz was eighty-two years old and living with his thirteenth wife when he died. He was a convert to the Greek church, a firm friend of the whites and the first of his race to take medicine and other precautions as old age came on. The rule among the Sitkas has been that when man or woman grew old and incapable of great activity and endurance, he or she lay down and waited for death, dying easily of inanition as a rule. So it was rare to find a Sitka over sixty. The rule of succession is for the chief's oldest nephew to succeed him, but he must marry the chief's widow. Now, the widow is seventy years old and as unhandy as aged squaws generally, while the nephew Jackson is, as his name implies, a converted Indian, besides being young, handsome and possessed of a pretty wife. So he won't take the widow, and there is no king over the Sitkas.

They are superior to Alaska Indians in general, have a rather pretty village and cattle, and the richest woman in it is the Princess Thom. She is a regular female Rothschild, owning about \$15,000 worth of stuff, most of which was acquired by her own activity and shrewdness as a trader. Some years ago she married a man named Thom, considerably her junior, but after awhile decided that she preferred his younger brother, who was the handsome Indian in the settlement—a regular aboriginal Apollo. So she divorced the older Thom and gave him her sister, then married the younger, whom she literally loaded with jewelry and elegant hunting gear. But the young squaws delighted to make her jealous and the young husband suddenly died. Soon after her sister died just as suddenly, and then she remarried her original Thom. Of course there is "talk." The Greek priests protested, but no official made inquiry; the princess has her way, and so there is a society scandal as well as a "political situation."

LONDON'S LABOR PAPERS.

Some of the Journals Which Direct Workingmen's Ideas.

The working people of London are generally well represented in the journalistic field. There are papers that represent all shades of opinion, from the extreme individualism of the Commonwealth to the State socialism of Justice, the organ of the Fabrian societies. But Labor papers in London have come and gone just as they have elsewhere.

The Labor World, published and edited by Michael Davitt, was one of the best labor papers ever published in the English metropolis. Its total issue was thirty-nine numbers, thirty-two of which were edited by Mr. Davitt, who finally resigned the editorial chair on account of ill-health. The Labor World had, before its discontinuance, a very large circulation, but nevertheless was financially a failure. A short time after the discontinuance of the Labor World, a new paper was launched called the Worker's Cry, published by a stock company and edited by ex-Commissioner, Frank Smith. The first issue of the paper was dated May 2 of this year. It immediately took possession of the field left vacant by the Labor World, and up to date has met with phenomenal success. It consolidates next issue with the Leader, and will be known as the Leader and Worker's Advocate. Frank Smith, who will edit the new paper, will be remembered as the ex-Commissioner of the Salvation Army. Mr. Smith did not agree with the methods of Gen. Booth, and resigned his position in the colonial office. Another well known paper in London is Reynolds's Weekly, and its continued war on vice of every kind, its repeated exposure of frauds in public affairs, its gallant fight for the seating of the member of Parliament for Northampton, Mr. Bradlaugh, constitute a record of which the Radicals of London are justly proud. The People's Press is an illustrated labor paper of sixteen pages, edited by Shaw Maxwell. It was printed for over a year, and had to suspend about two months ago for lack of support. The Labor World, Worker's Cry and People's Press were all sixteen page papers and gave all the foreign and home news. But for some reason the workingmen of London failed to support them sufficiently to justify their continuance. The Commonwealth and Justice are meagrely supported and only four page weeklies.

Some Curious Ideas About Hell.

A curious article appears in the Nineteenth Century on the various ideas of hell that have prevailed in different ages. An original idea was the result of the speculative inquiries of Jean Hardouin. This most learned fool maintained that the rotation of the earth was due to the efforts of the damned to escape from their central fire. Climbing up the walls of hell, they caused the earth to revolve as a squirrel its cage, or a dog the spit. There is, moreover, no clock in hell. Bidaime represents a tortured being rising from his bed of appalling agony, and asking, "What is the time?" And a dull voice out of the darkness answers, "Eternity." Of devils, Gulelmus Parisiensis has found, on an exact computation, that there are 44,435,556, but it has been said that they vastly exceed that number. John Weir, a physician of Cleves, convinced that this world is peopled by crowds of devils, wrote in 1576 a book of some thousand folio pages, which is one of our chief sources of information on the subject. He makes 72 princes of devils, with 7,405, 926 subjects. By Europeans the devil is commonly painted black. The Africans prefer a white devil.

