

Ontario Weekly

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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Labor Notes.

The hotel waiters of Philadelphia have been for two days trying to arrange a strike, but have not come to any conclusion yet.

On Saturday evening the mill operatives of Mount Washington and Woodberry, Md., celebrated the passage of a ten-hour law by the Legislature of that State by a torchlight procession, illumination and mass meeting.

At Winoak, Woodfield Co., Illinois, on Thursday, the wives of several miners, belonging to a union who had been discharged and their places filled by Norwegians, assaulted the latter and the president of the company, with eggs and other missiles.

Over 1,000 laborers employed in excavating in the new tunnel of the Delaware and Great Western Railroad, at Berlin Hall, went out on strike last Friday for an advance of 25c per day, their present wages being \$1 50 a day. The contractors refuse to pay the advance.

The striking shirt makers of New Haven have given up their project of the co-operative manufactory, and A. C. Breckinridge of Meriden has taken them in, offering them the same wages they had at New Haven before the reduction.

The boss masons and others connected with the New York building trade met on Saturday, to consider the prospects for the spring. It was stated that the owners of property are willing to erect buildings, but decline to do so as long as the eight-hour law continues.

A strike has occurred amongst the Morocco Dressers of Lynn, Mass., to resist the action of the employees to reduce the wages. The movement involves a number of firms, but several are continuing to pay their hands the old prices. The men on strike are sanguine of gaining success.

The delegates to the Laborers' Union from the various divisions of New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City and Hoboken held a meeting Sunday afternoon, and appointed a committee to consider the expediency of forming new organizations. This is rendered necessary by the largely increasing membership. It already numbers 8,000 members.

In the northern part of Philadelphia, as well as in Camden and Gloucester, N. Y., the silk, woollen and gingham weavers are on strike for the restoration of their wages to the old prices. One firm, whose hands have struck, agreed to give the old prices on and after the 16th March, but the hands believed that if they were worth it on the 16th, they were worth it on the 1st of the month. That seems to have been a queer way of throwing away a fortnight's wages. The strike is quite general in character.

The engineers in the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad are greatly aggrieved at the numerous misrepresentations which have been made concerning them and their proceedings at the Cleveland Convention, and are very reticent as to their future movements. Although a strike is apprehended, no apparent preparations for such have been made, and it is supposed that in the event of the occurrence of a demand for a higher rate of compensation, the movement would be universal, and work upon all the railroads in the country will be stopped at one time.

The New York Crispin strike is caused by the action of the cutter's association. The employers running second class establishments required their cutters to work 10 hours per day, and, although urged to adopt the eight-hour rule, they have refused to comply. At a meeting, Sunday, a resolution was adopted that all members who have been working for ten hours shall suspend work until their employers adopt the eight-hour rule.

The Home Labour Market remains depressed in several important branches. The iron trade especially is still inactive, and though in the North more rail mills are employed, many are working short time. Fresh contracts are moreover, not very plentiful. In the colliery district of Oldham and Ashton a reduction of wages is announced, and a similar course is likely to be adopted in other quarters. At Birmingham, the local trades are fairly well engaged. In the Lancashire cotton districts, mills are beginning to fall short of new orders, and a prospect of short time is reported from some centres. The hosiery manufacturers are mostly well employed. For railway and rough work there is still a large demand for labour, and many contractors would be glad of a supply of good country hands. In some of the Northern quarries, Suffolk and other labourers are doing well.—*Labor News.*

The condition of the Belgian workmen is still most precarious, particularly in the weaving district which has Verviers as its principal town. To add to the scarcity resulting from the dullness of trade, provisions have all been raised in price, while workmen have now great difficulty to find suitable lodgings. In Verviers especially the rent has been augmented in the working class quarters, and many families are utterly at a loss to find homes offering sufficient comfort, and yet not beyond the limits of their limited incomes. In the mining district also of Flemalle-Grande, the colliers are enduring all the hardships which invariably accompany a strike. Some weeks ago the directors of the mining companies of Xhorre and des Artistes reduced the workmen's wages 5 per cent. all round. Though this act was in nowise approved by the workmen, who did not think it justified by the circumstances, they nevertheless continued work; and the employers, encouraged by their pacific attitude announced only three weeks later their intention of imposing a further reduction in the scale of wages, and this time to the extent of ten per cent. Thereupon a strike ensued, and the employers apprehending a riot sent for some troops; who, on arriving, proceeded to arrest the chief leader of the movement. The workmen indignant at seeing their friends carried off attempted to rescue them, and this naturally led to further arrests. The strike promises to be prolonged for some time, as these events have embittered the feelings of all concerned.

