

THE WEEK.

Seventh Year.
Vol. VII. No. 38.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1890.

\$3.00 per Annum
Single Copies, 10 Cents

THE WEEK :

AN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART

TERMS:—One year, \$3.00; eight months, \$2.00; four months, \$1.00
Subscriptions payable in advance.

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Subscribers in Great Britain and Ireland supplied, postage prepaid, on terms following:—One year, 12s. 6d.; half-year, 6s. 6d. Remittances by P. O. order or draft should be made payable and addressed to the Publisher.

No advertisements charged less than five lines. Address—T. R. CLOUGHIER, Business Manager, 5 Jordan Street, Toronto.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Publisher.

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THERE is much reasonableness in the objections urged by the labour unions against the assisted immigration of skilled labourers. So long as the supply of skilled labour in the country exceeds the demand there is manifest hardship in taxing such labour for the purpose of increasing the severity of the competition to which it is subjected. But when the unions or their representatives use their influence to hinder the work of those who are bringing in boys and girls from the Mother Country, and training them for life on the farm without expense to the tax-payer, their position seems to us indefensible. Such was the position taken by Mr. Jury, if correctly reported, at the recent examination of Dr. Barnardo before the Ontario Prison Commission. Mr. Jury is represented as having condemned the whole system, on the ground that there are boys enough in Ontario without importing them from England, and that their unskilled labour often puts skilled labour out of work. The latter statement would, we think, be hard to substantiate. The cases must be rare in which the farmer who undertakes the training of one of these boys would have employed a skilled labourer in his place had the boy not been procurable. If he did so at all it would probably have been for but a few weeks in the busy season. The assertion that there are enough boys in Ontario without importing them from England seems sufficiently answered by the fact testified to by Dr.

Barnardo that the demand for his English boys always far exceeds the supply. To say nothing of the philanthropic aspects of the case, though much might be said on that point, we do not see how it can be doubted that every honest and industrious boy or girl added to the number of cultivators of the soil in any part of the Dominion, above all in Manitoba or the Northwest, is a distinct addition to the wealth of the country. Whatever differences of opinion may obtain on other industrial questions, all are agreed that one thing specially needed to ensure the substantial and permanent prosperity of the country is the development to the full of its agricultural resources. The tendency of the sons and daughters of farmers to migrate to the cities or across the border is deplored by all intelligent observers, but it is a tendency which it seems impossible to check. In this western world such movements of population are unavoidable. It is surely most desirable that the places of those who seek to better their fortunes in other pursuits should be promptly supplied by young people of a different class, fitted by early hardships to appreciate the advantages and endure patiently the disadvantages of rural life and pursuits. On every ground, then, we doubt if the views of the labour-unions in this particular can be sustained, and we are strongly inclined to the belief that, if Dr. Barnardo and other philanthropists engaged in work of the same kind honestly and rigidly apply the tests they profess to apply, and secure the training they claim to impart to their proteges, they are really rendering a service to Canada as well as to the unfortunate boys and girls they rescue from lives of poverty and possible crime. We fail to see how, so long as the demand for such helpers so far exceeds the supply, their importation can in any way be injurious to Canadian labour, either skilled or unskilled.

THERE is much force in the objections which are urged against the importation of boys and girls, many of whom are the offspring of parents physically or morally diseased. We doubt, however, if facts have yet been observed with sufficient care and over a sufficiently extended period to warrant generalizations so large as many are ready to make on grounds of heredity. That the diseased and vicious traits of parents or grandparents, and even of progenitors still farther removed, do sometimes reappear at unexpected points and with discouraging persistency is, we suppose, too well established to admit of doubt. But it is questionable whether this recurrence is not oftener than is generally supposed associated with a recurrence of conditions more or less similar. It is even not improbable that what we call recurrence of hereditary traits may be more frequently the outcome of similarity of conditions than we are accustomed to think. Be that as it may it would not be necessary to go outside the boundaries of any Canadian Province to find numerous facts in support of Dr. Barnardo's view that environment is stronger than heredity. Does not every reader know of cases in which the waifs of English poorhouses and streets have gained positions of respectability and influence in Canada? If we may accept Dr. Barnardo's statement that of 2,905 children brought to Canada under his auspices since 1882, no girl and but ten boys have been convicted, no better refutation of the objection based on the doctrine of hereditary taint can be needed. Where could we find a better record of Canadian boys and girls? The sum is perhaps something like this: While it would be highly objectionable that children of the classes in question should be freely added to the population of our towns and cities, where they would be more or less liable to fall under the influence of old forms of temptation, there can be but slight danger in placing such children, after the careful selection and training which Dr. Barnardo describes, amidst the healthful influences of farm life on the prairies, where the bracing atmosphere, invigorating labour and comparative seclusion from the more common forms of temptation which abound in city life combine to form an environment most favourable to honourable industry. We are after all members not only of the same race but of a common stock with these British boys and girls. If they are to be refused admission even to the boundless prairies what possibility of redemption is left for them? Canadians are willing, we feel sure, to take so much risk for the sake of our common humanity.