Absentee Landlordism on Long Island.

Union College, of Schenectady, owns land in Long Island city valued at \$2,000,000, or about one-tenth the valuation of the entire city. The government of Long Island city has been so extravagant that taxes are enormously high, and the college is forced to sell. If taxes were confined to land values, it is easy to see that this would result in a net gain to the inhabitants, notwithstanding the extravagant public expenditures; for no one could afford to buy, except to improve. But as the taxes fall upon improvements as well as land, the extermination of this great corporate landlord is offset by the taxation menace to improvers.

The striking French miners have agreed to submit the difficulty to arbitration.

Cheap Labor.

A question worthy of the consideration of practical manufacturers is whether cheap labor is more profitable than well paid labor. My experience has convinced me that the smaller the wages the less incentive there is to produce on the part of the laborers. It is the man who works cheaply that is always watching the movements of the clock and for him the fingers seem to travel too slowly. In the days of Southern slavery it was found necessary to hire watchers to keep the slaves awake. The man who is paid low wages never gives a passing thought in connection with the use of supplies and the saving which could be effected for his employer by reasonable economy in this direction. No; instead of trying to be economical he is invariably on the outlook for a situation where he can get more pay. The goods that have been destroyed and the orders that have been cancelled through imperfect work resulting from the employment of poorly paid workmen would amount in value to millions of dollars if the sum total could be ascertained. Cheap labor often turns out to be dear labor in the end. It is the well paid laborer who has a contented mind and the interest of his employer at heart, who uses the strictest economy in supplies, spares no effort in endeavoring to obtain the greatest amount of quality possible out of quantity of material given him to manufacture.

This is the man who is constantly doing his utmost for his employer in the hopes of increasing the figures on the income side of his ledger. Then again well paid labor is profitable in many ways. For instance we assume that the wage workers of the United States receive daily in wages \$9,000,000, and that the pay roll was increased \$10,000,000, it would mean 10 per cent. more consumption, or thereabouts of all kinds of manufactured products, such as boots and shoes, hats, clothing of all descriptions and other articles necessary to make life comfortable. This is where the beneficial feature of trades unions is plainly seen advantage, as their principal object is to increase wages whenever the industrial condition of the market warrants such action. In this way not only consumption is increased, by increasing the purchasing power of the laborers, but profits are enhanced, employers and operatives who were formerly unemployed would find employment owing to the increased demand for goods, putting all idle machinery in motion. Trades unions are performing a great work toward elevating mankind, and should be encouraged in the efforts they are making to put forward the car of progress and civilization.

The Unemployed.

The Rev. Edward Everett Hale expressed in the Christian Revier for November this country by the analogies of Europe. There they are carrying their Old Man of the Sea, and we have an idea that because they are carrying theirs we must be carrying ours. This is not true. America has no surplus population, and, within any which it is worth while to talk about, will not have any surplus population. We have no need of Lady Bountifuls, we have no need of gracious condescension from class to another class. All that we need to give to everybody in America the power to subdue the world which the good wants him to occupy. We need a "highly to resolve" that the civilization America shall go forward and go upward the work of the people who are in America and who are going to come into it. The sentiment is noble enough but springs from a misapprehension of facts that is apt to lead to false conclusions. Statistics show that, to put it low, two and a half million in this country are unemployed.

They are not a surplus population? The distinguished essayist might say, "no, employment could be given to them, the land large enough to accommodate all of them. True, and there is the rub. The so-called European surplus population is not "surplus" than our unemployed. It does not contain one half the population could house in comfort. The reason Europe has a surplus population is the same that causes the unemployed to be so numerous here. Both countries are afflicted with the same incubus, both have their Man of the Sea—the Capitalist system.

Young Mitchell says that Slavin in Sullivan's class. He says Sullivan get into fine shape for a fight.