In Switzerland the labour movement seems much disturbed by contentions between the party which attempts to unite to labour questions matters which appertain to the field of politics, and the contrary party which would exclude from trade societies any political element. In the German districts this struggle is particularly prevalent, but in the Romande or French part of Switzerland, the vexed questions of Federalization and Centralization are still the chief topics of dispute between the working men's societies. Whilst these theoretical matters are debated on all sides, the Geneva watch makers are busy organizing a union of all workmen employed in this the staple industry of the country. There are no employers' unions or arbitration committee in this city, but several deputies are now agitating in favor of establishing Councils of Prud'hommes as in France. These courts of arbitration would be most useful in reconciling the interests too often imposed of master and man in Geneva. In the district of Chaux-de-Fonds, which last month we described as being in great distress, provisions dear, and work slack, a strike has occurred which is particularly distressing under such circumstances. Here the employers are associated together, and has they had received but few orders they determined to reduce by one quarter the price paid for piecework, hoping by this means to be able to continue employing all hands. But this latter part of the programme they failed to fulfill; and many men being without employment, while others only received three-quarters of their customary wages, the workmen's union determined on a general strike. This event, it is thought, may bring about the complete ruin of one or two large firms, already severely taxed by the paucity of business during the last year.

The union printers of New Orleans have struck against a reduction of wages. The proprietors offered fifty cents per thousand ems, and the printers demand sixty.

LABOR AND CAPITAL.

The present aspect of these two subjects is so different to what has been previously common, that we are not surprised that the teachers and savans of social science, as usually understood, being a little out of the usual certitude of their being in the right track. This sort of darkness and uncertainty is evidenced in the fact that Lord Houghton and Mr. Leoni Levi have, on the part of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, issued a circular to parties interested, to the heads of trades and capitalists unions, to both employers and employed, asking for information upon specified questions, as to the rates of wages, and combinations affecting them, machinery, restrictions, and unions generally. What they wish to get at is—1st. The economic effects of combinations of laborers and capitalists; and 2nd. On the laws of economic science bearing on the principles on which such combinations are founded. Information and facts upon these matters is

assuredly desirable, and if truly furnished and placed in natural order and place would be of inestimable benefit to mankind. But in this is the difficulty. At present we have but partial facts, placed by partial interests and persons, in a way both incorrect and unnatural, and perhaps more is suppressed, not shown, than is explained and exhibited. In addition to this our very words are variously held, and understood. For instance, is there a perfect understanding that there is an economic science at all? And if so, is there any two agreed upon the laws of its working?

Lord Houghton, in his address on social economy at London, before the Social Science Association, 1862, threw considerable doubt as to whether there was a social science at all, and whether "free will" did not disturb all our certainty of any certain science of human action. Now, if humanity has no basis, or if we cannot ascertain the certainty of operation, we are thrown out of court at the very beginning, and feel that it is both useless and impracticable to go on with the enquiry. And this leads to the consideration, is there any such natural law in existence? The reply will be universal—Yes, relating to matter. We think there will be a general assent to the fact that mind, too, has its laws—but how that law prevails in and over human action appears yet to be very doubtful, unsettled, and uncertain.

Now, we hold that law rules action as much as either matter or mind. If not, then chance must be our rule, and chaos our ultimatum. To realize this, let us realize what law is in matter. Law is in the very constitution of matter itself. It is that which makes iron iron, which, under given conditions is always what it is, viz.: of a given weight in relation to water—malleable under heat—expansive and contractive in definite ways—and having all its phenomena absolute, and uniform under given conditions. The characteristics apply to all and any given substance, fluid, or gas in relation to each other and themselves, and it is thus only that we know, and can deal with them. Science itself is but acquaintance of the laws or nature of the action of these substances, and of their actions, in relation; and all art is but the application of the phenomena, substances or matter, to serve human purposes and wills. With these Laws, humanity has nothing to do, as existing in themselves. All we have to do is as relating to us. We can neither effect, will, nor unwill the nature of any matter. But we can upon ourselves in relation to their action. We cannot alter the nature of heat upon iron. We can the application of heat, and the use of it, when heated. The laws of matter, have never changed since creation, but our improved knowledge of this nature and working, has enabled us to do all that now do, or distinct from the ignorant and barbarous past. The matter of ships and telegraphs have not altered from the beginning; but our knowledge and adoptions have, and hence present superiority in art, science, and civilization.

