

[Written for THE ECHO.]

**WORKINGMEN! ROUSE YOURSELVES.**

By CYRILLE HORSBOLT.

From Melbourne to London, and from Moscow to Washington, are heard incessantly and with ever-growing force the sullen murmur and well founded discontent of labor against the increasing abuses and encroachments of that horde of speculators and monopolists who, in the midst of the liberty and progress of this age of enlightenment, have brought their operations to so bold and brazen a standpoint that no obstacle, however formidable, seem to them insurmountable which stand in the way of their insatiable greed. These scourges of humanity are to be found at every spot that offers to their fertile and corrupt mind the opportunity of plunder whereby they may enrich themselves and enjoy easy and luxurious lives at the cost of the humble and enduring workman. These human parasites are seen on every round of the social ladder: among potentates of ill-omen and gang that surrounds them; with those forming that section of society composed of flibusters, but politely termed the lords of finance, down to the lower circle of certain small and rude shopkeepers and manufacturers. This latter have also the ambition to elevate themselves above the lowly but respectable class in which they were born, and, in order to turn their dream of wealth into reality, think no way more simple and natural than that of treading on the backs and shoulders of those whom cruel circumstances have placed at their mercy; indifferent are they, thinking nothing of the heavy burden imposed, caring nothing for the inevitable result, making their victims prematurely aged, shortening their lives, crushing them without remorse or pity, leaving them in prospect—after forty or fifty years of hard service rendered to society—naught else but the ignoble alternative of ending their miserable existence within the walls of a degrading almshouse, or to be picked up some morning on the icy flagstones of the sidewalk, where the last breath of the wretched victims of human rapacity has been exhaled, overcome by cold hunger and exhaustion, while their small or great lords and masters are, tranquilly enjoying, in the midst of comfort, luxury and splendor those delights secured to them through labor,—labor bathed in the sweat, and often in the blood of these unfortunates.

Of that large army of creators of the world's wealth, which should be the property of those who have taken an active part in its creation and perpetration, the large number get barely sufficient wage in exchange for their work to maintain a mean and meagre existence. Every trades union or body of laboring men have grievances to complain of and right to maintain, and endeavor, in the midst of the struggle which they have begun, to find some way of redressing the one and securing the other. Many unions have already obtained satisfactory concessions, which, although partial and less than just, have nevertheless powerfully contributed to the amelioration of their social condition. But there are other workers, we are sorry to say, who seem entirely indifferent to their fate and appear to be willing to remain in the same position where dwell their ancestors before the deluge.

I will cite one of these trades, in which I am particularly concerned—that of the bakers. There are men, or rather living machines, who, for more than a quarter of a century have not, so to say, tasted the natural enjoyment, common to brutes, of a peaceful night's rest. It is a rare thing in many places for them to work less than 15 to 20 hours in a day. Sunday is for them a dead letter. Whilst others enjoy the day according to their individual taste, the bakers must remain at home and devote the morning to repose in order to be able to get through their burdensome task which, O shame, begins early in the evening and ends on Monday. They know nothing of the sweetness of family union permitted to the majority of mortals, and what is their wages compared with other artisans? And yet no other trade, not even the printers possess a means of action more radical and telling than the bakers, and which would be more efficacious if they only understood how to employ them wisely to ameliorate their sad condition. Between the two branches of industry—the bakers and the printers—there exists, from a material and intellectual point of view, a certain analogy which no one can deny. The one sustains the physical, the other the intellectual life. But, while acknowledging the necessity of intellectual nourishment, we must aver that the bakers belong the right of primacy by the indispensable necessity of their daily product. Everybody will admit that before enlightening the mind, bread must be had to satisfy the needs of the stomach. The union of our intelligent brethren of the press is an accomplished fact and works marvellously well; will the bakers follow

their example and walk in their footsteps? Let us hope so. If they would reflect a little and act in unison, it would not even be necessary to have recourse to a strike, which, in any case, is always a hindrance to the victors as well as to the vanquished. Twenty-four hours would suffice to bring to an agreement the most stubborn employers and throw off the most degrading bonds under which bakers now endure the existence of pariahs. They might break forever the heavy chains which they mutually forge, and the remedy is as simple as it is efficacious—namely, unity, sincerity and harmony.

Bakers come out of your shell, and cast away false prejudice and that want of reciprocal confidence of which your enemies take advantage and by which they encourage rivalry amongst you in order the more easily to exploit you. Act, and before long you will be forced to confess how blind you were, and the darkness in which you so long groped will be replaced by light. Many have already answered the call of brothers devoted to a noble cause, and, guided by principles of justice, probity and disinterestedness, have cast their lot with the Union. You cannot, on the other hand, too carefully guard against certain imposters with honeyed speech who creep among you; for these intriguers, under pretext of organizing you, seek only to bring confusion in your ranks—their object being to create for themselves some sinecure. Trust the honesty and good faith which has been tried and proven. To the indifferent I should ask, will you listen to the voice of reason? It is for you the only hope, the only plank of safety, the means of freeing yourself from the unmanly slavery under which so many groan, and by their own fault. By uniting you have everything to gain. You will secure a method of work more worthy of men and more in rapport with the age in which we live. Unity will afford you the opportunity to assist at the reunions of men from which you are necessarily excluded, and enable you to take an active part in all discussions affecting your interests.

