

# Ontario Workman

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

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## Labor Notes.

New and large foundries are being erected at Neuves Maisons in the Mearthes, France.

The members of the Society of Amalgamated Engineers number 41,285, and the funds amount to £155,000.

The chain cable-makers of Gateshead are on strike for a slight rise of wages, their masters having refused all compromise.

According to the new census returns for the county and city of Dublin, the most numerous class of artisans is that of plumbers and carpenters. No less than 364 were employed in poplin manufacture, 258 made wigs and chignons. No less than 11,500 are described as laborers.

The Home Secretary, upon the consideration of the memorial of the five gas stokers, expressing contrition for their offence, presented by Mr. Mundella, has recommended the remission of eight months of the term of imprisonment. They will, therefore, be liberated after four months' imprisonment.

The carpet weavers of Kidderminster and other districts have been renewing their applications for an advance of wages; and there has been a second conference between the masters and the men in Kidderminster.

The manufacturers have agreed to give a farthing per yard more on Brussels carpets, and other qualities proportionately—an advance from 10 to 15 per cent. on weavers' wages. It will commence some time in March. The masters have also conceded an hour on Saturdays. The manufacturers in Durham and Scotland will give the advance as well as those in Kidderminster and that district.

The engine-drivers and stokers on the Northern and Southern Railways of Spain are on strike for an advance of wages and shorter hours; and, especially, the Northern Railway Company has threatened to import workmen from England, France, and Belgium. From France some have already arrived, but they have fraternized with the men on strike, and most of them have returned home; from Valencia alone, about a score have gone home again. The men on strike have called upon the New Council of the International Federation of Madrid, to request the intercession of the association to prevent the importation of foreign workmen, and to have the facts published in the English press, together with an appeal to the English engine-drivers and stokers to abstain from accepting situations in Spain during the strike.

The London postmen, after waiting for some time with the most exemplary patience, have at last received an answer to their memorial for increased pay. The Lords of the Treasury will not make any alteration in their wages, although their petition was backed by the recommendation of the Postmaster-General; but some improvement is to be made in their uniform. When this decision became known, it, of course, caused great dissatisfaction. The United Kingdom General Post Office and Telegraph Service Benefit Society announced a lecture on the subject to be given at Albion Hall, London Wall, next Monday. In view of this announcement the Post Office authorities have issued a circular reminding the employes that they are forbidden by the rules of the service to hold meetings or discuss questions as to their pay beyond the walls of the Post Office building. We understand, however, that the lecture will be given at all risks. —Graphic.

A deputation from London, including Mr. Applegarth, is in Barnsley, endeavoring to compose a dispute which has existed in the linen trade for 24 weeks, and kept 1,500 persons out of employment. Interviews between the masters and the operatives have been brought about, but with what probability of a settlement is not known.

The annual meeting of the North of England Arbitration Board was held at Darlington on Monday. The report showed that nearly 15,000 members were connected

with the Board. Mr. Dale was re-elected president, and Mr. Trew vice-president. An agreement substantially like that of Staffordshire was come to respecting the wages question, viz., that the present rate of wages shall continue to the end of March; in the meantime, with a view to further settlement, it was agreed that communications should be entered into with the South Staffordshire Conciliation Board, with a view of adopting an arrangement for regulating the wages of both districts in a similar manner. If the standing committee fail in effecting by the end of March an arrangement in conjunction with Staffordshire, the wages of the northern district shall be dealt with independently. The sliding scale shall be fully considered, with a view to its taking permanent form, and failing an agreement, it shall be referred to an arbitrator. The proceedings were harmonious.

The following letter has been received from Mr. Gladstone to acknowledge the receipt of a memorial, adopted at a meeting held at Bedlington on the 18th inst. — "10, Downing-street, Whitehall, Jan. 25, 1873.—Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Gladstone to acknowledge the receipt of a memorial, adopted at a meeting held at Bedlington, in the borough of Morpeth, on the 18th inst., urging the unsatisfactory character of the household franchise in boroughs, and advocating manhood suffrage. Mr. Gladstone desires me to state that he is aware of the serious difficulties which the last Parliament encountered in the definition of a house, and that he feels the gravity of the considerations connected with the question of household franchise, which Parliament will doubtless weigh with care whenever the subject again comes under notice.—I have the honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant, W. B. GURDON.—Mr. Robert Elliott."