Now, we affirm that exactly the same conditions of Law applies to humanity, and to all and every human action upon humanity; as it does upon substances, and that in every form of application. Every art and action has a specific and necessary result of its own inherently, separate from and independent of our wills. Thus honesty and dishonesty have results pendant and inseparable from the action. If every action of commerce or exchange was honest, that is, according to just and actual equivalents, then society would so far progress and flourish. If every such action was dishonest, that is, not in equivalent or in just relation, then society would so far decline and be broken up. The doing is within our volitions, but the results of action are perfectly independent of them. Love and hatred, industry and idleness, obedience and disobedience, justice and judgment, have each a set of specific, definite, and certain results, inherent, unalterable, and inalienable in themselves. It is only thus that we know them, can name, and consider them; and as science is to know, and art to apply the laws of matter for our benefit, so the knowledge of laws or nature of action becomes a science, and their application an art in society. The one may be called physical or natural, and the other social and moral. While the laws of action or moral is as definite and absolute as those of matter, in, and from which, after all, they arise; they are more difficult to understand and realize, because more subject to conditions of variations. The law that water boils at a given temperature is certain, and invariable subject to the condition of a given density of the

atmosphere. With a change in this respect, the law does not change, but abides with the conditions. So honesty in its absolute, never changes; but the same actions may be called honest and dishonest, according to the relations of parties and things. To take away money or goods from persons, may be right or wrong, according to the relations or imbalances existing between persons. To take without leave, or without giving an equivalent, is called theft; while exchange, agreements, and equivalents is called trade or commerce. The one is wrong, and the other is right inherently, because the results are good in one case, and bad in the other; inherently and independent upon any human volition. It probably required ages of social revolutions in the infancy of society to establish the fact of honesty and dishonesty to even very simple actions. Children do not know anything of personal property, but they acquire it by experience. Training gives experience earlier, or induces actions and knowledge upon authority. This applies to all human history, and all early laws have a superstitious or external authority added to the natural, when too little recognized to ensure obedience. In the early history of Scripture we have religious motives given to secure right physical actions; and it is, "thus saith the Lord," to ensure the covering of nature's excretions, and the actions of sexual relations. This, more or less obtains still, only the natural motives are more trusted, and appealed to for conformance the more as we know of their nature and inviolability. And it is thus that society has progressed in morals and economics, and thus we have advanced above the cruel and barbarous past. We know more than our forefathers did, but we have still more to learn. One of the principal difference betwixt us now and in the ancient days, is that governments should be for the benefit of the governed; and that governments are good, and bad, and safe, and unsound for themselves, in proportion that they serve the interests of the greatest numbers. Early governments are despotisms and tyrannical—middle governments are oligarchies, and uncertain. The highest government is when the whole is considered and acted for by each. It would take volumes to demonstrate these sentences, and to show their truth, and we only instance them now to show the laws of action in humanity. Reverting to the subject of our article, capital and labor, we have to show if there be no law, inherent and unchangeable in the nature of actions, it will be impossible to know the relations of capital and labor—and useless if we did. If there be such laws, it is most necessary that we should study to know them. But why know them, unless it is to apply them for the benefit of humanity? Now, what do the gentlemen mentioned, and the Society for the Promotion of Science and Sociology, want? Do they want to know the mere development of wealth, or the use of it to humanity as well? It is a fact that in some conditions, slavery, and the vilest despotisms and cruelty have developed wealth. But such wealth was a curse to both the slave and the tyrant. So what is called free and unregulated labor may develop wealth. At present the great query is—whether regulated or unregulated labor is the wisest economy? The reply must however, depend upon what we mean as economy. If that includes the welfare of the workers, as well as the capitalists, then assuredly regulation, so as to secure distribution of wealth, and time to enjoy it is necessary. If it means only that there may be a few enormously wealthy, and a mass of workers wretchedly poor and wretched, then unregulated competition may be preferred. Contrast the condition of the working classes from 1815 to 1835, as compared with 1865 to 1874. The whole difference is due to the regulation of competition betwixt capital and labor, and while the regulation is but beginning to work, how it has worked for both labor and capital is evident. How it will in future will require further consideration.—*Bee-Hive.*

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MECHANICAL GENIUS.

