

protective tariff could very easily be extended. Let this for the present suffice.

If, however, questions of this sort were looked at more closely and frequently from a moral point of view and weighed in their moral bearings and relations, the power of conscience enlightened by truth, would make itself much more felt in the conduct of men in those matters which most deeply affect others as well as themselves, in the use of the ballot, in their conduct as legislators for example. Our representatives in Parliament would take a broader and higher view of all public questions, and legislation, which by apparently—for nothing which is morally unsound can ultimately really benefit them—benefiting the few at the expense of the many, and so setting class against class, and even nation against nation, would be avoided, and the reign of peace and good will and of a higher morality than now prevails would be advanced to the benefit and blessing both of individuals and nations.

WORK FOR THE WORKLESS.

Fidelis in The Week.

"Stick to the unemployed, John; in work lies our salvation!" This touching exhortation, addressed to John Burns by a convict in Pentonville prison, has, he says, rung in his ears ever since, as a stimulus to further efforts for this most unhappy class. He takes it as in some measure a text for his recent article on the subject of Work for the Unemployed (in the Nineteenth Century, for December), in conjunction with Carlyle's well-known remark that "The man able to work, willing to work, and unable to obtain work,—is one of the saddest sights which fortune's inequality produces under the sun." His paper is full of practical suggestions for solving the great problem of "the unemployed" on a thorough and business basis; and notwithstanding a lack of sympathy with what he calls the "palliatives" of Christian philanthropists, who labour for the moral and spiritual, as well as the material uplifting of individuals,—natural, no doubt from his points of view,—his suggestions should be carefully studied by all who desire to promote a radical cure for this festering sore on our modern civilization.

For the condition of the unemployed seems to present an anomaly on what we have been accustomed to regard as the Divine law of labour,—an apparent contradiction to the Christian's faith that, for every human being, there is a post of usefulness in the great human family. But for the labourer who has but his hands, and can find nothing for them to do, wherewith to earn the daily bread for himself and his family,—what seems left save to beg or steal, or sit down and die,—if he do not in desperation, as some have done, go and hang himself?

Few of us, perhaps, are inclined to welcome enthusiastically our long, cold winters; but let any one with a little imagination try to think what it means for the unskilled labourer who has four or it may be five months before him during which he can expect no regular work, only a chance job now and then, if he be fortunate enough to secure that! Other people—most of them, at any rate—find their work go on as usual; perhaps they are even busier in winter. And, besides the regular work that keeps the wolf from the door and robs the dreary months of half their tedium, most other people have their cosy homes, with all their home comforts, books, papers, abounding interests, to make them forget the external dreariness; if, indeed, warmly wrapped up to face the weather, they do not find in the bracing cold an actually pleasurable stimulus! But how about the day-labourer, who has toiled cheerfully, perhaps, all summer, for the maintenance of himself and his family, and who, despite all that is said of the "thriflessness" of our labouring classes, would have had to practise a somewhat heroic self-denial, in order to be able to lay by any adequate store against the idle days of frost and snow? For, considering the average pay of the day-labourer, and the average size of his family, added to his liability to be laid up by accident or illness during the "shining hours," which he, like the bee, must improve unceasingly, or come to grief, it is no great wonder if he does not find them sufficient to provide

for the whole year. And if, as often happens, he has been laid up for some weeks, winter of course finds him quite unprovided for its demands on his slender means. As the short, cold days come on, when larger supplies of fuel, food and light are absolutely necessary for health and comfort, he has to face them without any prospect of work and pay. Month after month of semi-starvation must drag itself by, while he sits in his poverty-stricken home, generally too pervious to the winter blast, with his depressed wife and ill-clad, hungry children, or wearily paces the streets in the vain search for work, happy if he may by any chance pick up an odd job. What wonder if, heart sick and despondent, he falls an easy victim to the first prevalent epidemic; or, if he escape physical disease, becomes a prey to the attractions of the saloon, in which for a few cents he can find at least temporary comfort and forgetfulness of his misery?

These are no fancy pictures, but actual experiences of many a working man in Canada, not only in this present winter, but every winter to a greater or less extent, in all our large cities. Every year there is the same dismal monotony of distress, which weighs heavily on the hearts and sympathies of those who try by the poor palliative of a little charitable assistance, to bridge the winter's "Slough of Despond" caused by the almost entire suspension of out-door work for men.

