

LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC.

MIDDLE MEN AND WORKING MEN.

In the *Century Magazine* for July is an article on the great need of the working men, with which in the main we agree. Instead of agitating and "striking" for higher wages they might better learn to use in a more rational way the income they now receive. In the matter of food, which is of the first importance, it is safe to say that there are many families who might with a more perfect practical knowledge of the art of cooking and preparing foods, live just as satisfactorily and be better nourished on about half what it now, without that knowledge, seems to require to feed them. One great want of the working man, however, not referred to in the *Century*, is, not so much more wages, but shorter hours of labor (which means to the employer, higher wages); more leisure—more time to cultivate their mind and body—to attend to their health—to keep themselves clean. The mass of the working people sadly need elevating. The refined, cultured man suffers, is really pulled down, little or much, through anger or contempt it may be, by contact with ignorance and dirt and crime. The one great drawback in the way of securing shorter hours is the difference between the prices received by the manufacturer for the products of labor and that paid by the consumer. This goes to support "middle men." It can hardly be for the good of mankind that those who really contribute nothing to the community—who simply handle what is made and cultivated—buy often in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest, should receive so large a share of the surplus wealth, indeed on the whole the largest share. There are too many middle men—agents and "travellers" and pedlers; who frequently, moreover, induce people to buy what they do not really require. A remedy it is not easy to suggest. More co-operative societies would seem to be the only one.

IN *The Toronto World* of the 10th inst. is an article—"The Country is Safe"—with which most thinking men, who have deeply at heart the welfare of the country, will fully agree. It is as plain as can be that failures of luxury and fancy goods importing houses and such are benefits to the country. What is wanted is *production*—less *trade*. The "worst" of over-production even, is to check trade, though it may reduce wages for a time. He "who makes two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before" should receive