

NOTICE

We shall be pleased to receive items of interest pertaining to Trade Societies from all parts of the Dominion for publication. Officers of Trade Unions, Secretaries of Leagues, etc., are invited to send us news relating to their organizations, condition of trade, etc.

Our columns are open for the discussion of all questions affecting the working classes. All communications must be accompanied by the names of the writers, not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.

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J. S. WILLIAMS,
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JOBBING PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO.

The Ontario Workman.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JUNE 13, 1872.

WHITHER ARE WE DRIFTING?

Truly the times we live in are portentous. The condition of the serf gave place to that of the boor, and the boor was followed by the menial of former times, so called by those who fared sumptuously and were clothed in purple and fine linen every day, from the fruits of his labor; but the menial has felt, and is feeling, the injustice of his situation, and by unity of action and persistent agitation, have been gradually raising themselves from their servile condition, until they occupy the position we are proud to call that of the free workman of the nineteenth century. But has the man of toil reached the climax of his ambition here? Certainly not. If the signs of the times be any criterion, there still remains to be settled questions of grave moment. Never in any age of the world have the producers of all wealth been so thoroughly alive to what they consider their just rights and privileges, as at the present day; and if there ever was a time that the agitation now known as the labor question, required calm, deliberate, intelligent, dispassionate and thoughtful consideration above another it is the present time, when, from all quarters of the civilized world is wafted on every breeze the one momentous subject, that is at present shaking our social system to its very centre under the name—if you please—of the uprising of labor. Now, let us ask the question, and perhaps venture an answer: What is the reason of all this commotion in the social system, and especially that portion of society known as the working classes? Is it the result of ignorance? Surely not, for never since creation has knowledge been so generally diffused than at present. Then, is it from a wide-spread repugnance to labor on the part of the workmen? We think not, and believe we are warranted in thinking so by the fact that never before in the history of man has wealth been increased so rapidly as it has in what has come of the present century—and by whom? Solely by the *bona fide* workman. And further, the workman of to-day is beginning to fully understand the divine and natural law, that he who does not labor should not eat, and cannot eat save of the fruits of the labor of others. Therefore, the workman understands perfectly well the principle of labor, and feels the duty incumbent upon him to perpetuate the existence of mankind, and contribute to the prosperity of our common heritage by his labor.

Well, a reason must exist somewhere. We never see an effect without a cause, and discontent, when it becomes general and wide-spread, is always the result of some good sound logical reason. The workman of to-day occupies the same position as his serf and menial predecessor did so far as production to sustain life goes; the result of their energies then and now are the same, but disaffection among our toiling forefathers never became so general and wide-spread, and never at all so influential as at present, simply because their ignorance and want of perception led them to believe that they were dependant upon the lords of the soil, and felt generally satisfied with the dregs that fell from the richness of their own productions, while the usurper of their liberties and energies reveled in the ignorance, poverty and degradation of his species. But times have changed, and the masses of the people with them; and distinctions, titles and usurpations have paled before the advance of knowledge, truth and justice. The simple fact is, that the people have been to school, and have been learning the lesson of God through nature, and are beginning to recognize the true meaning of that divine supplication, Our Father who art in Heaven,—the supreme ruler of the universe, our Father, our common Father. And are the so-called unwashed multitude but his step-children? We recognize His justice in nature, and emphatically say, No! Then we do not hesitate to say that knowledge, a growing understanding of what is right and just, is at the bottom of this most important and wide-spread movement; nor will the agitation cease until there is raised on the ruins of ignorance, fraud and wrong, the glorious temple of wisdom, justice and truth, from which shall be proclaimed "peace on earth and good will towards men."

A SIGN OF THE TIMES.

In the *Globe* of Friday last was published a leading article that certainly caused some little astonishment, if not amusement, amongst such of the workmen who might have seen the article in question. Under the caption of "Strikes and their Lessons," the *Globe* takes a wonderfully mild and conciliatory view of the aspirations of the working classes; and, indeed, with one or two exceptions, the article might almost be regarded, from its general tone, as a counterpart of those which appeared in that journal when the short-time movement was confined to distant climes. The *Globe* admits that on a calm and deliberate consideration of the labor movement, there are some things suggested particularly worthy of notice; and remarks that "it is a novelty that the struggle should have been chiefly for the reduction of the hours of labour rather than for increase of wages," and intimates that "any fair and reasonable increase of remuneration would not have been objected to," and considers that, in electing for shorter hours rather than increased pay, the workmen have made a "great mistake." As far as the employers being willing to pay increased wages is concerned, it may be very true; but had not the question of shorter hours of labour taken so firm a hold upon the operative classes, and, instead, had they made a demand for increased pay, we opine that the willingness of the employers to accede would have been about equal to that manifested by them in considering the short-time movement. If by a temporary raise of wages, however, they could stave off the agitation for short hours, they would be very willing to grant that increase; but as to the "great mistake" made, those who are most interested in the movement—the workmen—have taken an opposite view, and, we believe, time will yet prove them to have been wiser in their generation than their would-be mentors.