Of course there are the women and children left; and to their credit be it said that, in general, they do what they can. But this is very precarious and uncertain. I observe that an optimistic friend, who seems to know but little of how "the other half of the world lives," scouts at the very idea of "child-labour" in Ontario. Now I happen to know a good deal about a good many poor families in a city which, I believe, is much like other Canadian cities and towns, and I know that in few of these families is there a boy over ten, who in winter is not set to some kind of work—if it is only that of going for an hour or two to "do chores" for some one who can pay him a little for so doing—or if nothing else offers, at least to try his luck at selling papers. I have known a little boy, only seven years old, obliged to be out in the cold, dark evenings, for hours, trying to sell papers, because neither father nor mother could procure work! Again and again I have known the Factory Act contravened by sending children under age to work, because of the sad necessity of the family; and as to the wives and mothers, I know of no case in which any healthy woman has shown unwillingness to take any work she was able to do. On the contrary, there are always far more applicants for woman's work in winter than there is work to do. Our optimistic friend, aforesaid, refers to some difficulty experienced in securing a competent charwoman, and to the necessity of giving her a good breakfast and dinner, as an illustration of "this high standard of living among the lower classes"! It is possible he may not have known where to look for the right kind of charwoman, and may have stumbled on a small capitalist, in her way, who may have been indifferent as to whether she got a job or not. But I could match his one case by many cases of women who, at this present writing, are only too anxious to secure such work, or any! And have seen in Toronto as well as in Montreal, numbers of poor women trooping weekly into the Industrial Homes, where charitable ladies give out plain sewing—women with hunger-pinched faces, glad to earn their fifty cents a week, by needlework, for their destitute families. The difficulty, indeed, usually is, how to provide enough of this kind of work, and to dispose of it after it is done. Certainly, of workers there is always an "Embarras de richesses."

But now, as to the dollar a day for washing and ironing from eight till six, and the "hot breakfast and dinner thrown in," as an evidence of this high standard of living. Our friend, being of the masculine gender, does not seem to know, what every intelligent woman knows, that washing and ironing for a whole day is very exhausting work, and also that it is "skilled labour," since no one can be a good laundress without much training and experience. It is about as hard work in its way as that for which an ordinary unskilled labouring man usually gets his dollar a day, at

least; and why should not the labouring woman, especially the skilled labouring woman, be as worthy of her hire as the labouring man? A dollar may seem a good deal to give for a day's washing. But our friend, if he stood in the laundress' place, would not find it a great deal to get, especially if the earnings of two or three days a week had to be the whole support of a family! As to her not arriving in our friend's kitchen till eight, did it ever occur to him how the previous hour or two had been spent? If, as is likely, she was the mother of a family, she had in all probability several small children to care for and provide with breakfast, before leaving them for the day; and then to plod some distance, perhaps through snow or slush or mud, to the house where she has to work. Is it much wonder if she may not arrive till eight o'clock, or if she is ready enough for the "hot breakfast" when she gets there? As for the "hot dinner" she needs that too; for the work of a laundress is exhausting, especially to any one not as a rule well fed; and, during the trying winter months, many of these poor women and their children live for weeks at a time on little more than bread and tea! The charwoman, with her long day's steady muscular exertion, needs a good deal more nourishment than the average man or woman engaged in light sedentary occupations; just as our furnaces need a double supply of coal when they have to produce a double quantity of heat. The work of the laundry would inevitably suffer, if the laundress did not have her two good meals, the provision of which is simply a necessary bit of household economy.

Now the fact, of which I have actual personal knowledge, that in winter there are more women seeking work—work of the hardest drudgery and involving the whole day's absence from their own little families,—than there are people needing such work to be done, is itself an evidence of the bitter poverty which, every winter, overwhelms our labouring class. For many of these poor women have husbands,—husbands whose strong arms should be amply sufficient to maintain their families, if they could but find work for those arms to do. But, beyond a rare chance of a stray cord of wood to cut, or a little ice-cutting or street-cleaning after a snow-storm, what can they find? "My husband walked five miles this forenoon looking for a bit of work,"—said one poor woman this very day, taking thankfully a little coarse sewing to do, in default of something better. And this has to go on, month after month, among those "lower classes" who, we are sometimes told, are so superfluously comfortable!