What a tiny thing is a spark flying from an anvil! Yet it is not altogether insignificant, for it can fire a powder mine should one happen to stop its course. Through the horrors of a catastrophe we learn to carefully analyze the smallest things, to discover in minute causes the germs of great results. Grave experiences have served as goals to industrious inquiry—their fatal recurrence has stirred the

dormant genius of thoughtful men, and urged them to useful action. Discovery had led to discovery, invention has been followed by invention—at first slowly, afterwards rapidly—gathering accumulated riches of experience until the roll of mechanical fame has lengthened and shines with the glowing names of men whose life studies have been successfully realized for the benefit of generations coming after their own. Watt, Stephenson, Arkwright, and a host of others, have left legacies that will continue to bless nations for all time. The studious boy, with his hand upon the lid of the domestic urn, little dreamt what mammoth machines were destined to start out of that simple incident. If called to the scene of human toil again, even a Watt would marvel to view the wondrous development of practical science. The hiss of steam from every manufactory, the plunge of engines in every mill, the ceaseless clatter of obedient machinery in ever workshop! Let Stephenson join company; together, these two master minds might gaze upon "gridironed England;" upon its flying coaches; upon its busy rivers, graced, not with the gay gondola of Venetian luxury, but with gliding steamers freighted with commercial wealth—rivers banked with hives of industry, resonant with the deep hum of honest, hardy toil! Arkwright would fitly join this company. The immortal trio would enter the factories of Great Britain and see bewildering wonders there. Though half deafened with the rattle of looms, they would soon detect the swift beating and the soft whisper of a thousand shuttles doing their silent work, as great men do theirs, unostentatiously and unringingly, and without complaint that the riches they make must be gathered by other hands. A lengthened survey would be needed to allay the astonishment of those famous men. A stroll along the banks of our rivers would surely claim their attention. The modern crane, with its iron trunk, soon fixes their attention. How their admiration is excited by its picking up that locomotive and transferring it more surely than many human hands could do. Those great men follow the movements of the same strange thing while its proboscis is raising—as indifferently as a real elephant would pick up an umbrella—a huge wrought-iron girder, and sweeping the vacant air for a single movement, drops its weighty burden softly and precisely in the appointed place! Leaving modern modes of shipment and bridge-building, the mouths of our rivers present an impressive spectacle. Steamships would be there, laden with "black diamonds," that have been won from the depths of English coal mines. Screw steamers for conveying that useful and valuable minerals to distant lands. Other vessels steam away for foreign countries with rich cargoes of beautiful machinery—the fruit of skilled labor in British workshops! The seas, too, if they could be compressed within a narrow focus, would give importance to the panorama. The heaving waters dotted with cloudlets of vapor (as shoals are distinguished on the charts of mariners) show where the ocean steam plough is doing its determined work against wind and tide. Yet the survey we have taken comprises but a quota of the numberless useful resources which the progressive genius of men of science and practical sense has placed at the service of nations for their benefit. Among the last, though certainly not the least, is the electric telegraph—the lightning servant—the earth's tympanum. A metallic cord, with numberless ramifications, now grasps the map of Europe, winds through the depths of the broad Atlantic, to echo to the denizens of a distant continent the latest pulsation of a true brotherhood of interest in commercial enterprise and mechanical achievements.—*Mechanic.*

The Workingmen's Central Council of New York proposes calling a mass meeting of the working classes this week, for the purpose of demanding the abolition of the contract system in the construction of public works and for the removal of Government agents who have practised fraud in order to violate the eight-hour law in the New York post office and elsewhere; they also propose to present and discuss a plan of co-operation for the building trade and other industries, the establishment of co-operative stores and their general elevation.

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