

Like most men who have attained distinction, Joseph Arch is largely indebted to his mother, who taught him both to read and write before he was six years of age, after which he attended the village school for two years, and then went to work in the fields for fourpence per day. He gradually rose until he became a labourer, when he earned the highest wages, eleven shillings per week.

When about twenty he married. His wife, though possessed of good intellectual gifts, had not been favoured with such an education as he had enjoyed.

In their early married life Mr. and Mrs. Arch were very poor farm labourers, earning between \$2.50 and \$4.00 per week. Being a Methodist local preacher his labours took him from place to place, and as he travelled he became deeply impressed with the degraded condition of the people of his class. His preaching efforts developed his own mind, and in the course of time he began to agitate for an improved condition of the farm labourers. This finally resulted in the organization of the Agricultural Labourers' Union, one of the very strongest labour organizations in the world. Mr. Arch, as president of this union, became one of the most influential men in England, and was finally elected to parliament, of which he is still a member. In all his work Mr. Arch found an intelligent and loyal assistant in his wife.

The association has been a great boon to the labourers, whose wages have increased in consequence at least fifteen to twenty per cent., and over 700,000 persons have been assisted to emigrate.

Joseph Arch was brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus mainly through the instrumentality of the Primitive Methodists, and he was the first member of that denomination who was elected to parliament. It is said that when he began to preach his favourite books were the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress. He continues to preach at

every opportunity and is very popular among the labouring portion of the community. No large gathering would be considered complete if Joseph Arch was not to be one of the orators.

At the great meetings held in Hyde Park, London, he is always a conspicuous figure. One was held a few years ago when 5,000 labourers were present, who were not the least conspicuous among the thousands who were present on that occasion. But of all who addressed the multitude none commanded better attention than Joseph Arch.

"There is," says the *London Daily Graphic*, "a tinge of irony in the fate which makes Joseph Arch the parliamentary representative at once of those in the lowest as well as the highest walks of life, for the honourable member, who was at one time a famous hedger and ditcher of his county before he took to learning and championing the claims of his class, sits in parliament equally as the representative of the labourer and the Prince,—the Sandringham estates of the Prince of Wales being within his division. The introduction of the Parish Councils Bill—the creation of another very distinguished Methodist, Sir Henry Fowler—marks Mr. Joseph Arch's day of triumph. For forty years he has worked for the advancement of his class, and apparently that class is now something like a power in the land. His pride in the bill almost exceeds his pride in having the Prince of Wales as a constituent.

"The bill is a great stride in the right direction, sir"—with a slap on his knee. "It is going to revolutionize our villages; it will give England back her vanished peasantry, and add immensely to the prosperity of the country. These are surely great things to set against the loss of their influence by the squire and the parson, who have squandered away their chances of binding the labourer to their interests by assisting the farmer to grind him into the dust."

THE PRESENT CRISIS.

We are living, we are dwelling in a grand and awful time,
In an age on ages telling, to be living is sublime.
Hark! the waking up of nations, Gog and Magog to the fray,
Hark! what soundeth? 'Tis creation groaning for its latter day.

Will ye play, then, will ye dally, with your music and your wine?
Up, it is Jehovah's rally, God's own arm hath need of thine!
Hark! the onset, will ye fold your faith-clad arms in lazy lock?
Up O up, thou drowsy soldier! Worlds are charging to the shock.

Worlds are charging—heaven beholding; thou hast but an hour to fight;
Now the blazoned cross unfolding, on, right onward for the right!
On! let all the soul within you for the truth's sake go abroad!
Strike! let every nerve and sinew tell on ages, tell for God!

—Bishop Cox.