And the very circumstance that so many women are obliged to seek work which takes them away from home and from their children, is in itself an evil, as any thoughtful mother will understand. I know of not a few families in which the enforced absence of an industrious, hardworking mother has been the means of sowing the seeds of both physical and moral evil. Some children, now in our reformatories for juvenile crime, might have grown up as honest and promising as their playmates, but for the mother's frequent absence from home to earn the daily bread. In Britain, one of the things aimed at by industrial reformers is that the wives and mothers should not have to go out to earn their living; on the principle, recognized readily enough in the higher strata of society—though there less de rigueur than where all the household work has to be done by the mother—that the care of a family is sufficient to fill a mother's life, without exhausting outside work. Thus, inconvenient as it might prove to many of us, there can be no doubt that it would be far better for society as a whole if charwomen were much less abundant than they are. But so long as there is no work for the labouring man in winter, so long must the labouring woman toil to supply the lack; happy if she can but earn enough to keep the family warmed and fed. That too many cannot—all our charitable societies know full well. Let the Relief Committee in connection with the Toronto House of Industry, with their hundreds of cords of wood and thousands of loaves weekly distributed, and the benevolent ladies who work in the Industrial Rooms, testify what they know in this particular.

This evil is steadily assuming larger proportions by means of the numbers of shiftless and thriftless English families every year lured out to Canada by optimistic and misleading representations of the prosperity of our "lower classes," only to swell this already overwhelming tide of misery from lack of winter work. They are burdens on all our charitable organizations. Sometimes the men drift off to the United States, leaving their families to be cared for by the charitable; sometimes, as in a number of cases I know of, after the family have had an "assisted passage" from England, the man is "assisted" back again, in the hope that he may, in course of time, be able to send money to bring back his family, which, of course, in such cases is left a burden on the community. Other such families drag on a miserable existence for a time, till perhaps the whole family is divided between our prisons and charitable institutions. Others, who get on better, swell the ranks of the improvident who live well so long as they have anything to live on, and then fall back into the starving, unemployed "submerged tenth."

Now, while it is unpatriotic to draw unduly dark pictures of Canadian life, it is surely not less so to promote real misery by fancy pictures of imaginary prosperity. And this is done whenever such pictures conduce, as they too often do, to the immigration of the unskilled labour, which settles down, a hopeless mass of poverty, in our towns and cities. And as it is more patriotic to increase our real prosperity than to make us seem more prosperous than we really are, it is the duty of every patriotic Canadian to face the situation, not to ignore it, and to see whether any radical remedy can be devised for the yearly mass of misery from want of work. John Burns suggests several remedies for this in Britain, some of which would be impracticable in our more rigorous climate. He suggests such legislation as would shorten the working day, which, of course, would tend to divide the total amount of work to be done, among a greater number of people. Another remedy which he suggests is that of carrying on municipal works, civic improvements, etc., during the winter months. Our rigorous winters, of course, interpose serious difficulties in the way of carrying on almost any kind of outdoor work. Yet "where there's a will there's a way," and perhaps some shrewd and enterprising city council might find out the way to carry on some needed improvements during the winter, if it were only in the way of keeping our streets as clear and clean as they ought to be, to correspond with our advancing civilization in other respects. Why should not our streets, as a whole, be kept in a state of perfect smoothness and good order, at the expense of the city, and through the labours of the otherwise unemployed, who, if they do not get their maintenance at the public expense for public work done, and in a way that presses equally on all, must get it at the expense, of the more charitable, in a way that presses most unequally on them! Another suggestion of Mr. Burns—still more practicable among us—is that all cleaning, painting, etc., in public buildings at least, should be done during the idle winter months, instead of being crowded into the few busy weeks of spring, when there is more to be done than there are hands to do it.

Such suggestions are certainly most pressing on our consideration, if we reflect that carelessness as to this problem will certainly and surely sap the independence of that great working-class, whose self-reliance and prosperity are the very cornerstones of our national well-being.

In a ship like the *Majestic*, about \$3,000,000 are invested, and the working expenses are proportionately heavy. In the sailing, engine and passenger departments the large number of 322 hands are required—47 in the first, 161 in the second and 114 in the third. The wages paid for these hands amount to, say \$1,500 for the sailing department, \$4,800 for the engine and \$2,350 for the passengers, making a total of \$8,650 per month. When these figures are considered, together with the other expenses of maintenance, office expenses, insurance, agency commission, shore staff, works, port charges, interest on capital and depreciation, it may be fairly taken that at least the sum of \$80,000 must be realized a trip before any profit can be counted on; so that some idea of the enormous sums at stake in the working and management of an express transatlantic line can be formed.