## THE STRIKE IN SOUTH WALES.

There is unfortunately no sign of an immediate termination being arrived at in the dispute which, since the first of the month, has been pending between the ironmasters and their workmen. Statements were freely made that if a ballot were taken there would be found a large preponderance of votes in favor of accepting the reduction of 10 per cent. The secret vote has accordingly been taken at Dowlais, at Blairst, at Beaufort, and one or two other centres of the great works, but the result has been a signal failure.

A mass meeting was held on Tuesday night at the Drill Hall, Merthyr. It was attended by men representing every branch of the iron and coal trade; but, of course the latter were in preponderance. The object of the assembly was to hear Mr. Halliday's address. There were 2,000 persons present. The miners' secretary, in a speech of two hours' duration, related the proceedings at the Leeds conference, recently held in reference to the South Wales strike. He assured his audience of the financial ability of the union to carry on the contest successfully.

At Merthyr on Wednesday a correspondent had an interview with Mr. Halliday, who maintains that the only means of closing the strike is by arbitration. Mr. Halliday stated that the executive were not only willing that men should work to supply the pumping engines with fuel for the purpose of keeping the pits clear of water, but they were prepared to find men. He mentioned, however, that it would only be upon the condition that the men were not required to do anything more than cut coal.

The Times thinks that such a strike as that in South Wales could hardly have risen without some great mismanagement, and it is clear the existing system of paying wages has worked very badly. It is contrary to all sound principles of business that the rate of wages should vary with the employer's receipts. Labor has a certain value of its own, which depends partly on the supply of its available, and partly on the nature of the employment; and an employer should in reason be no more bound

to raise the market value of labor because his profits have increased than to pay a higher price for his machinery. The system, moreover, has acted and reacted with equally injurious results. Since wages rise with the price of coal, the men have an immediate interest in diminishing the supply and thus raising the price, and the public have to suffer the consequences. That such a view of their interest is shortsighted they will learn by a bitter experience; but it is plausible, and is undoubtedly acted upon. Every improvement of their condition seems at present to lead to the same abuse. The masters, however, have set the men a bad example in the matter of fixing prices. They have practically formed themselves into a close union for fixing the price of iron and coal. They will not leave it to competition, but determine among themselves what they think the public ought to pay. In other words, they judge for themselves what proportion of the public profits they have a right to monopolize. They are now turning their own weapon against them, and for this reason alone the public sympathy can hardly be one-sided.

## MR. ARCH, THE ENGLISH AGRICULTURISTS' CHAMPION.

To most of our readers the name of Joseph Arch is "familiar as a household word," and they will no doubt peruse with pleasure the following speech delivered at Cirencester, on the occasion of the inauguration of a District Union:—

Mr. Arch was met with a storm of applause on rising. He said—Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentlemen, I certainly must say that of all the meetings I have attended since February last, I have not attended one which has given me so much pleasure of mind as attending this meeting to-night, and that because, sir, I have had the pleasure of meeting with you. Long years ago, sir, I knew you in the Leamington circuit, and when you left it I never thought of seeing that day when you and I should appear on a public platform to advocate the cause of the agricultural laborer and seek to promote his interest. But I feel pleased to-night, not only, sir, to meet with you, but to meet with those honorable men who assembled in this Hall to-day. I believe, sir, that at the present moment the whole of the agricultural laborers of this country are receiving more instruction by virtue of their combination, they are knowing one another better, they are feeling more and more one another's interest, and I believe, sir, they are feeling more at heart than ever was known in the history of this country the interests of the nation. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I do not to-night speak of the depravity and great degradation of the farm laborers, for the question is not, how did we get in the ditch? but, how are we to get out? (Applause.) If I were to draw some of the most deplorable pictures, perhaps, sir, I might arouse some feeling of resentment in some hearts; but my object is not to set class against class. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I throw that imputation back in the face of any man, whether he be Bishop or member of Parliament; sir, I give him that imputation back for what it is worth. I repeat, my object is not to set class against class, but to bring the great human family of capitalists and laborers into one common brotherhood of feeling, to sail in one boat, and to work for one common object. (Applause.) It is true, sir, that the farm laborers of this country have had sore grievances, and let me tell you what I think some of them have suffered. I may not have suffered quite so much as many have, but perhaps the reason why I haven't is because I wouldn't. (Great laughter.) As an agricultural laborer my object always was to get the biggest shilling—(hear, hear)—and I believe, sir, that could the agricultural laborers of twenty years ago have seen what we see to-day, they would have escaped misery which they had to endure. But we cannot blame many of those men I think, sir; because I know, in cases too numerous, that where the laborer has had a desire to better his condition, and to move to better fields of labor, he has been chained at home by debt and suffering. (Hear, hear, and applause.) I am very pleased, sir, to stand here to-night with the experience of a local preacher of twenty-five years' standing—of one who has walked twenty-five thousand miles to carry the Gospel of the blessed God to the rural districts—in which time I have entered scores of

