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THE organization of Knights of Labour is, as was said before, far more formidable than a Trade Union. It is secret, and sure in the end to fall into the same sort of hands into which other secret societies have fallen; it extends over the whole continent, having its centre in New York; it avows itself political, and has already appeared in that character; by laying a trifling tax on its innumerable members it can command almost any sum of money for its operations; it is aggressive in the highest degree, and as every column of commercial intelligence shows, has already kindled war at many points of the industrial world. In an attempt to exclude it from their establishment, the Toronto Street Car Company have brought on a great strike which was attended with rioting, the strikers, or people acting in their interest, having used violence to prevent the Company from running its cars with other hands. The right of men to leave their employment, either individually or in a body, whensoever they please is indisputable; but so is the right of other men to take the place, and that of the employer to say whom he will employ. If an employer is not to be at liberty to say whom he will employ, commercial enterprise must cease. If the work which one man declines or gives up another is not to be allowed to take, freedom of labour must come to an end and be replaced by the most oppressive of monopolies. That no one but the members of a particular association shall be permitted to earn his bread by the work of his hands would be a class law to which the community, which lacks power of organized resistance, might be compelled for a time to bow, but which in the end it would refuse to endure. The obligation of contracts is also obviously vital to those interests of commerce and industry which are common to masters and men; yet it has been very lightly treated on this occasion by certain organs of opinion. It was said that the Street Car Company had broken its charter: that it had broken the rule requiring the rails to be kept level with the road every one who crosses the track is made painfully aware; but this was a totally different question. The usual cry was also raised against Monopoly. A monopoly the Street Car Company is and must be unless the streets can be so widened as to admit competing lines; but it is not an uncontrolled monopoly, and it is assuredly a great blessing to the citizens, above all to our artisans, whom it enables to live at a distance from their places of work, in better air and where house rent is lower. Let its charter be strictly enforced by all means, but to set the roughs upon it is really to set them upon public property, little as people may see the matter in that light. We unfortunately needed no further proof of the amenability of magistrates elected by popular suffrage to the popular influence of the hour, or of the subserviency of party journals to anything in the shape of a "vote." The police and those immediately in command of them loyally did their duty. On this occasion mediation has happily brought about a compromise; but apparently dark times are coming for industry and trade. To make the workingman understand theoretically the ultimate effect of labour disturbances on the interests of labour is almost impossible, especially as industrial demagogues have exclusive possession of his ear; and experience in this case will be a costly teacher. It will be costly to the workingman and costly to us all.

INDUSTRIAL warfare is the natural offspring of the Old World. There is less necessity or excuse for it on this continent, because under democratic institutions political power is in the hands of the working-class, and the workingman, if he is wronged, can do himself right in a regular way. In England, at the time when the first Trade Unions were formed, political power was almost entirely in the hands of the wealthier class, whose sympathies were too much with the employer. Combination laws were enacted to deprive the workingmen of a power of mutual support and protection which was freely exercised by the masters. Wages were artificially kept down by the Statute of Labourers, which Cobden remembered as a boy having seen posted up for the regulation of wages in Sussex, though its practical operation had probably by that time ceased. It is happily impossible that in Canada or the United States legislative injustice should be done to the workingmen, or that they should be deprived of any liberties which are fairly theirs. Here it is rather the other class that is in danger of unfair treatment. By the Mechanics' Lien Act, the owner of

a house which is being built is compelled to pay the wages of mechanics whom he has not employed, who have not trusted him, and to whom he is under no sort of obligation, in order that they may not lose by the failure of their employer, to whom he has already paid the money for the work done. Such a law passed by the master-class in its own favour would be denounced by the workingmen as unjust. It is surely a conclusive proof that the interest of the artisan does not go to the wall. It might have been hoped that in a community so liberally organized as ours peace with justice would not be unattainable; unfortunately in the industrial world, as in the world at large, there are people to whom justice is not an object of great solicitude, and who subsist by disturbing peace.

It is almost heartbreaking to consider the gross and palpable character of the fallacy by which the bulk of the artisans who take part in these labour insurrections are misled, and under the influence of which they may in the end lay destructive hands on the trades by which they live. The enemy against which they are waging war is Capital, which they are taught by their chosen guides to regard as a tyrant robbing them of their bread. Suppose they are completely victorious in the war, as, after a struggle more or less protracted, they are pretty sure to be,—suppose the capitalist, finding that all his profits are gone, that nothing but the risk of loss and vexation is left, retires discomfited from the field, realizes whatever remnant of property may remain to him, transfers it to some community where commercial liberty still exists, and shuts up his works or mill, what will follow? Will the artisans without capital, with nothing but their bare sinews, and, perhaps, without the means of subsistence for a week, be able to set up works, or a mill of their own? If not, what can they do but remain unemployed and starve? The expulsion of all capital from the country is the goal towards which these agitations ultimately lead. Does any sane artisan believe that his condition would be really improved by that result?

If Euclid had sat down to write on geometry with a violent political prejudice against right angles his work would not have been of so much value to science as it is. Of the economical speculations which are now issuing in swarms from the press nine-tenths are tainted with political and social prejudice against the present holders of property. Now we have a writer ascribing the depression of trade and the bad times in part to the existence of millionaires who, he says, absorb the wealth of the community, and whom he proposes to destroy as noxious vermin by the application of that favourite specific of confiscators, a graduated income-tax. The main cause of commercial depression and of everything that flows from it seems plain enough. Prosperous trade tempts over-investment, and when the market is glutted with the goods and the number of factories has been increased beyond the demand, a recoil of necessity ensues. There are collateral causes of course, but the main and normal cause is this, and the only remedies are the sobriety of calculation and the foresight which cupidity itself must learn by degrees to exercise, while their practice is being every day made easier by the increasing accuracy of commercial information and the wholesome action of Boards of Trade. Every boom, of whatever kind, is followed by a proportionate depression, and it would be as reasonable to charge millionaires with the reaction in real estate at Winnipeg as it is to charge them with the bad times which have come after a period of immense profits in British factories and shipyards. That the legislator should favour the distribution, rather than the aggregation, of wealth is now admitted on all hands, though to keep wealth equally distributed, in spite of all the inequalities of individual capacity, thrift, and luck, would be about as feasible as it would be to keep the sea perfectly smooth or the rainfall perfectly even. If a millionaire makes a vicious use of his wealth he may do much harm, but commercial millionaires, at all events, are generally men of regular, and often are men of very frugal, lives; while some, perhaps a considerable proportion, of them practise beneficence on the largest scale, so that their fortunes may be said to form a sort of emergency fund of which, if the financial world were a dead level, the unfortunate might feel the want. Great wealth begets envy, and therefore millionaires should avoid display. Envy is a real pain and very common, so much so, that it is not the smallest of the motor-powers in democracies; but it is a sentimental pain, and may be assuaged by the reflection that any but a very moderate amount of wealth can minister to the happiness of the possessor only if he finds pleasure in the generous use of it, while the rich have often reason to envy the healthy, and suicide, the most emphatic proof of unhappiness, seldom takes place in the ranks of labour. The substantial evils that arise from the existence of millionaires are probably not very great. Commercial opulence, at all events, usually represents enterprise which has added twenty times as much to the wealth of the community and the wages of labour. Mr. Brassey's