

NOTICE.

We shall be pleased to receive items of interest pertaining to Trade Societies from all parts of the Dominion or publication. Officers of Trades Unions, Secretaries of Lodges, etc., are invited to send us news relating to their organizations, condition of trade, etc.

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We wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions of correspondents.

Our columns are open for the discussion of all questions affecting the working classes. All communications must be accompanied by the names of the writers, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

WILLIAMS, SLEETH & MACMILLAN.

Trades Assembly Hall.

Meetings are held in the following order:—
 Machinists and Blacksmiths, every Monday.
 Painters, 1st and 3rd Monday.
 Coachmakers, 2nd and 4th Monday.
 Crispins, (159), 1st and 3rd Tuesday.
 K.O.S.C. Lodge 356, 2nd and 4th Tuesday.
 Tinsmiths, 2nd and 4th Tuesday.
 Cigar Makers, 2nd and 4th Wednesday.
 Iron Moulders, every Thursday.
 Plasterers, 1st and 3rd Thursday.
 Trades' Assembly, 1st and 3rd Friday.
 Bricklayers, 1st and 3rd Friday.
 Coopers, 2nd and 4th Friday.
 Printers, 1st Saturday.
 Bakers, every 2nd Saturday.

The Ontario Workman.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JAN. 16, 1873.

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

We have sent accounts to those of our Subscribers who are in arrears, and hope that they will remit the amounts without delay. We know people are apt to think "Mine is only a very small matter, it won't make much difference," but when these small amounts, scattered over various parts of the province, are multiplied by tens and hundreds, it becomes a matter of importance to the publishers that each subscription should be paid promptly. The publication of a newspaper is attended with a very considerable outlay of money and energy, and we trust our readers to whom we have, and may yet, send accounts, will strengthen our hands by prompt remittances—*Verbum sat sapienti.*

CO-OPERATIVE HOMES.

This is a subject which, for some time past, has been claiming attention in New York and other American cities. The dangers and inconveniences of life in large cities have long ere this arrested the attention even of the most careless. It has been estimated that in the tenement houses of New York the annual mortality has been one in eleven, while in Boston, washed by salt water on three sides, the death rate among children during a hot summer, is shown to be as high as a thousand in one hundred days. This fact alone, without taking into consideration the dangers to morality which must result from huddling so many human beings into these confined spaces, must convince all that tenement houses are not the best possible residences in which either to bring up the young or to house men and women on whose shoulders is the work of the world. And the remedy that is proposed for this evil is the building of co-operative homes—that is, that a number of workmen should combine together, buy one, two, or three hundred acres of land, about half a mile distant from the city, divide it into lots of one acre each, and proceed immediately to build cottages of three or four rooms each, and sell them

to members of the society at cost. This plan, if gone about properly, may be feasible, but we must confess to having our doubts whether a sufficient number of workingmen, with sufficient capital, will be found to engage in the undertaking.

WHAT LABOR REFORM MEANS.

The advocates of Labor Reform are often accused of being unpractical and wild in their theories. It is said of them that they have no definite idea of what they want, and that their arguments are of the Utopian and agrarian school. Their history, in this connection, is a repetition of all reformers in times past, and so far it has reiterated the fact that those who have once lost their rights can hope or expect little from appeals to justice. In a time like this, when Mammon seems to reign supreme, the hearts of men become so calloused and hardened to the condition of their less fortunate brothers, that burning truths glance off and find no lodgment in the recesses of conscience. Dollars, not men, seems to be the popular motto with those who have risen to affluence, and in this country, as in Europe, he who toils for his bread is looked upon, by many, as a sort of necessary evil which is well enough in its place, but the idea of elevating "greasy mechanics" to a social equality with wealthy, genteel loafers is, according to the views of shoddy aristocracy—most of our aristocracy is shoddy—simply preposterous and an outrage upon society.

