

The Echo
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MONTREAL, November 15, 1890.

THE ECHO is mailed to subscribers at a distance every Friday evening, and delivered in the city early on Saturday. Parties not receiving their paper regularly should communicate with the office.

A STRIKE AMONGST THE DOCTORS.

"Doctors differ" is an old saying, but in a little matter recorded elsewhere in our columns to-day there appears to exist a singular unanimity amongst them. According to a despatch the whole of the medical staff of the Protestant Hospital in Ottawa have resigned, owing to the dismissal of one of their number—Dr. Rogers—by the Board of Governors. The cause of dismissal is not given, but it is presumably a personal one between the governors and the doctor who woke up one morning to find his usefulness gone. However, the gentleman in question has the sympathy of his colleagues, and this is, no doubt, a source of consolation to him. Curiously enough a great number of strikes amongst the trades result from the application of the same principle, a specimen of which we had on the wharf here the past summer. A workman, otherwise without reproach, renders himself obnoxious to the boss through being a member of a trades organization and, at the first favorable opportunity, is discharged. His comrades, smarting under a sense of the injustice of the act and restless under the feeling of whose turn is to come next, demand the reinstatement of the injured party under the alternative of a general strike. This, of course, is "y-ranny," "dictation," etc. "Can't a man employ whom he may?" will be asked, and with some show of reason, too. But if, after he is employed, the workman finds it necessary, for his own interest, for the protection of his labor and in order to the better gain the full market value for such, to organize with his fellows, has the employer right or justice on his side when he discharges that workman? The answer is no. Yet how frequently does discharge follow on the heels of admission to a trades union, the boss protesting meanwhile that unionism has nothing to do with the discharge at all. But in most cases the excuse is so flimsy and the alleged misconduct so trifling that the real reason is patent to everybody. When such a case occurs the man's fellow-workmen are justified in standing by him in his extremity, and are in honor bound to every lawful act to have his wrongs righted. "Injury to one is the concern of the whole," is a maxim that appears to find favor with the medical profession of Ottawa, and it is to be hoped that their emphatic protest against the dismissal of Dr. Rogers will have its effect upon the governing body of the hospital. A "strike" among the professions is rarely heard of, although, as we have said, it often occurs on just

such a question of honor and principle in the ranks of skilled and unskilled labor.

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

A case under the Employers' Liability Act just decided in the Court of Session, Edinburgh, has given rise to a good deal of unfavorable comment in the Scotch newspapers, and it is likely that amendments to the Act will be demanded by the Trades Unionists at the next session of the British Parliament. The reading of some portions of the Act is rather ambiguous and the extent of liability is not too clearly defined. The case in question was that of a miner who sued the Lanemark Coal Company for damages for the death of his son from injuries received while engaged at work under direction of one of the Company's foremen. The action was first taken in the Sheriff Court, the Sheriff-Substitute finding in favor of the defenders, on the ground that the pursuer had failed to prove fault on their part. This decision was reversed by the Sheriff-Principal and now the higher court has upset the decision of the Sheriff. Considerable surprise has been manifested at the last mentioned decision, and as a specimen of newspaper comment we quote from the Scottish Leader, which says: "On the face of the facts, it would appear to any layman of common sense that the case was one in which the employers ought to be held liable. The business of propping pit-roads, especially when they have been allowed to get into bad condition, is a notoriously dangerous one, and if workmen are not to be guaranteed compensation for possible injury to life or limb while doing work of this kind, it is difficult to understand how the Employers' Liability acts can ever be of practical benefit at all. Some more precise definition of the circumstances under which employers are responsible is imperatively needed, both for the proper protection of women and for the avoidance of litigation."

With the death, a short time ago, of Thomas Murphy, an Irish musician, in an American hospital, a sad romance has faded away. It is twenty years since a sensation was caused in English society by the clandestine marriage of Lady Blanche Noel, the lovely daughter of the Earl of Gainsborough, with a young organist, Thomas Murphy, whose only resources were good looks, musical talent, and a lively temperament. Murphy was the son of an Irish peasant, and the Earl would not forgive his daughter, who had married beneath her rank. The young couple came to America, and there for many years they gained a scanty livelihood, he teaching music and she writing for magazines and papers. The name of Lady Blanche Murphy became a familiar one in American current literature, and as her husband became an invalid winner for many years the chief bread winner of their little home among the New Hampshire hills. Both shrank from notice, and bore their hardships without complaint or appeal for assistance. At last Lady Blanche herself fell ill with a fatal disease, which finally caused her death eight years ago. Her devoted husband struggled on, but at last disease and poverty did their work, and death released the unfortunate.

