

HALIFAX, N. S., SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1885.

## TRADES-UNIONS.

Trades-unions are bitterly denounced by some people who do not see any necessity for such organizations. On the other hand, we know of some employers of labor, of some manufacturers especially, that have not the slightest objection to these unions when they are properly managed. If they be occasionally mismanaged, and led into absurd extremes, it does not follow that they ought to be condemned in their entirety; it simply follows that into them, as into all other things human, abuses are liable to creep. The following very pertinent and sensible remarks on this subject are from the *Bangor Industrial Journal*,—one of the best edited journals of its class with which we are acquainted:—

"In these days of strikes and lockouts the query naturally arises—Are not trades-unions failures? If we confine ourselves to certain points of observation the conviction is forced upon the mind that such is the case, but probably a broader range of vision would show that while these industrial combinations have their disadvantages, they also have their advantages and benefits. In taking a philosophical view of the situation the rights and interests of the laboring man should be as carefully and conscientiously considered as those of the employers. No just or equitable determination of this much-vexed question can be made, unless the natural rights of both sides be taken into account. From this broad position, trades-unions cannot be said to be useless or, in the main, failures.

"The right to combine for mutual protection is an inherent right. Society itself, as at present constituted throughout the world, is based upon this principle. The State is but a combination of individuals who join hands under the form of law for the purpose of protecting each other's interests and receiving protection. Trades-unions *per se*, then, are not necessarily wrong. A very strong evidence of the correctness of this proposition may be seen in the combinations which employers themselves indulge in from time to time. These associations, formed of classes who have a common interest and a common peril, are founded in a necessity, and, if properly conducted, are commendable. The trouble has been, and perhaps ever will be, in the abuse of the power and advantage which arise under such combinations. Fire and water are useful elements when restrained under proper bounds—they are even indispensable elements, and contribute more largely than any others to man's enjoyment and benefit—but once let them obtain the mastery, and what do we see? On the one hand we have fierce conflagrations destroying the noblest works of man, on the other we have the havoc and destruction which only the tornado and the flood can work. With trades-unions we have also a great power for good—a power alike beneficial to the workman and his employer—but this power must and should be controlled within reasonable limits; otherwise, like fire and water when unrestrained, it will work with most destructive influence."

## EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

The rapid improvement which has been made in educational methods during the last few years has led to the creation of a rather misleading term—the "New Education." Now, the movement in favor of rational teaching is new only in its wide-spread influence; in its origin, like so many apparently new things, it is very old. Roger Ascham, who "taught the young ideas how to shoot," (he was both a teacher and a writer on archery) in the 16th century, practised, or at least professed to practise, certain methods which the advanced educationalists of to-day are struggling to render general. The wave next struck Germany, bringing into prominence the eminent names of Comenius, Ratich and Sturm. In the 18th century Rousseau's 'Emile' revived the movement, which was largely helped on by Basedow and Pestalozzi. The last named is the greatest and most remarkable of educational reformers. He became a school-master out of pure philanthropy: he was extremely poor (of course he lived in the last century); he was himself almost uneducated, and knew nothing of the experience of other teachers; he acquired a reputation for lack of knowledge, judgment, power of government, and common sense.

The principles contended for by these educationalists are based upon nature's methods. They proceed from the concrete to the abstract, from the known to the unknown; they require the pupil to teach himself, the teacher only directing his movements; they discountenance all coercion; they allow nothing to be committed to memory until it is understood.

Many of the greatest inventions have been made by men who could never apply them well. So it was with these reforms. Rousseau was not a teacher, and Pestalozzi confessed to "an unrivalled incapacity to govern." But the value of their ideas has been demonstrated by the experience of practical men; and it would be well if everyone who engages in the work of education would base his practice upon the principles which they have laid down.

## OUR FISHERIES.

In ten days time the fishery clauses in the treaty of Washington will expire, in consequence of which Canadian fish-dealers will no longer enjoy the free markets of the United States, and the American fishermen will be debarred from the privilege of fishing within the three-mile limits in Canadian waters.

To the fish-merchants of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick the free access to the American market is an undoubted boon, and in the present state of the West Indian trade the loss of this market cannot fail to be injurious to the fishing interests of the Maritime Provinces. This loss, how-

ever, will be compensated in part by the inability of the American fishermen to provide for the wants of the markets hitherto supplied by them; and as these will be more directly under the control of our Canadian fish-merchants we may find in the end our present loss prove a direct gain.