Frequently we hear some workers grumble about the arbitrary demand of certain employers. Undoubtedly there are everywhere natures hard and despotic, but it would be well for such workers to reflect that in most cases they have nobody to blame but themselves. Is it not a sickening and degrading thing to see some obliged to humble themselves in going from door to door offering their services at an abatement, like some vile commodity? It is the business of those who cannot dispense with their services to come to solicit them; for workers should never forget that the sweat drops moistening their forehead are more serviceable to the good of humanity than all the pearls and diamonds—fruit of our labor—with which the moths of society deck themselves.

Let us hope that the time is not far distant when every individual of both sexes forming the legions of respectable artisans will comprehend that it is to the different trades unions that belong the right of fixing on a reasonable basis the limit and the value of the services given by each of their respective members. To the bakers we make a fervent appeal to cease to give two days' labor in one, for this unworthy action is casting on the sidewalk a number of their brother workers and robbing them of the sole means of providing the simplest necessities for their families. To every wage-earner we will say, learn how to make yourselves respected by those who employ you, in maintaining between them and you a dignity without arrogance, instead of a low and debasing servility such as too often exists, and which is the cause of that air of inferiority and even contempt with which the honest working man is regarded by the self-sufficient and by the narrow-minded.

It is not in the presumptuous or the vulgar, or in beings of brutal instinct, where one must look for the superiority of man, but among persons of feeling in every position, who, animated by purely philanthropic sentiments, labor with earnestness, either by hand or brain to better our social condition and to reconstitute us in that now usurped place at the great banquet of humanity of which we should be the greatest ornament. It is our duty to show ourselves worthy of the noble title of artisans in laboring in concert for a cause so holy and so just—our emancipation. That cause reposes on principles of honor and probity, is incontestable, and cannot fail to win the approbation of every person who takes a sincere interest in the fate of the oppressed.

To all intelligent and conscientious employers we would state that our object is not to harass them in declaring an open war upon them, but on the contrary to protect their interests, which are analogous to our own and to say to them that in coming closer to us they will find men trustworthy, on whom they may rely and in whom they may place confidence as true auxiliaries to strive against their wrongs who are ours; that is, the competitors of cheap products or cut-throats of honest industry; for while aiming to oust ranks without partiality every craftsman of our trade we shall never suffer any one to remain in it who has proven himself unworthy.

**LABOR AND WAGES.**

**Cleanings From the Industrial Field of the World.**

The St. Paul painters will demand the eight hours' day after May 1, 1891.

The American Federation of Labor will hold a State convention in Albany this month.

Chicago steamfitters won recognition for the union, \$3 as the lowest pay for fitter and \$2 for helpers.

Carpenters are scarce at Great Falls, Mont. Helena men were offered \$4 and \$1.50 to work there.

At the Glasgow convention of seamen and dockmen, it was suggested the next strike take place in midocean.

It is estimated that four-fifths of the engines now working in the world have been built within the last 25 years.

The New York surface railroad men now want a ten hour law. The present State law provides for ten hours labor, to be performed within twelve consecutive hours.

The Trades and Labor Union of St. Louis has established its own headquarters, with a library and reading room and a labor bureau for the benefit of organized labor. It is self supporting and of inestimable value.

As a form of organization Trades Unionism represents the "survival of the fittest." It is approved by the logic of centuries. Its imitations are those of human nature. Its aspirations are boundless as humanity. F. K. F., in the Boston Leader.

Twenty-five unions are now attached to the Patternmakers' League, and they will hold a convention in Chicago Feb. 1. Their special business will be the consideration of means whereby the eight-hour rule can be put into effect March 1.

Samuel G. Myers, President of the American Federation of Labor, has sent out a circular a king union men to sign petitions favoring woman's suffrage. He says they need not commit their societies to the principle at issue.

In the Prussian mines last year 712 men out of 317,000 (or about one out of every 443) were mortally injured in accidents. This is a considerable decrease for the mortality of 1888, when one out of every 430 was killed. In the coal mines the mortality from accidents was about one in every 382 or 553 in a total of 213,158. Thirty-two deaths were the result of premature explosions of blasts.

The Chicago Cornice Makers' Union is in fair condition after maintaining a strike for nearly six months, during the past week the largest employing cornice maker in the city gave in and conceded the eight hour day. There is no doubt that before the spring trade commences the bosses will be ready to meet the union on its own terms.