Then comes a gentle patting on the back, for the *Globe* tells the workmen that "their bearing throughout these strikes have also been a noticeable feature, that there has been a degree of reasonableness in the bearing even of those who struck, and an abstinence from attempts at coercing their fellow-

workmen who did not see things as they saw them, which have been in marked contrast to what has too frequently taken place at such times and in connection with such movements." Of course, in order to preserve the well-known consistency of the journal, and sustain the charge of "conspiracy" which Mr. Brown has brought against the members of Typographical Union, exception is taken to the unfortunate printers, who of all the classes of "intelligent comprehension" were alone guilty of "outrageous conduct" in committing "overt acts of intimidation and coercion." The recent trial of the "conspiracy case" was very closely watched by the working classes generally, and they know—just as well as the editor and manager of the *Globe* knows—that beyond the mere fact of those men having connection with a Trade Union being established, no charge of "intimidation" was proved, or even sought to be proved. The whole and sole result of the trial, so far as it went, was, to prove the men members of a Typographical Union—only this, and nothing more.

The *Globe* then tells us, that "wise moderation has also been exhibited in the readiness of employers and employed to meet each other in a calm and reasonable way." We are glad to know that in some instances this "wise moderation" prevailed, and in consequence threatened difficulties were avoided; but in the case of the most important of the strikes in this city—the printers—so far as the "Master Printers' Association" were concerned, their action was the very opposite of this statement. It is well known that on no less than three occasions, the Union, wishing to avoid difficulties as far as possible, asked for a conference with the employers, but were on each occasion peremptorily refused. We have reason to believe that some of that association were quite willing—and even suggested its propriety—that a committee from the printers should be received, but the domineering action of the "big chief" prevented any such approaches to a "wise policy," and only when their eyes were fully opened to the cajolery of Mr. Brown, did those gentlemen withdraw from an association with which they had few feelings in common.

The old argument of a "cast iron rule as to the length of a day's labor" is rehearsed, and while it would be very unwise to make nine hours the limit of a day's work, the standard can, with propriety, be fixed at ten. Of course there is nothing "cast-iron" about the ten hours; it is only when you take one hour off that it becomes of that consistency. But we are told that "while the nine hour limit has been mentioned, it has not been insisted on, but less work on Saturday has been willingly agreed to." We have understood throughout the whole of the movement the regulation as to the hours was to be left to suit the convenience of the various branches of industry, but what has been insisted on is, that the weeks' work should consist of *fifty-four* hours instead of *sixty*. We are glad to know that, in general, arrangements have been made mutually agreeable, all the more likely to be lasting from the manner in which they have been brought around.

The article concludes with a little more "soft sawder" in the shape of complimenting the men upon their "good sense" and "reasonableness." Of course no fault can possibly be found with the mildness of the tone now used by the *Globe*, and the article is chiefly remarkable in contrast with some which have preceded it in the same journal; but the enquiry has been frequently made as to the cause of the change of tone. Some have been so uncharitable as to attribute it to the fact that the elections are approaching! but, of course, that consideration could have no weight with the immaculate George. Oh no! perish the thought—and yet, after all, the elections are coming off.

FOR THE FRONT.—The Volunteers of this city left in full force for Niagara yesterday. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed.

—We have prepared an article on Early Closing, but it has been crowded out this week.

THE DUTY OF WORKINGMEN.

The duty of the workingmen at all times, but in the present crisis above all others, is to be true to themselves, to look at every question from their own stand point, to see how it affects their pockets, their condition, their morals; and, having found out to their satisfaction what their duty is, to do it.

Employers are harping to "continue long hours of labor, because they prefer immediate personal wealth to the future prosperity of the country. Journalists, to a very great extent, side with them, because capitalists can enrich them with bribes given in the shape of advertisements; and politicians remain neutral, because they desire to side with the winning party, and are yet dubious who that party is. Upon the shoulders of the workingmen themselves, therefore, rests the burden of the struggle, and if they are but true to themselves, upon them will also rest the *prestige* of success. That which costs nothing is worth no more. The very fierceness of the fight is in itself the best indication of its worth. If, as employers say, they would rather give an advance in wages than a reduction in time, it is self-evident that the diminution of the hours of labor is of more importance to the workman than an increase in his pay. Workingmen can seldom err if, when they see their employers very desirous for them in their trade capacity to adopt a certain line of policy to just do what is its complete opposite. If employers declaim against trades' unionism, it is proof positive that unionism is the best policy workingmen can adopt. If employers oppose the nine hours in contradistinction to a rise of pay, it is equally positive that the hours are of more advantage to the men than the money. Employers seldom, if ever, look at trade questions from their workmen's stand point, consequently their view of trades questions are generally inimical to the true interests of the men, and, therefore, their's is the last position working men should adopt.