Labor reformers may have made mistakes in their efforts to improve the condition of those who earn their bread by the sweat of their brows, and it is very natural that errors should creep into the acts of men who attempt to explore new and untried theories, though the foundation of those theories, may be as true and firm as the "rock of ages."

Labor Reform is in its infancy, and like a little child it must necessarily creep before it can walk, and doubtless will receive some falls before its muscles become sufficiently firm to sustain its growing body. Labor Reform has a true and just cause that must eventually grow a good effect. The inherent desire in man to govern himself is working out the problem of man's duty to man, and how best to enforce it when not done voluntarily. The opponents of Labor Reform are more ungenerous, and go to further extremes in their opposition than ever the hottest headed advocate of poor men's rights.

The principles of the Labor Party are, in the main, correct; they are as yet somewhat crude perhaps, but they embody the true elements of justice and equality, without which no government can long endure. Labor Reform means a higher and nobler condition in life for those that delve for an existence; it means better education and more refinement for the laboring classes; it means a just division of profits between labor and capital. It means true manhood and true womanhood; and it means comfortable shelter, respectable clothing and nutritious and palatable food for those whose hands produce the necessities and comforts of life; it means the elevation of men to their true sphere, and, like crude gold, it will come from the crucible pure and bright.

THE LABORING CLASSES.

We hear a great deal from the lecturers and orators of the day about the "laboring classes," as if the people who do the work for society were a race quite distinct from those who are born to do nothing but enjoy the fruits of labor without contributing anything to the productive wealth of the country. And we find as occasion offers there is a wide difference in the general estimate of those people whose avocation is toil. Some of the public teachers—for those who make talking a business are prone to claim the right to do the teaching in every department of knowledge, political, religious and moral—have much to say at times about "the dignity of labor," and are very eloquent in impressing the duty of labor upon all except themselves. They tell us continually that

every man is born to labor, and that if he does not follow that order of nature he neither performs his duty nor fulfills his destiny. And it is astonishing what a difference there is, at times, in the relations which labor and its "dignity" bear to wealth and idleness. Just about the election period, the laborer figures largely as the hero of society, who holds in his hand the destinies of a nation and the fate of government. He is made to believe that not only is the government machine operated by his will, but that its work is exclusively for his benefit. At other times when working men, being convinced of the inadequacy of fine-drawn theories and flaunting rhetoric to their wants, proceed practically to take the management of their interests in their own hands, and to organize associations for self protection, and, by combinations, endeavor to establish such rates of wages as will afford them a decent support, "laboring classes" slide down in the scale of dignity, and are regarded as unreasonable, tyrannical and rebellious; the powerful arm of government is invoked to reduce them to submission, and legislative wisdom is urged to subject and restrain them. Then we are required to recant all our former opinions about what we owe to labor, and to remember only what labor owes to capital.

The absurdity of these various and opposing ideas is apparent; but the reconciliation of interests, and the remedy for the constantly conflicting efforts of capital and labor to obtain the mastery remain as far from adjustment as ever. The truth is, that a want of sincerity on the part of political economists, and the growing conviction among the people of the hypocritical character of their teachers, is the cause of the difficulty and the obstacle to a mutual understanding and an equitable settlement. Now, when the mercenary orator harangues the populace about "dignity," and impresses the necessity of "protection" to secure the interests of laboring people, it has become manifest that he is not really pleading the cause of labor, but only bolstering the rapacity of capitalists, who get the protection for themselves, and dole out about as much of its indirect "benefits" as they may think fit for their operatives. We must understand more thoroughly the hardships and privations of laboring people before we can fairly judge of their conduct when under the stringent rule of poverty; and we should appreciate the services of those who relieve us from the burden of duties we are wont to "shirk" and happily escape; while they who toil daily, toil for their own support as well as for the support of their fortunate neighbor. The miner who digs our coal, the scavenger who cleans our streets, have a daily task before them, from which most of us would shrink in horror, and consider ourselves most unjustly persecuted if we were obliged to perform; and yet, this is the business of their whole lives; for this they seem to have been born; they live by it, and still they live for it. Surely, this is virtually a condition of slavery, and perhaps the most intolerable kind of slavery, where poverty is the master, and "capital" the steward or overseer. Is it wonderful that the subjects of it claim and try to secure a fair remuneration for their labor?

