

The Echo.

ALL LABOR IS SACRED.—Carlyle.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14th, 1890.

THE UNITED TYPOTHETÆ.

We understand that an organizer of the United Typothetæ was in town the other day, and held a meeting with several of the employing printers in the St. Lawrence Hall, his object being to start a branch of the association in this city. In view of his visit and its purpose it is necessary that we should enlighten the public as to the aims and objects of the association. The newspapers of this city have carefully concealed the fact of the meeting, who attended it, who were present, and the officers, if any, who were elected. Why is this? If the Typothetæ were an institution to be desired in our midst, if its objects were laudable and their attainment for the good of the community, would it not have been noticed and welcomed? Certainly it would. But the newspapers of this city know right well that the principles of the association are such that the establishment of a branch here would prove a stumbling block in the promotion of harmony between employer and employed, for their principles and constitution are utterly opposed to progressive ideas for the amelioration and enlightenment of the laboring classes. Such a programme of principles would prove very unpopular here, and that is the reason why the papers withheld all notice of its introduction. Originally founded as a social organization of employing printers it has developed largely into a society to fight and break up, if possible, the International Typographical Union and its branches. The sooner they get rid of these members who believe in this way the better will it be for all parties. The International Union is too firmly rooted in the hearts of the printers of this continent to be easily upset. On this point an employer in the Artist Printer says: "I really can't see what affinity the employers of Union labor can have for the employers of the incompetents and the disreputable outcasts from union societies. The latter will always be a detriment to the former, and hinder them in all their endeavors to adjust matters of difference between themselves and their employers in a just and honorable manner."

One of the main "principles" of the Typothetæ is to flood the trade with boy labor, one idiot belonging to the organization claiming that each office or workshop should have at least two apprentices to one journeyman, "in order to keep up," as he says, "with the increase of population." Again, on this subject, "An Employer" says:

"It would be well to pay much more attention than is paid to the apprentices we now have, and see that the promise to 'teach them the trade' is truly and faithfully kept, which, alas, is not done with more than one-tenth of the learners at the present time. After a boy is once engaged, nobody seems to consider it his duty to instruct him in anything, the employer or foreman least of all. If an apprentice does become proficient, it is because he has more than the usual amount of ambition and smartness, and has 'picked up' all that he knows at the end of his time."

We cannot call the policy of the unions at all "short-sighted." It is but an attempt to limit the number of apprentices to the capacity of those who undertake to teach them, and if the unions could only secure the co-operation of the employers in this matter, the day would not be far distant when we could boast of a better and more skilled class of journeyman printers than we now have."

Continuing "An Employer" thus sensibly discourses on the question of incompetent labor:

"Has it never occurred to them that a monopoly of knowledge concerning a trade is as useful to the employer as it is to the employee who endeavors to build up such restrictions around his art? Suppose you employ ten good men at \$20 per week, and gain the same percentage off their labor as the man across

the street who hires 'bum' labor at \$10 per week, don't you see that you are 100 per cent better off than he. Why not encourage high prices for work, and try your best to educate your workmen so that they will be worth high prices?"

"I become rather weary at times when I see some firms reducing the wages of their employees' so that they may be better able to compete with their rivals, just as if their compositors couldn't do the same thing and be on the same footing as before. In what does it result, but to lessen the amount of profit, though it be based on the same percentage?"

"Reducing wages and hiring cheap men, or increasing the number of apprentices for the purpose of reducing the cost of work, is but poor policy at the best. It doesn't pay. Aim at high-class work, get a reputation for it, and secure good prices accordingly. Don't degrade the printing business more than you can help. Don't assist in increasing the number of 'botches' now in it by advocating for more apprentices."

The Typothetæ is opposed to the progress in material wealth and social advancement of the workingman, and those who enroll themselves in its ranks should have the patronage of the working classes diverted away from them.

We congratulate the printers of Rouse's Point on the establishment of a branch of the International Typographical Union at that place, and we trust that the enthusiasm displayed in its formation will not be allowed to wane. Such an organization was sorely needed, and now that it has been formed we advise its members to act at all times up to the principles of Unionism, and the success of the branch is assured. Besides being of benefit to the employees themselves it will also advance the interests of the proprietors, as we find that the waste and destruction of material—so liable to occur in a printing office—is reduced to a minimum where unionism exists. The establishment of a Union at Rouse's Point should also greatly benefit the printing trade here, as it will considerably reduce the risk of unfair competition from that quarter.

In connection with the Herald lock-out a funny story is now told. It seems that the brawny editor, assisted by two or three of the reporting staff, was engaged in locking up the daily bulletin, which, by the way, was no indication of the contents of the paper. They managed the locking up successfully, and the question of getting it down to the press room arose. The editor being possessed of plenty of muscle, volunteered to carry it down. Hoisting the form up he got it on his head (as the easiest way to carry it), but, alas! his head went through, and left the chase hanging on his shoulders. Ridding himself of his improvised collar, he left the composing room crestfallen.

The electors of St. Lawrence Ward have now before them, in the person of Mr. Clendinning, a gentleman whose election as their representative would do honor to the ward. He is a man of conspicuous ability, of conscious probity, and in business tact is second to none. Mr. Clendinning is also a fluent speaker in both languages, and altogether a very desirable representative. The workmen especially should rally round him, as in his position as an extensive employer of labor he has ever shown that kindness and consideration towards his employees which ought to exist between labor and capital.

Letters to the Editor.

To the Editor ECHO:

SIR,—I think if "the finest" will keep their eyes open they will notice that the G. T. R. run locomotives on Wellington and St. Patrick streets within the prescribed hours. I saw two boys running to get a ride on the locomotive on Wellington street in the middle of the afternoon lately, but I saw none of "THE FINEST" AROUND.