It will be seen from an advertisement in another column that a public meeting is called for Tuesday evening next, in the Weber Hall, to select a gentleman to put forward as a candidate for Mayor. We trust there will be a good attendance of citizens of all classes, and that those who have candidates to propose will be on hand to do so. The public will then have time to decide upon their qualifications and fitness for the office. Workingmen especially should make it a point to be present to urge their claims upon candidates. Better facilities for voting

is urgently needed, as under the present system workingmen are limited to one hour in the middle of the day. They are often swindled out of their vote by the polls being purposely blocked by the tactics of ward politicians at that particular time, and this must be remedied. The polls should be kept open until eight o'clock in the evening, when all would have a chance to deposit their ballot. There are other necessary reforms needed, such as the time of meeting of the Council and the readjustment of the property qualification, and their adoption will very likely be urged at this meeting.

Now that the London dockers are being attacked in many quarters with the object of showing that they are unworthy of their hard won victory of a year ago, a letter from Cardinal Manning to the Melbourne Trades' Hall Council, which is published in the Australian papers, is valuable as bearing favorable testimony to the maligned dock laborer. His Eminence surely is entitled to speak with authority on the matter, and after praising the conduct of the men during the great strike, he significantly adds: "They well deserved the generous and abundant help that came to them from Australia." This, be it noted, was written comparatively recently.

The Council of the London Liberal and Radical Union has passed a resolution declaring in favor of the Government and municipalities setting a good example as employers by adopting, where practicable, an eight hours' day. The subject will, no doubt, be thoroughly threshed out at the approaching meeting of the National Liberal Federation. As a consequence of the passing of the resolution, Mr. George Howell, M.P., has resigned from the executive committee of the Council, being opposed to all legislative interference with the hours of adult labor, but it is more than likely he will be induced to reconsider his resignation.

In another column will be found Mr. Helbronner's reply to the manifesto addressed to the workingmen of this city by the City Treasurer. A perusal of Mr. Helbronner's letter must convince any impartial mind that he has not, by any means, the worst of the argument, and that there are hidden matters which require to be revealed, and assertions made that have to be disproved by facts and figures before the public will be satisfied, or that Mr. Robb's ingenious appeal will have the effect hoped for it. Mr. Helbronner promises a further instalment by way of reply to Mr. Robb's personal attack upon himself.

The death sentence upon Birchall was carried out yesterday morning within the precincts of the Woodstock jail. The unfortunate man went through the trying ordeal with wonderful composure, not the slightest tremor of his body being visible while the hangman was making his preparations upon the gallows. There are comparatively few men who believe the execution was otherwise than just, the murder being of an exceptionally deliberate nature with no extenuating circumstances accompanying it.

The Special Water Tax Committee met one day this week, examined a couple of witnesses, and then adjourned. At this rate of going the public can feel certain that some kind of a result will be arrived at in the course of four or five years.

Public Meeting OF CITIZENS
is hereby called in the WEBER HALL, on **TUESDAY EVENING NEXT,** At EIGHT P.M., for the purpose of publicly nominating a **Candidate for the Mayoralty**

BIRCHALL HANGED.

THE PRISONER'S LAST HOURS ON EARTH.

Sad Parting With His Wife--He Dies "Game."

WOODSTOCK, Ont., Nov. 13.—This was a busy day about Woodstock jail, the scene of the judicial tragedy to be enacted at 9 a.m. to-morrow. The sheriff's officers were astir early in the morning superintending the erection of the scaffold and arranging other preliminaries for the execution. The hotels are crowded with newspaper reporters, and every incoming train adds to the number of correspondents from abroad. It is estimated that there will be fifty pressmen here at the final scene to-morrow.

Thomas Ratley, the hangman, arrived in town on the 10.30 train this morning, and was driven at once to the jail, occupying a seat alongside the cab driver. He alighted at the jail, hurriedly pulled the bell, and the turnkey enquired, "Are you the man?" Ratley nodded an affirmative, and the big iron gate swung open to receive him. This afternoon Ratley tested the scaffold with the 350 pound weight, and left everything in working order before he came down town.