Employers generally strive to get as much labor and as many hours as possible from the workmen for the lowest possible remuneration. The price of clothing, fuel, rent, are seldom or ever taken seriously into their consideration—the state of the labor market regulates their course of action, not the requirements or necessities of their men.

Workingmen who trust to the generosity of employers depend upon a reed, that will fail them when they most need its support. For example, the employees of the Northern Railway some time since asked Mr. Cumberland for a reduction in their hours of labor, and gave valid reasons why the concession should be granted. In reply, he told them because they had been long and faithful servants, if they compelled him to accede to their request, he would be under the *painful necessity* of finding younger men to fill their places. If by long and faithful service these men had, as Mr. Cumberland acknowledged, earned the right to retain their situation—the right being earned—the place was theirs, and the request for a reduction in their hours of labor the more necessary and imperative because they were old. Age might need repose, enfeebled energies consideration, fidelity reward; but if the performance of duty involved a supposed loss of cash, why, "throw duty to the dogs, they'll have none of it."

Therefore, workingmen we must look after our own interests as workingmen, be loyal to each other, accepting no bribes from the employers either in the shape of a better position or higher pay, they are given for temporary purposes, and with the achievement of the object for which they were given both place and power will be lost. Employers keep their men in dependant positions by creating suspicion and distrust, and if they would gain possession of their rights and privileges, it must be by union and confidence among and between the men themselves. The employer's policy is to divide and conquer; our weakness is *their* strength; our own contentions the source of their pride. We must look at questions affecting

our social condition—not only as they may affect ourselves, but also as they may affect our children. We ask if, for the sake of a temporary rise in wages, it is worth our while to rivet the chains of toil longer and firmer upon our children's hands than they are upon our own? Is it worth while weakening our own prospects and increasing the employers' power, because a few are offered an increase of pay? Is it worth while working ten hours here while in the States eight hours is rapidly gaining power and breath.

If the workingmen are true to themselves they must win; the falsehoods promulgated by employers and their special pleaders are refuted by the very condition by which they are surrounded. Nearly all the employers in Canada, a few years ago, were certainly not rich men; now they are the reputed owners of hundreds of thousands of dollars and magnificent dwellings. Could they be so—could they have such—if their margin of profit be so small as they would have us believe? The employers are not more ingenious than the majority of the men they employ; some must direct whilst others manipulate, hence the necessity for a division in labor makes them bosses. Let the workmen be true to themselves, and unite each with the other to secure the success of the present movement; let no political or religious questions affect the strength of their union; let them act together as one man, following the example of their brethren in Newcastle-on-Tyne and in New York, and success is theirs. Right, justice, and the *prestige* of success is upon their side; union and confidence alone is wanted to ensure victory; and since employers, knowing this, are doing their best to sow dissensions among them, we hope they will, with their own good sense, baffle the endeavors of the employers, and gain for the higher purposes of their being another respite from the toils of mammon.

THE INTERNATIONAL BOAT RACE.

The International boat race, which has so long been the subject of conversation in this and the Old World, came off, on the Thames, on Monday afternoon. The morning broke cloudy and stormy, and fears were entertained that the match would have to be postponed. In the afternoon, however, the sun shone brightly, though the atmosphere continued chilly. Vast crowds continued to gather along the river, and the excitement became more and more intense. Shortly after six the boats shot out from the shore amidst the most deafening cheers, and the shouts of joy and relief were taken up and rolled along on both sides of the river from Mortlake to Putney. The Atlanta crew won the toss, and elected to row on the Surrey side. The gun for the start was fired at 6.23, and both boats started brilliantly. In the first 200 yards the English crew were a length ahead, and bending to the Surrey side, took the Atlanta's water. At Barne's Bridge the Englishers had increased the gap to a length and a half. At this point, the Americans made a series of desperate "spurts," and slightly improved their position, but the tremendous efforts told on the men, and they showed signs of exhaustion. On reaching the water works, opposite Choswick Wall, the distress of the Americans was evident, and it was clear that, even at that point, the race was practically won. The Englishmen gained rapidly, and continuing to row on steadily with ease, increasing the distance at every stroke, and finally came in no less than twenty lengths ahead—nearly 800 feet. Though the Atlanta's have been badly beaten in the contest, yet they deserve praise for their pluck in going across the Atlantic to test the prowess of the Londoners.

—The steamer *Kingston*, which was to have carried the Queen's Own to Niagara yesterday afternoon, was burned to the water's edge on Tuesday night when off Grenadier Island. The vessel and cargo are a total loss. Two lives were lost,—a Mrs. Dr. Jones, and a boy belonging to the vessel.