To the Editor of THE ECHO:

SIR,—Owing to the fluctuating nature of the trade there are at different times large numbers of compositors out of permanent employment in this city, and believing the employing printers of Montreal would not be averse to considering any proposition having for its object the welfare of those so situated, I respectfully submit the following:—

1. That the master printers of this city substitute, wholly or in part, male help in lieu of the female compositors now in their employ, the latter to receive two or three months' notice of the intended change.

The dismissal of the female compositors, in the manner proposed, would be no hardship to them, and their replacement by first-class male help no increased cost to the employers. Why? it may be asked. I will answer. The young ladies now employed as female compositors could easily procure positions at more suitable industries or professional occupations that would give them equally as good remuneration for their labor and better adapt them for the higher and nobler sphere of womanhood, which many of them in their course of life will no doubt be called upon to accept. To-day, employ in the composing room; to-morrow, it may be, the female compositor becomes queen of the household.

As to the likelihood of any increased expenditure arising from this change, as suggested, I do not think there need be the least apprehension on the part of the employers; if any, I claim it would be insignificant, compared with the more satisfactory manner in which the composition would be done by good, reliable men, any number of whom can be secured. I hold, too, that the journeyman compositors have the prior claim to the consideration of the employers, in that they have served a regular apprenticeship to the trade and adopted it as their vocation in life. In the printing trade, as in other like industries where female help is brought into competition, I think it will be found that it is necessary to augment their numbers in order to offset their inability to perform general work. It is therefore nothing more than distributing among a larger number of inferior help the same amount of wages that might with better advantage, and more satisfaction to the employer, be paid out to first-class male help.

I have had occasion, during the past year, to work in one of the large printing houses in this city employing female and boy labor to a large extent, and after close observation of the ability of the female compositor for general work, I have no hesitation in asserting that not one in five ever approaches to average proficiency. Again, I am in a position to affirm that they are unfairly used to deprive the journeyman compositor of that to which he alone is justly entitled. So, too, in regard to the excess of boy labor. During my stay in the printing house I have reference to I was compelled, through being unable to better my condition, to accept the same scale for superior workmanship, that took longer to complete, as was paid for the plainer kinds of composition; in fact, owing to the system of "culling" in favor of my female competitor, I was unable to earn that which I was capable of doing with a fair field, no favor, and no other assistance but my own.

2. Another grievance of the journeyman compositor is the absence of a regular indenture system of apprenticeship and the strict enforcement of the same.

Taking the old adage, that "the boy is father to the man," so is the apprentice to the skilled workman. At the present time the almost common rule is to take a boy into an office without any inquiry as to his capability. At the end of four or five years he steps out as a journeyman, knowing what?—very little more than the ordinary routine of the office which he had just left. His next move is to seek admission to the Trades Union (if one exists in the locality), who, for self-protection, are forced to admit him. Armed with a certificate of membership, and strong in the faith and assistance of his fellow-craftsmen, he succeeds in obtaining employment in some other office, the superintendent of which readily discovers his inability to satisfactorily perform the duties assigned him, and charges him with incompetency. Who is responsible for this? I answer his first employer or his representative, as well as the parent or guardian, for had there been a regular bond of indenture in the first instance there would have been an obligation on the part of his employer to have taught him the higher grades of workmanship. And yet employing printers will taunt trade unions with fostering inferior help, when, in fact, they are the direct cause of it themselves. This is an all-important matter for consideration and ought to receive serious attention.

As on these two questions, female and boy labor, depends much of the welfare of the journeymen compositors of this city, I suggest that the men seek a conference with the employers and endeavor to arrive at some amicable arrangement. At such meeting, too, might be discussed a scale of prices for newspaper and book and job work; the hours of labor regulated, particularly with regard to morning papers, and a common agreement arrived at that would be binding on both employer and employee. Thus would be established that entente cordiale which should exist between the employing printers of this city and the journeymen compositors. How about the employers taking the lead in this matter?

Every fair-minded journeyman compositor, and the public in general, should sympathize with you in the lock-out to which you have been subjected. Knowing, as I do, the toilsome labor you have to perform, night after night, I have often wondered how you stood the strain, and now, to make your position worse, your employer, it appears, seeks to take away from you some of that small portion of the best paying work which you have all along been receiving. Shame on such a proceeding! But what shall be said of those unfair men who have replaced you? Bereft of all principle, they have sunk their manhood so low that they ought to be pitied rather than condemned. There is yet time for them to redeem themselves, and I hope they will reconsider their hasty and unfair action by vacating the positions which they have taken.

COMPOSITOR.

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Saturday, June 14th.

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Handsome 42 inch Bordered Chambrays in all the newest shades.

SHOT BROCADES.

Brocaded Chambrays in new colors. Novelties in Fancy Chambrays.

CHECKS.

Stripes, Plaids, Brocades.

FROSTED.

Novelties in Fancy Chambrays.

SCOTCH PLAIDS.

Plain Chambrays in new shades.

ART SHADES.

Soft finished lawn for dresses in all the newest high art shades.

NOVELTIES.

Many novelties represented in this department.

A BARGAIN LINE.

Plain and Checked Chambrays, 7½c per yard.

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SATEEN DEPARTMENT.

FRENCH SATEENS.

VERY RICH.

French Sateens, the newest modes from Paris, in all qualities.

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of Persian designs, in light colors.

ENGLISH SATEENS.

A large stock of the newest patterns and shades in English Sateens just received from England.

CAMBRICS.

Handsome Delaine Pattern Cambrics.

PRINTS AND SATEENS

Handsome Sateens, 10c, 11c, 12c yard. New Pattern Prints, 6½c, 7½c, 8½c, 10c. Choice English Drillettes, 12c yard.

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