laborers' homes, and found them always willing to share their few comforts with me; but I have actually seen poor women, when I have talked these matters with them, in their own quiet homes, shed tears of bitter grief because they were locked up in poverty, and had the man gone from home to look for a fresh and better place, and only ceased payment of the baker's or grocer's bill for one week, there was the certainty of having the County Court bailiff like a vulture down upon them. (Approbative cries.) I want to know whether this is the proper place and proper position of honest working men. (Voices: Never, no, no.) What we want is things fair and above board; and I put it to any gentleman in this meeting to-night, whether he is a farmer, whether he is a tradesman, whether he is a landlord, or whether he is a clergyman—I don't care which—I put it to any man in better circumstances of life, how should you like such a deadly incubus, such a fearful nightmare upon your souls, and to feel that when you have done your best, poverty and debt stare you in the face, and rests like so many clanking chains hanging about you? Could you be contented and satisfied with your lot? (Applause and voices: Never, never.) Then I want to say, in the name of humanity, let alone Christianity, don't begin to prate your contentment to us. But, sir, there is another dark cloud in the chapter of the people's ills, and one which I hope to see removed shortly and for ever suspended from the ruin of the honest working man. It is, sir, that when he has done his best, brought up his family of four, five, six, or seven children, in all the respectability which his thrift and industry, combined with his small earnings, will allow him to bring them up, that when he has done this he might turn to society and defy any man to stain his moral character,—when, with the wife of his bosom, who with pain has borne them and with anxiety reared them, when they have done their best and grey locks hang down their furrowed brow, I say to send them to the Union Workhouse is a disgrace to England and her Christianity. (Immense applause.) Sir, if there is anything at which my soul rebels, it is at incarcerating an honest man and his wife in that place which is but little better than a prison. (Hear, hear.) Well, now, gentlemen, we are told that we have been most wonderfully provided for in our old age, and that there is a very courteous workhouse master and a very sympathetic matron. (Laughter.) But having read of late some accounts of the fare of our workhouses in this country, my very soul has burned within me while they have tried to make it appear that in these union workhouses there are the comforts which we require. Well, if there are, then I want to ask this question—if these places have within them all that is necessary to make us happy, why don't they try twelve months there themselves. (Hear, hear, and great laughter.) If they can put up with it we can; but if they grumble then I say we have a right to grumble too. (Hear, hear.) But we are told, you know, that we must not be impertinent. I know that many like to have their dignity drawn beyond that which pulls them above upright; but, sir, I am not one of those thin skinned gentlemen who believe in classes. (Hear, hear, and applause.) If I know of any name which in point of sacredness comes next to the name of God, it is the name of man. (Applause.) Whether in a bishop's lawn sleeves, or in a prince's mitred brow, or in his clean smock frock, I say we at large claim the name of man. God has made us men, but man has made us slaves. (Cheers.) Well now, gentlemen, we won't quarrel with ourselves upon the point, or attempt to say that upon any particular class or any particular party this blame is attributable. We know that we have got in a bad position and we must get out of it. I have been looking to Westminster for a good while expecting help. Well, Westminster has professed to give it us in the Royal Commission for Enquiry, and this made some fearful reports with respect to the consequences of the condition of the laborers; but what use is it for a Government to send out a Royal Commission to report unless they make some practical effort to redress our grievances? Now, since the Royal Commission has reported our state, and the men of St. Stephen's have failed to help us, we began in February last to write a blue book of our own. Sir, our motto then was and is now, I hope, "Unity to protect, but no combination to injure." (Great applause.) I know some of the farmers blame us for combining together, but had they not set us the example? Look at their Chamber

