

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 PORTRAITS.

"Men who, in advance of law and in opposition to prevailing opinion, have forced into national recognition the hitherto disregarded rights of labor."

Mr. ALEXANDER MACDONALD.

PRESIDENT, MINERS' ASSOCIATION; AND M. P. FOR STAFFORD.

Alexander Macdonald is descended from a very powerful arm of the Clan Macdonald, who, by their devoted attachment to the Stuart dynasty was all but exterminated on the dark moor of Drumoak (Culloden), which crushed out the last hopes of the Jacobite cause. His grandfather who was the mere stripling, fled to the lowlands, and located in the county of Perth. Like some others who were fugitives for the "lost cause," fortune shined on him for a time; but an hour of disaster came, and the father of the subject of the present sketch betook himself to the life of a sailor at the earliest moment he could be bound to that occupation. In after life he took part in the capturing of several of the West India Islands, and was latterly taken prisoner in the war of 1812 between the United States and this country. On the termination of the war he returned to Scotland, settled down in Lanarkshire. There he married the mother of Alexander Macdonald, who was of Norman extraction, and possessed great force of character. Alexander Macdonald was born in the latter part of the first quarter of this century at Dalnaculter, in the parish of New Monkland, near the town of Aird, about ten miles east of Glasgow—a place generally celebrated for the richness of the mineral fields that lay about it. His father having become a miner, at the early age of eight years he was taken into the mine to work.

The condition of miners was, at that time, of a very low order, it being only in the year 1797 that the law had been passed that conferred on them their freedom, so that they were virtually merging from the state of slavery. There was no limit to the hours of labour, or the age that their young would be taken there—males and females were both employed in them. Ventilation in theory was hardly known, and in practice it scarcely existed in many places. As might be expected, from going to work at the early age mentioned, his education was of a meagre kind indeed. Thanks to the watchful attention of his mother, every day or parts of the day, that he had to spare he was sent to school; and in the evening also, though almost constantly for some years the hours in the mine averaged fully fifteen per day. An early thirst for knowledge was engendered by almost weekly being at school; the long degrading hours he recoiled from. The doings of those that were striving for the reduction of the hours of labour, for the factory children were his constant study. When the females came to be put out of the mine in 1842, he was advocating the reduction of the hours of labour to eight per day, and the education of every miner's child. In a great strike of that year he took an active part. At the close of it he determined to prosecute still further those studies he had begun, with the view of entering one of the learned professions. Taking a share in all the leading movements of the day, he still never lost a day, he still never lost an hour in preparing to enter the University to complete those works he had begun.

In 1846 he entered the Glasgow University, during the whole session of that and the following year maintaining himself for what he had accumulated by his own daily labour. In the summer he resumed mining, and again by the aid of his own toil and the assistance of his own family he again attended the University of Glasgow. Meanwhile he never forgot the miners' cause. In 1850 he became a teacher, and so continued for some time, till the question of a better Mines Act—the Acts of oppression under the Masters and Servants, the evasions of the Truck Act, the Law Compensation of Accidents, and the miserable house system then existing, with the low rate of wages at the period, all engaged largely his attention.

These evils so impressed him that he left a highly remunerative position and threw himself unreservedly into the stormy life of a leader among the working miners. The Mines Act of 1855 was passed—it was known only for its effects. The Select Committee got by Mr. Forster, the M. P. for Walsall then and now, to enquire into the Truck System, ended in no result. At the beginning of the year 1856 little or no union existed among the

miners anywhere. By the close of 1857, an interchange of views had taken place among those that remained of the recognized leaders of the miners of the United Kingdom, and the result of this was that a small conference was held at Ashton-under-Lyne. Alexander Macdonald taking a leading part there. It was agreed to agitate and press on the Government the necessity of passing a measure for their protection. In 1858 this was done. In 1860, another Act was passed, but like its predecessors was not satisfactory. One point was insisted by Alexander Macdonald—the necessity of having two shafts to every working—one for escape if the other was destroyed. The mine owners opposed this, and the Legislature supported him. The Hartley catastrophe came in 1862, and then an Act was passed, Alexander Macdonald as before leading in the matter.

In 1863, a conference was convened from all parts of the empire. It resulted in the formation of the Miners' National Association and of it Alexander Macdonald was elected president. In 1865, a select committee was appointed; he took part with others on behalf of the association in watching it, and giving evidence before it. He subsequently watched over the passing of the Bill introduced in 1860-70-71, and the final measure of 1872.