IN a recent interview with a newspaper reporter, General Middleton complained bitterly of the treatment he had received from the Canadian politicians and press. It might have been expected that in such an interview the General would have either attempted an explanation and defence of the incident which led to his enforced resignation, or would have admitted in a frank and soldier-like manner that he had made a serious mistake. He does neither in any satisfactory manner. He does, indeed, hint that the chief responsibility for the appropriation of the furs belongs rightfully to Mr. Hayter Reed, who accompanied him, it appears, somewhat in the capacity of an accredited adviser on non-military matters. General Middleton's statements and hints in regard to this point make doubly clear what we have before insisted on—the necessity for a fuller investigation of the question of the relation of the other parties implicated, to the plundering. But General Middleton's plea that because the unappropriated as well as the appropriated portion of the furs disappeared, the attempt of himself and his aids to secure a portion for themselves should not be blamed, is, to say the least, pitifully weak. The fact that the rest of the property also went astray simply means, we suppose, that some other parties were more successful in their efforts to secure valuables that did not belong to them, and, consequently, reflects still more severely upon the conduct of the campaign in this respect. The prevention of "looting" we have always understood to be one of the duties of a British general, in modern civilized warfare, a duty which is surely not less obligatory in the suppression of a small insurrection at home. Throughout this interview General Middleton shows that singular apparent incapacity to understand or realize that the affair has really an important moral bearing, which has characterized his course from the first. Even after the formal censure of Parliament, he seems to have found it impossible to believe that the people's representatives were in earnest, or that the situation demanded any action on his part. Most men in his position, it has always seemed to us, would have come forward as soon as the charges were first preferred, years ago, to meet them either with indignant denial, or with frank explanation and apology. The politicians may be left to defend themselves, but, as a member of the press, which has not hesitated to speak out in regard to the matter, we can only say that we should have deemed ourselves recreant in the discharge of the duty of an independent journal to the public had we hesitated to denounce the appropriation of private property by public servants, and to demand, on behalf alike of the injured party and the public, full restitution.

A WASHINGTON despatch of recent date states that the House Committee on Commerce are considering a Bill which has for its object to promote reciprocity in wrecking on the lakes and canals along the Canadian frontier. It is to be hoped that a measure so clearly necessary in the interest alike of commerce and of humanity may be enacted without further delay. The American Bill is said to contain a provision that it shall become operative only after proclamation shall have been made by the President that Canada has extended to American vessels the same privilege it extends to Canadian vessels. This is only what is to be expected, and there should be no doubt that our Government and Parliament would lose no time in reciprocating in such a matter. The state of affairs existing, whereby tugs of either nationality are prevented from going to the assistance of wrecked vessels, if such wrecks happen to be on the wrong side of the international boundary line, has long been a disgrace to the civilization of both countries. It is not worth while to stay to enquire which Government has been most to blame in the matter, if only both will hasten to do away with the mutual reproach. At a time when rumours are rife which threaten the discontinuance of the bonding privileges and other commercial courtesies which have long been profitable to both peoples, as well as creditable to their good sense and friendly feeling, it is to some extent reassuring to learn that some steps are being taken in the right direction. It would be altogether too bad if, in the last decade of the nineteenth century upon which we shall so soon enter, and in free and