of Agriculture. I know some tell us that they are not farmers' Unions; but I don't know what Unions are if they are not. When Chambers of Agriculture was first talked about in my county, I had some conversation with two or three very influential farmers of the neighbourhood—for I must say, sir, that when I used to talk to the farmers they always received what I said with very good feeling: If I told them a good hard truth—which I often did, because I never feared the face of man God ever made—they frankly confessed to its undeniable truth. Well, the farmers started the Chambers of Agriculture, but on the appearance of the first report they complained to me of its formation and control, having a great landed proprietor as chairman and another landowner in the vice-chair, so that they were done. They call us poor agricultural laborers ignorant, but we have been far too sharp to allow their finger to be put in our pie. (Immense laughter.) But I am pleased to find that the farmers are beginning to assert their rights. I watch with interest the various subjects brought into the Warwickshire Chamber of Agriculture for discussion; but never, sir, until this movement was started, and the farmers' interests and grievances were pushed to the front by the powers of combination amongst the laborers, did ever I see them broach the subject of destruction of game and tenant-right. Now, sir, they are discussing these things very thoroughly, and I hope the day is not far distant when these mischievous and injurious things to the farming interest of this country will be speedily wiped away. (Hear, hear.) Now, sir, I am coming to a delicate point, and that is the landlords. As the chairman said, we have been squeezed; but we don't want to squeeze the farmers or the landlords. But I do say this, sir, that the thousands of our agricultural laborers, with hundreds of our tenant farmers in this country, have no right to have the produce of land devoured by a lot of vermin for the sake of a few monied lords. (Great applause.) They tell us that is not a laborer's question; but if the squire's hares eat my cabbages it is my question. (Hear, hear and immense laughter.) Some years ago a farmer told me the destruction by game in his wheat fields was most abominable. I asked the farmer who made the game laws, and was told the Parliament; but that he confessed he helped to form, and in that particular he was obliged to bear. (Laughter.) And now, sir, we have got the ballot, the farmer will tell the great game-preserving landlords they don't believe such a theory, and after the laborers have got a vote they will tell the landlords, too, that they don't. (Applause.) Mr. Arch proceeded to argue that the intelligence that characterized artisans in towns was spreading among the agricultural laborer class, and would ere long make itself felt. Having denounced what he called "the iniquitous laws of primogeniture and entail," which must be got rid of, he proceeded to answer the argument which had been used as a kind of threat by farmers that if laborers continued to emigrate in large numbers they would be unable to obtain labor to cultivate the soil, consequently it would throw down cultivation, and the food supply of the nation would be in danger. His answer to that was that if the farmers did not cultivate the land they might depend upon it that the Government would step in and interfere, and probably that would result in the laborers having an ownership in the soil. Having referred to the waste land which might be cultivated, and contending there were many sources of happiness to the people which might be developed, Mr. Arch concluded by stating that they had raised the song and never meant to lose the theme again that "Britons never shall be slaves."

The glove, or rather the shoe, thrown down by the British cordwainers has been taken up by their French colleagues. The cobblers' tournament is shortly to come off at Boulogne-sur-Mer, the Northampton of the Continent. A manufacturer of the town has offered to supply the materials gratuitously to the English of the awl, who will contend on condition that their handiwork falls to his possession afterwards.

Mr. John Albert Bright, Mr. John Bright's eldest son, has delivered his maiden speech at Rochdale. His text was a vote of confidence in Mr. Potter, M. P. In the course of his remarks he alluded to the Irish Church, abolition of purchase in the army, the education question, the ballot, and the "shameful extravagance" of the Liberal Government. In conclusion, he called upon his hearers to see that their representatives, looked into all departments of the State, and swept out all the cobwebs and spiders.