Labor has a dignity far above the factitious importance which selfish politicians attribute to it, when votes are needed and money is running short. In proportion to its usefulness and the self-sacrifice involved in it, labor is indeed honorable. Therefore, it follows that those avocations commonly regarded the most menial are the most honorable, and society owes a debt of gratitude to all those who bear the burden of the hardest and most disagreeable work, which it can best reciprocate by a cheerful remuneration for the most toilsome and exacting employment. — *Phila. Sunday Transcript.*

THE HOUSE.

The House, during the past week, was mainly occupied with the debate on the Address. No business of importance has been transacted up to the present time.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

TORONTO TRADES' ASSEMBLY.

At the last regular meeting of the Toronto Trades' Assembly, the following officers were elected:—President, John H. Dance; Vice-President, J. Winnett; Recording Secretary, J. S. Williams; Corresponding Secretary, J. Hewitt; Financial Secretary, J. Carter; Sergeant-at-Arms, J. Stephens; Trustees, J. C. MacMillan, A. Scott and A. McCormick.

BAKERS.

At the regular meeting of the Journeymen Bakers' Union, held in the Trades' Assembly Hall, on the 11th inst. the following officers were elected for the ensuing six months:—President, James A. Boyd; Vice-President, G. Perry; Recording Secretary, A. Crawford; Financial Secretary, G. Love; Treasurer, M. English; Door-keeper, J. McKnight; Delegates to Trades Assembly, J. A. Boyd, G. Perry and M. English.

THE BALLOT.

We have already spoken in favor of the election by ballot, and we are pleased to notice that Mr. Clarke, of Wellington, gave notice that he would introduce a bill for taking votes by ballot at elections of members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Communications.

HAMILTON.

(To the Editor of the Ontario Workman.)

DEAR SIR,—Man's inhumanity to man has produced a new price list for the piece-workers in the Wanzer Sewing Machine Factory, the immediate effect of which list is to reduce the prices from thirty-five to fifty per cent. This was very like a new years gift for those men who in the largeness of their hearts went back upon the Short Time Movement and accepted the gilded bait held out to them last summer. These men have found to their sorrow that the way of the transgressor is hard. They find that summer friends can turn the cold shoulder to their dupes when the snows of winter block up the highways and byways of our land; and moreover, they now find the evil of selfishness in not sustaining the organization that assisted them in their time of need. Had they continued to sustain that organization it would have been something to fall back upon; but failing to do so they now find themselves powerless in the hands of their humane, considerate and I had almost said Christian masters; but fortunately the last name does not apply to men who take such undue advantage of the unfortunate beings who are in their power for the time.

The best and most spirited of the men have already left this little Eden, and more will follow as opportunities offer. No doubt every effort will be made to bring machinists from the country towns to fill their places; but let all such remember that the price of firewood and house-rent will far over-balance any difference in the rates of pay received by them in their present situations, and that which will be held out to them as an inducement to come to Hamilton. Besides, the taxation is likely to be very heavy on workmen for years to come. This point is easily accomplished by the gentlemanly assessors, who, out of affection for the hard-working mechanic, value his cottage and garden up to the highest cent that their tender consciences will allow them; whilst on the other hand they bring the capitalist down so shamefully low, that we only wonder that "Big Thunder" has not discovered this new way of keeping Ontario down. If New York wanted a Vigilance Committee to look after its mis-spent money, our city wants a Revising Committee to look after our assessors.

The weather has been very severe along the line of the Great Western Railway during the past week; the usual amount of damage has been sustained by the locomotives on the line; for engines are always more liable to damage when the temperature is about 10° above zero, as there is generally a strong breeze blowing then.