As before noticed, in early life the cruelties—if we may so style them—that took place under the law of Master and Servants Act made a deep impression on him. He was one of the parties appointed in 1864 as the Congress that was held on that subject to see the law altered; he continued to act along with others till the old law was repealed in 1867. In 1868 Alexander Macdonald became a candidate for the Kilmarock district of Burghs. Towards the election taking place, he found the screw being so heavily put on, that he retired from the contest rather than see many of the working class voters sacrificed. There was no ballot then. He has twice visited the United States, to see the real position of the working man there as compared with his country. He travelled the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast, in many places receiving from trades unionists a hearty and generous welcome. Many thousands of the Scotch miners who have located in the States received him with open arms. He is at the present time the president of the Miners' Association, as he had been from its formation. In his position as president he has never had a permanent salary. He has been, more than once, by the Scotch miners, and friends in Scotland, presented with tokens of their respect and esteem. On the 11th of January, 1873, he was presented by the leading miners of the kingdom and their friends, with the sum of £1,500, most of which had been collected by the miners in their various localities. Till the present, Alexander Macdonald remains unmarried. It may justly be added that he is the eldest of seven brothers, all of whom yet survive. Four of these have settled and become citizens of the great Western Republic. One of them earned some distinction for himself under the star-spangled banner during the late war.

On Tuesday Mr. Macdonald was elected by the working men of Stafford to represent them in Parliament. He was second on the poll, as will be seen from the following statement:—T. Salt (Conservative), 1,238; A. Macdonald (Working Man candidate), 1,181; Mr. Bridgeman (Conservative), 946; Alderman Pochin (Liberal), 903.—London Bee Hive, Feb. 7th 1874

A WORKING KING.

The late King of Saxony was in the habit of attending all the State institutions to see that they were kept in working order. One day King John appeared at the telegraph office of a small station, taking the clerk by surprise. The official had only just time to telegraph to his colleagues at the next station, "The King has just arrived on a visit of inspection," before he was summoned to give all possible details to his sovereign with regard to the amount of traffic in the place, the number of despatches received, the number sent out, etc. Presently a message came along the wire, which the clerk read in much embarrassment. "What are the contents of that despatch?" inquired the king.

The official stammered out the contents were unimportant, but, as his royal master insisted on being informed of them, the unhappy clerk was at length compelled to acknowledge that he had telegraphed to his neighbor, "The king has just arrived," and that the answer he had received ran thus: "The King pokes his nose into everything."

THE LABOR PROBLEM.

PRODUCTIVE CO-OPERATION.

SOME STRIKING INSTANCES OF THE BENEFICIAL RESULTS OF THE SYSTEM.

A reader of the WORKMAN, who is deeply interested in the co-operative movement, has sent us the following interesting paper on the subject, and we gladly give it a place in our columns. Co-operation may not be a cure for every ill; but we believe the workingmen of this continent would materially advance their position did they, but determinately endeavor to buy, sell and to work on this principle.

Productive co-operation may be divided into three classes: co-operative societies begun by employers, those commenced by workingmen, and those started by other co-operative societies. A good specimen of the first class is the

BRIGGS COAL COMPANY.

in the north of England. It was in 1866 that the Briggs brothers were induced, mainly by an article written in 1856 by Prof. Fawcett, to adopt a co-operative course. Their employees were an idle, drinking, uproarious set, who hated their masters. The cost of taking care of the mines, whether worked or not, was nearly \$1,000 a day, and, as the men were often on a strike, this sum might be a dead loss for days and weeks together. This was the state of affairs when the Briggs brothers concluded to try co-operation. They formed a joint-stock company, issuing shares of \$50 each, one-third of which they sold to the workingmen. The rest they kept in their own hands. Payments for these shares were made by the employees monthly, and, as soon as a man had paid his \$50, he began to receive dividends. A 10 per cent dividend on stock is the first bill on the net profits. If anything remains, it is divided into two equal shares. One goes to the Briggs brothers; the other is divided among all the workingmen, shareholders or not in proportion to the wages they have received during the year. From that day to this the Briggs Coal Company has continued to earn more than ever before; has been

FREE FROM STRIKES.

—an unprecedented case; and has made from 15 to 17 per cent yearly. There is a great saving spirit manifested among the men, formerly so careless. The Briggs brothers and their men have built up a public library and established schools. Drunkenness is said to be unknown. The magic of co-operation has wrought an almost perfect work. This result is the more remarkable, because it has been effected with most unpromising material, and in what seems, at first sight, an unpromising way. The Briggs brothers gave their men no share whatever in the management, since the majority of the stock remained in their own hands. The plan they adopted made it impossible that they should lose. Their stock represented the full amount of capital they had invested in the mines, and on this they were to receive 10 per cent before labor, as such, got any dividend whatever. Their profits had averaged about 6 per cent; but, the next year after they admitted their men to partnership, they cleared 10 per cent, and \$8,500 besides. I believe they have made as much as this, if not more, every year since. This system known in England as that of "industrial partnerships"—is one which every employer can easily try, and try with no possible risk of loss. If he does not wish to issue stock to his employees, he can say to them: "At the end of this year, I will divide my profits above 10 per cent on my capital [naming a per centage somewhat higher than his average rate of profit] into two halves, one of which shall be divided among all of you, in proportion to the wages each has earned during the year." He would thus

HIRE HIS MEN'S BRAINS

and good will. It would pay them thereafter to be diligent, faithful and sober, and to prefer arbitration to strikes. If the plan does not work well, it can be dropped at the end of the year. But it will work well, and manufacturers will make money by it from the instant of its adoption.