Trades Union philosophy begins with the recognition of the class interest of the wage earners. That the Fourth Estate is able to proclaim a philosophy, marks its advance. The sellers of labor require their own books of trade. The phrase "identity of interest between laborer and capitalist" is an unwarranted fiction. The proprietor in the counting room can have, in an economic sense, no blood relationship with the man at the bench.—Labor Leader.

The Chicago Painters have at last "got a move on them" and are rapidly uniting with the International Union of Painters and Decorators. There are now four branches of that organization in the city with a combined membership of nearly eight hundred. Nearly all the old members of L. A. 1940, K. of L., are joining the Brotherhood, the former organization being practically out of existence.

There is a fair prospect of the difficulty existing between the Carpenters' Council and Master Carpenters' and Builders' Association, being amicably arranged, and thus averting a strike the coming spring. The carpenters were never better organized or better able to maintain a strike than at present; on the contrary the bosses admit having lost heavily by the strike last spring, and are in no mood to prolong the controversy through another season.

When Typographical Union No. 6, New York, met last Sunday the question of reducing the death benefit from \$150 to \$100 was raised and talked over at great length. The men who favored the change said the \$150 was a little too much, and the payment of it was a heavy drain on the Union's receipts. Last month five members died, and their deaths cost the Union \$750. It was decided to settle the matter by a general vote in March. The Committee on Scale was ordered to revise the scale of prices and, in doing so, to consider the nine-hour question, typesetting machines and time work. Prices are not to be raised. It was announced, amid cheers, that Typographical No. 7, which is composed of German compositors, had secured a charter from the International Union, and would be known as Union No. 247 hereafter. A committee was appointed to fix up the difference between No. 6 and No. 247. A committee of the locked-out Rochester shoe

makers appealed for financial assistance. The Secretary was ordered to send out a circular in their behalf. They were given credentials authorizing them to collect money in union printing offices.

The London Daily News says that according to a return prepared for Sir Henry Parks by the New South Wales Government statist there are 319,000 bona fide workingmen in New South Wales, of whom 110,000 are members of various unions. These numbers are inclusive of the miners.

The "pauper labor of Europe" seems very much agitated just at present. Frenchman, German, Englishman and every other workingman seem determined to better their condition. There'll be music in Europe by-and-by, and the "pauper laborers" will be in the band.

The gentlemen who own the anthracite coal lands of Pennsylvania met recently and agreed to "raise" the price of "their" coal from 10 to 20 cents a ton, according to the quantity furnished by nature. As a consequence the local wholesale dealers have advanced their prices 52 and 50 cents a ton, and those who can only buy a bushel or a bucket will be obliged to stand an increase of \$1 to \$3 per ton. This is one of the beauties of private ownership of natural opportunities. A few people, or perhaps a great many, may freeze to death this winter, but then, you know, vested rights must be respected, else some of our monopolists will have to go to work.—Ex.

The union painters will be the next body of men in New York to enforce the eight-hour rule. At present many of the men work eight hours a day, getting \$3.12 a day, the rate based on the \$3.50. Last Sunday there was a joint meeting of the representatives of branches No. 1, 3 and 6, Progressive Painters, Operative Painters, German Painters, the German Fresco Painters and the American Society of Fresco Painters, at Clarendon Hall. It was resolved to make a demand for the new system, but a date was not set. The employers met on Jan. 15 when the matter was submitted to them. The painters will insist on \$3.50 a day.

Lynn and Rochester. Do you know, the news from here? The news is that employees are all combining generally against employers. In Rochester 21 manufacturers have united to support one of their number in trouble with his (?) men. (Do the men belong to him?) They have all agreed to employ no union men till the men in that factory return to work. Trades union officers giving out money to support strikers have been arrested for supporting a combination in trade against employers. (Combinations of employers against employees of course are perfectly legal. "Kings can never sin.") What does this mean? It means slavery; it means war; the enemy is moving on.—Boston Living Issues.

The condition of labor in Italy has not been sensibly improved by modern progress. The wages of men in cotton mills vary from 21 cents to 48 cents per day of ten hours; those of women from 7 to 15. In the city of Rome daily wages are as follows: Stone masons, from 56 to 58 cents; carpenters, from 56 to 78; day laborers, 30 cents; stonemason (in rough) from \$1 to \$1.25; stonemason (finishers) from \$2 to \$3. The stonemason workers constitute, of course, an aristocracy of labor; their number being comparatively small, they should not be considered in forming an idea of the condition of the working class. The low money wages which laborers and ordinary mechanics receive will appear still lower in the light of prices for necessaries. Beef, according to quality, costs from 15 to 30 cents a pound; butter, 30 cents; sugar, granulated, 15 cents; coffee, 40 cents; wheat flour, 54 cents. Meat is hardly ever tasted by a workingman.

*Parker, the East End Shoe Man, is selling VELVET SLIPPERS suitable for Presents, cheap at 1351 St. Catherine street. Call and buy a Pair at 75c or \$1, or a Pair at \$1.25, worth \$1.75.*

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