The exclusion of the American fishermen from our in-shore fisheries will undoubtedly be advantageous to those who are engaged in fishing along our coast, and if we are able to secure permanent and remunerative foreign markets we shall in a measure hold a monopoly of the trade, since the American fishermen will not be in a position to successfully compete with us. The American market will be enlarged to the American fishermen, but since the catch will be much less than it has hitherto been the people of the United States will no longer be able to purchase fish as cheaply as they have hitherto done.

The revenue cutters along the American sea-board will prevent the smuggling of Canadian fish into the United States, and these should find their counter-part in the gun-boats to be placed along our coast to protect our in-shore fisheries. Brother Jonathan should remember that to him free fish means free fisheries, and that the loss of the former to us means the loss of the latter to him.

## HERAT.

From time immemorial, Herat, which is frequently styled the "Hilt of the Sword of Afghanistan," has occupied an important place in the world's history.

In the early dawn of civilization Herat was the acknowledged metropolis of the Aryan people, and for centuries it was occupied by the descendants of Timur, and was regarded as one of the most favored cities in Central Asia. The strategical position of Herat, has long caused it to be a bone of contention among the surrounding tribes, and its present ruler has experienced great difficulty in retaining his hold upon it, owing to the difficulties of communication between Herat and the Capital. The city, which contains a population of about twenty-five thousand, is situated in a beautiful valley, formed by two spurs of the Hindoo Koosh Mountains. This valley has been rendered exceedingly fruitful by a superb system of irrigation, it being estimated that the food supply now produced would find about one hundred and fifty thousand persons, in addition to the present native population. From Herat radiate the great caravan routes direct to Kandahar, Cabul, Bokara, Suisten, Meshed, Merv and Kliwa, to Kermon, to Yegd, and to Ispahan.

The fortifications of Herat, which are of an imposing character, are nevertheless weak and insecure; and it is doubtful whether under present conditions the city could be successfully held for more than two days against a well-equipped foe, like Russia. The citadel, which is a huge artificial mound, two hundred and fifty feet in width at the base, and fifty feet in height, is surmounted by a wall twenty-five feet high and fourteen feet thick at the base. The city, however, is dominated by high hills which render its present fortifications practically useless.

The position of Herat upon the frontier of Afghanistan, and in close proximity to the boundaries of Persia and Tartary give to it an importance from a military stand-point beyond that which it would otherwise have. This the Russians have not been slow to realize, and their movements in Central Asia have hitherto been guided by the strong desire to possess so important a position; as from Herat they can readily press forward to the much coveted port upon the Persian Gulf. Herat would undoubtedly be a loss to the Ameer of Afghanistan, but its occupation by the Russians would in no wise endanger the possessions of the British in India.

## GLADSTONE.

The acceptance by the Queen of the resignation of the Premier will no doubt enable Mr. Gladstone to retire from public life to enjoy that well-earned peace and quiet which he has so long coveted. Mr. Gladstone has, during his career of upwards of half a century, seen many reforms carried into effect which mark the Britain of to-day as compared with that of the early years of King William IV. In the outset of his public life Gladstone was a most pronounced conservative, and though a somewhat young politician, he vigorously opposed the emancipation of the negroes in the West Indies. His subsequent career proved him to be possessed of more liberal views than he gave promise of in early life, and the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed finally led him to throw in his lot with the moderate liberal party of the kingdom. His wide-spread influence in Britain was due to his freedom from the taint of political corruption, rather than to his administrative ability; and his record, though by no means brilliant, is one of which any honest man might well feel proud. His successor in office, Lord Salisbury, will find it difficult to frame a domestic and foreign policy that will be acceptable to the people's representatives. With Ireland in semi-rebellion, the Sudan given up to the plundering hordes of the Mahdi, and the Russians threatening British supremacy in Persia and Afghanistan, Lord Salisbury will indeed require a more than average amount of foresight and sagacity, if he would relieve the nation from the vexatious complications of to-day, and again place her in her proper position in the vanguard of civilization.

The condition of trade in Halifax at the present time is such as to cause serious forebodings as to the prospects of our becoming a great commercial centre. Would it not be well for our business men to follow the example set them by Lunenburg and Lockport in fitting out a fleet to engage in the bank fisheries.