

One of the strongest incentives to an undue love of amusement especially to young men in the middle and upper ranks of society lies in example. There is wisdom in the proverb "As the auld cock craws the young one learns." And it is not at all surprising, however to be lamented, that the Ball room and the Theatre and other kindred places should possess so many attractions to their inexperienced and susceptible minds, when they know that their parents in this respect are under the same influences and cherish the same predilections as themselves, and is it reasonable to expect that there will in ordinary cases be wisdom and moderation on the part of the young, when there is folly and extravagance on the part of the old?

Water cannot, according to the laws which govern it, rise above its level, but it descends to a lower plane with a speed according to its momentum, and so when our sons seem to prefer pleasure to wit and amusement to employment and run at the last into every excess without restraint and with perverse rapidity, we may weep, but we need not wonder, for we ourselves supplied the momentum.

Another incentive to an undue love of amusement lies in too long business hours. It is a matter of thankfulness indeed that in this Province the hours of labour are not excessive either in city or in country. At least I believe so except in a very few instances. But the experience of older people should furnish us with a guide as to the regulation of the hours of labour. Society with us is plastic,—we may mould it as we please. Its plasticity moreover has not yet begun to harden. There are no hereditary prejudices as to labour, to uproot, no habits of life hoar with the age of centuries to overcome, no vested rights of feudalism to part with. The employer and the employed stand to each other in fresh and healthful and simple relationship, vastly different indeed from what they were till of late in our Fatherland and in all the older countries, and which down till this very hour present the hugest difficulties to the due regulation of the hours of labour. We know nothing of all this. We ought not and we shall not if we govern ourselves by the teachings of History. Yes, we may yet mould our social state as we please and one of the finest phases into which it can be cast would be short hours of labour for every day, and the half-holiday every Saturday afternoon. I plead for this modification.