Birchall, although repeatedly urged by his wife to make a full confession of his doings on the memorable 17th of February last, refuses to gratify her desire. He still asserts that he did not actually do the shooting, but it appears that this does not satisfy Mrs. Birchall's desire for a full and frank confession of what transpired after her husband and Benwell left Buffalo. Mrs. Birchall spent several hours in the doomed man's cell last night, and it was after midnight when Rev. Mr. Wade left the jail. His spiritual ministrations have had an effect on Birchall, but to what extent is only a matter for conjecture now.

It is learned that the Attorney-General has decided not to allow Birchall's body to be handed over for interment to his wife, so the remains will be buried in the jail yard.

Mrs. Birchall had her final interview with her husband at the jail this evening. Shortly after seven o'clock she left the hotel in a cab, accompanied by her sister, Mrs. West-Jones, and drove directly to the jail. The interview lasted until after midnight. The parting was most affectionate. Mrs. Birchall was then driven back to the hotel, after which she was given an opiate, when she fell asleep, and is now resting quietly. After she left, the Rev. Mr. Wade, Birchall's spiritual adviser, entered and remained with the prisoner the balance of the night.

When the hangman arrived this morning and began superintending the erection of the scaffold Birchall saw men at work, and remarked that it was a very weird-looking structure, also that it seemed a very crude affair. He noticed the hangman and enquired jocularly if that was "the professor." He took no breakfast, and did not get up till about 2 p.m., having remained until that hour asleep, or in a state bordering on sleep. Then he ate a hearty dinner, and said he felt very well. He looked at the workmen at work on the scaffold, and said he wondered what they would say to him if he opened the window and asked them how much they were getting for the job. He did not carry out the suggestion, however.

WOODSTOCK, Nov. 14.—Reginald Birchall, convicted on the 29th of September of the murder of Frederick C. Benwell in Blenheim Swamp in February last, was, in accordance with the judgment of Judge McMahon, hanged in the jail yard here this morning. The excitement in the town last night was intense, all the hotels being crowded with people expecting to gain admission to the jail yard. An idea of the widespread interest taken in the case may be derived from the fact that no less than fifty reporters, representing the leading papers of Canada and the United States, are here. Birchall kept up his spirits last night as usual, discussing the hangman, whom he calls "the professor," with his guard, Mr. Perry.

At 8.22 the procession appeared in the doorway. First, came Rev. Mr. Wade, bare-headed, with open book and dressed in priestly vestments, next to him was Dr. Chamberlain, Inspector of Prisons, and then Birchall, with his arms pinioned with a stout strap, buckled, and with George Perry, his day guard, on one side, and Mr. Leetham, of Montreal, his college chum, on the other. For a moment Birchall stood on the top step of the three stone steps leading to the ground and surveyed the scene. There was no trace of faltering nor yet sign of pent-up feeling.

The procession moved on again, and now Birchall's face was turned toward the gallows and the dangling rope. Yet he did not flinch. From the stone steps to the rope, turning obliquely to the right in the direction taken by the procession, was about twelve good paces. Half way across, the minister halted; his sonorous voice piercing the frosty air, and the procession halted. In a few moments Sheriff Perry gave a signal and Birchall was led forward, but before stepping forward he turned, bent toward Mr. Leetham and kissed him on the lips. Mr. Leetham turned away in anguish, the hot tears gushing from his eyes. Birchall was placed in position a couple of feet to the left of the noose. The hangman, Radclive, produced a stout strap and bound Birchall's legs at the knees. The doomed man, with only a few moments between him and eternity, did not allow his face to move. He stood with head erect looking straight before him and did not offer the slightest opposition to the operations of the hangman. There was no perceptible deepening of his pallor. Towards the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer Rev. Mr. Wade's voice broke. It was filled with deepest anguish. He stepped forward, kissed Birchall on the lips, and said "May God have mercy on you" and retired a few paces. Radclive from behind seized the noose and passed it about Birchall's neck, adjusting the knot under the left ear. Then he produced the black cap and dropped it over Birchall's head. The bright sunlight, all that is beautiful and bright on earth was thus shut out from him forever. The supreme moment was at hand, but there was

no tremor through the body, nothing whatever to indicate fear. The cap being adjusted, Radclive seized Birchall's right hand in his. Birchall was able to slightly raise his hand, and it was seen that he warmly grasped the hand of the hangman. Perry gave a signal, and at 8.29 Radclive jerked the cord. Instantly the weight dropped and Birchall shot into the air. It was evident that he was dying hard, and to all appearances was dying, not from a broken neck, but from strangulation. Six minutes after the weight fell Dr. Chamberlain pronounced Birchall dead.

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