

THE WEEK.

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CONTENTS OF CURRENT NUMBER.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES—	PAGE
Strikes.....	M. 347
The Salvation Army.....	Arnold Haultain. 347
Literary Notes from Paris.....	Zero. 348
Art in Education.....	Freder. 349
Value of a Well-spent Life.....	M. 349
THEODORA.....	349
READINGS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.....	349
POETRY—	
Morning on Lake Muskoka.....	J. D. Spence. 351
CORRESPONDENCE.....	351
TOPICS OF THE WEEK—	
Opposition Tactics.....	352
The Ottawa Scandal.....	352
The Duty on Lumber.....	352
Protection for Fish.....	352
The President's Recommendation of Governmental Arbitration.....	352
American Opinion on Home Rule.....	352
The N. Y. Tribune and Mr. Goschen's Speech.....	352
Comparison between the South and Ireland.....	353
Satisfaction of the Nationalists.....	353
Dissatisfaction of Irish Americans.....	353
The Quebec Assembly Home Rule Resolution.....	253
The Liberal Opposition to Mr. Gladstone.....	353
The Bradford Election.....	353
The Greek Danger.....	353
The Balkan Imbroglia.....	353
The Greek Outbreak.....	354
Proposed Junction of Russian and Indian Railways.....	354
NOTES.....	354
SUNSET (POEM).....	355
A LOVE MARRIAGE.....	Zara. 355
A MILITARY SKETCH.....	V. F. M. B. 356
PINE ART IN TORONTO.....	356
MUSIC.....	357
OUR LIBRARY TABLE.....	357
LITERARY GOSSIP.....	357

STRIKES.

THERE seems to be no doubt that the New World is becoming liable to be the scene of strikes quite as much as is the Old. This being the case, and as they are likely to assume much wider proportions, and assail more numerous interests here than there, it may be well for us to strive to acquire some clearly defined ideas on the subject at the outset.

Strikes consist in a joint cessation of work on the part of all the employes of any industrial establishment, and a refusal to resume it on the terms on which they had previously been remunerated. That they are entitled to do this there is no question; and that if the class usually styled "working-men" would save themselves from having the worst of the bargain generally, they will need to be prepared to undertake such united action, seems to us highly probable.

But, a strike once initiated, it must be understood that the "working-men" do not acquire any rights on strike of which they were unpossessed while at work. When at work it was their duty to refrain from damaging their employers' property, and it is their duty to continue to do so when idle. Parties not employed in the deserted establishments could not have been allowed to interfere with them while the strikers were at work in them; and the fact of their lying idle, or of strikers being the parties by whom they are assailed, does not in the slightest degree lessen the right of their owners to protection of their property. This being the case, stopping street cars, "killing" engines, or shunting trains are acts altogether outside the "rights" of strikers, and which the authorities are bound to prevent, if we are to escape anarchy. The reason is that the essential basis of society lies in the enforcement of the rule that no man shall be judge in his own cause; but must, should he consider himself aggrieved, submit his grievance to a supreme authority and abide by its decision.

This being understood, it follows that strikers have no right to interfere with their ex-employers, or any parties who may choose to enter into contracts with them. The contract which they are entitled to refuse, other parties are entitled to accept if so inclined. This is nothing more than is done every day in reference to other articles than labour, and the competition to undersell each other is carried on more vehemently by vendors of goods than of services. The struggle is not very beautiful. Its rule practically is, every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost. This, however, is the necessary result of leaving every man free to judge of his own interests and act accordingly. The essence of any contract is that it shall be free.

At this point, however, the "workingman," or at least his leaders, may reply that strikes are useless should the members of the League be allowed to turn traitors at pleasure. This may be true. But do members really desire that a League should be empowered to keep its members faithful? If so, the first question is, To what are they to be kept faithful? To answer it we must have a definition of the objects of the League; of the responsibilities to be undertaken by the members, and of the authority to

be wielded by the officers—that is to say, unless the latter are to be allowed to act despotically. The latter supposition is preposterous; and in the former case the power of the officers of the League could be made effective only, were their mandates enforced by the power of the State, or by some League police which it might establish. That Leaguers would really like the creation of such an authority we very much doubt; that the rest of the community would refuse to tolerate it seems to us to be a certainty. Furthermore, it has to be observed, that whatever powers of combination "workingmen" might equitably claim, employers might equitably claim also. Let us have two such associations confronting each other in different trades and we shall have freedom of contract practically destroyed, and the Guilds of the Middle Ages practically restored—in other words a complete breakdown of the much-lauded modern system of "free and unrestricted competition," and a restoration of paternal government! Concerning this we think that not only non-League "workingmen" but the rest of the people would have a good deal to say. On the merits of such a change we just now say nothing. What we want is to explain that it is impossible for "workingmen" simultaneously to enjoy freedom of contract and Leagues to possess the power of keeping all their members in a state of strike.

This being the case, it seems that we must, for the present at least, regard Leagues as of no authority whatsoever in the State, and any compulsion which they may attempt to exercise, either on members or non-members, as purely illegitimate. Besides this, we must remember that the merits of a dispute as to terms of remuneration between one man and a hundred, or between hundreds of shareholders and thousands of employes, is—if we are to abide by free and unrestricted competition—a matter as much outside the business of the State, or of onlooking individuals, as is a dispute on the same question between a merchant and a clerk. The expediency, or in expediency, of the action of the disputants is no business of outsiders. But it is the business of the State to see that parties unconnected with the strife shall suffer as little as possible from it; and that those who may profit by it by entering into new contracts, shall not be hindered from so doing if so inclined. This may be called very cold-blooded language. It is merely the language which follows from the doctrine that every man is the best judge of his own interests, and should be left free to pursue them by contract until his action shall check that of other people.

M.

THE SALVATION ARMY.

WITH the increasing dimensions and spreading influence of the Salvation Army it must be expected that discussion on its character and aim will arise. It has already passed through the fire of criticism, and doubtless it will not flinch from it again. Indeed, it courts criticism. A persecuted sect is a pitied sect, and a pitied sect always gathers devotees.

To judge of this already rapidly-growing movement dispassionately is to many difficult, to some impossible. Some treat it as a rival; a few join hands with it; but the majority eye it askance. Cardinal Manning, when asked to express his opinion, has scarce an opinion to express. He regards it as one would a new and curious animal, ignorant whether it is fish, flesh, or fowl, and he leaves it with the impression that for him it is common and unclean. "Our fears," he says, "greatly overbalance our hopes."

Perhaps the severest criticism that the Salvation Army can justly receive at the hands of the truly unprejudiced is that it is a body of men who know not what they do. Nor need this be interpreted in any harsh sense. They are passive rather than active. They work by exhortation, not by compulsion. They invite, they do not insist. They urge, but never threaten. And if the means they employ to catch the mob differ somewhat from the more artistic paraphernalia of their co-religionists, these latter are scarcely in a position to cast the first stone at what to the world only seems a sister who sins more openly than her accusers.

The Salvation Army is not a singular phenomenon. It has many analogues. If we cannot call it similar to so distinct a sect as the Albigenses, it certainly bears a strong resemblance to many of the religious outbreaks of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries—to the Brethren of the White Caps, the Pastoureaux, the Bianchi, or the Flagellants. The analogy is closer than at first sight appears. Each of these found its source in dissent from ecclesiastical dogma, or dislike of ecclesiastical control. Each was