We have had a rather unusual occurrence in the yard, which I regret to say has ended fatally to two men: one, a fireman, was killed instantly; the other, a regular yardman, survived a couple of days. As the inquest is still pending, it is best to leave the subject in the hands of the jury, who, it seems, are determined to make a strict search for the real cause of the accident.

One word about your article on the "worthy poor"; and first let me say that I heartily endorse every word you have said on the subject. What I want to know is the rule or rules this very philanthropic Association give their agents so as to enable them to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy. Now, it is commonly reported, and the *Witness* says that there are houses licensed in New York for the sale of a liquor which causes great distress and misery; yea, moreover, it is even said to cause death, and that among the rich and poor alike. Now if this be so, would it not be well first to furnish the world with a copy of the standard by which the "worthy poor" are known, and next let these agents enquire into the report, and if it is found that a revenue is derived from the vice and misery of the people, to make it publicly known, lest our own land fall into this snare. Yours, etc.,

WORKMAN.

O S H A W A.

(To the Editor of the Ontario Workman.)

SIR,—An act of condescension occurred at the late municipal election here on the part of the powers that be, inasmuch as they actually allowed a workman to be elected as a councillor. It may seem a small matter to record, but to those who know how workingmen in the Oshawa Cabinet Factory and Joseph Hall Works are in general importuned at elections, the fact that so many of the men in those establishments voted for one of their own number, gives us reason to hope that they will do better next time.

I see by what your Hamilton correspondent states, that the bosses there were present at the polling booths. Here, in the Cabinet Factory above referred to, the president generally at election times requests the voters of the factory, as a personal favor, to vote for his "ticket." If he don't succeed, the manager next visits them, and as was the case at the last general election, he will tell any one who may be inclined to vote against the boss that "It is no use voting against power, because power can retaliate"—that generally fetches them.

In the Joseph Hall Works, on like occasions, the president, if he cannot succeed in getting the voters in his establishment to vote as he wants, he will request them not to vote at all, or, as I am informed was the case at an election for School Trustees some time ago, he told a man that he "would mind him" for voting contrary to his wishes. The man referred to had his wages cut a York shilling a day shortly afterwards; but, of course, his voting against the boss had nothing to do with it—oh, no. One can scarcely credit that the boss referred to could be guilty of such a mean action, but when he could discharge the man who forwarded the petition of the men of the Joseph Hall Works for the "nine hours," it will be seen that he is capable of anything.

This is a paradise—a purgatory rather—for workingmen who may dare to differ with the bosses of the two establishments above mentioned, as your correspondent can vouch, seeing that he has virtually been outlawed for having dared to advocate the nine hours movement, the ex-reeve having refused the protection of the law to your correspondent, and his family as well, but nevertheless he hopes to be able to exist yet.

In answer to a petition of the men of the Oshawa Cabinet Factory, to be allowed to quit at five o'clock on Saturdays, and loose the hours, as a punishment they were made—for the last four or five weeks—to quit at four o'clock, and loose two hours, the men being quite agreeable to the arrangement.

Last Saturday the men were notified that in future they would have to work till six o'clock on Saturday. Happy men! and happy bosses. Of course the long winter is on just now.—Yours, &c.,

HEATHER JOCK.

BRANTFORD.

Mr. S. L. M. Luke has written the following communication to the *Courier*, and as it may interest many of our craftsmen, we re-produce it for their benefit:—

As a jour printer, I came to Brantford about Sept. last, 1861, and found employment in the office of the *Daily News*, conducted (?) by one E. A. Percy. Before being twenty-four hours in the establishment I was informed by three or four of the journeymen who were then, and had been for a length of time in the employ therein, that if I had not brought money enough with me to pay my board during the length of time I intended to remain in the *News*, it would be better for me to leave before I incurred any responsibility in the boarding houses. There were symptoms of a "strike" on hand—not for increase of wages, nor for hours of labor by the "week hands." I deemed it not necessary for me to enter