The history of the Ralahine Co-operative Agricultural Association, County Clare, Ireland, is as interesting as any romance. It was in 1829 that a Mr. Vandeleur, owning an estate of some 700 acres in this

county, determined after studying the plan of Robert Owen, to try

A CO-OPERATIVE FARM.

At this period, all Ireland was in a reckless, unsettled state, and land-owners were afraid to live at their homes. Mr. Vandeleur's steward was shot and his family fled in terror from their home. But Mr. Vandeleur was a brave man. He had made up his mind to have a co-operative farm. Leaving his family in England, he went back to his estate. Although he had put up some cottages, and made a few other preparations before, he now called his people together, and, for the first time, told them what he was going to do. He had engaged a young Mr. Craig for his secretary. He proved to be as brave as his employer. He stood his ground in spite of various gentle hints of the possible consequences. One of these pleasant suggestions consisted in a rude sketch of a coffin with his name scrawled there on. By degrees Mr. Craig won the people's attention, and talked so persuasively to them of co-operation that they at last agreed to try the experiment. Mr. Vandeleur let his 700 acres to them at a rent of \$3,000, and they paid, beside, interest on the value of all cattle, tools, etc., which brought the amount up to \$4,500. The men elected their own Committee of management by ballot, Mr. Craig himself being subject to ballot. The concern was an almost

MIRACULOUS SUCCESS.

Everything that seemed impossible became a fact. Liquor, filth, ignorance, gave way to temperance, cleanly homes, and good schools. Not only were the 700 acres cultivated, but a tract of waste land, fertilized and made productive. Among the evils forbidden by the Company's by-laws was that of gambling. Mr. Vandeleur unfortunately did not come under this rule. He lost his all a few years later, at the gaming table. The winner refused to continue the lease and the tenants were ejected. Some of them emigrated, the remainder relapsed into the barbarism from which co-operation had temporarily lifted them.

Of the second class of productive co-operative societies—those started by workingmen,—the

WOLVERHAMPTON PLATE-LOCK WORKS.

is a good specimen. Years ago, one of the masters of Wolverhampton cut down his men's wages. They struck. The other masters hastened to form a lock-out, and expected, by suspending all work, to compel the employees to submit. These latter belonged, however, to a Trades Union, which could give them temporary aid. During their brief holiday, they held several meetings to decide what it was best to do. They finally concluded to establish a manufactory of their own. This they did. The masters smiled scornfully, and immediately put down the prices of the immense stock of goods they had on hand, so that they found a quick and ready market. To be sure, they lost on these prices, but it was a means to an end, they thought. The workingmen thought so, too. They shut their teeth firmly, worked hard, and undersold their masters in the markets. They lost, as they knew they must. It was a long year before the masters began, one by one, to give way; and it was five or six long years before the Workingmen's Wolverhampton Plate-Lock Works Company began to really pay. But, when it once began, it did not stop. It is now a flourishing profitable Company; and it realizes, as the world does, that it is perseverance and co-operation that made it so. This is not by any means the only example to be given of what workingmen have done for themselves. There are many small co-operative shops in England, owned by the men to whom they give employment, and a few establishments as large as the one already described.

The third class of producing co-operative society—associations under the control of other co-operative societies—finds a fit type in the

OUSEBURN ENGINE WORKS.

at Newcastle-on-Tyne. Its capital is \$500,000, divided into 20,000 shares. After providing for a reserve fund, and payment of 10 per cent on the paid-up capital, all profits are to be divided equally between labor and capital. Every worker in the company receives a dividend on the amount paid him in wages or salary. Each employee must allow a portion of his wages or salary to remain on deposit with the company. When the deposit amounts to \$25, he receives a share-certificate.

The greater part of the capital-stock was subscribed by the co-operative stores in the north of England. This, in fact, is true of the great majority of productive co-operative enterprises. The stores are far easier to manage, and are naturally started first. When they grow strong and find surplus cash on their hands, they are apt to use it in promoting co-operative production. It was in this way that most of the great corn and cotton mills which workingmen own near Manchester were started. The panic in the English iron trade last year cost the Ouseburn Engine Works \$50,000, but the Company went serenely on. It is a power in the iron business to-day.

KNOW YOUR CHILDREN.

Hundreds of men have no time to get acquainted with their children. They see in a general way that they are clean and wholesome looking, they pay the quarterly school bills, and they grudge no expense in the matter of shoes and overcoats. They dimly remember that they once courted their wives, and said tender things in pleasant parlours, where the cheerful gaslight shed its glow, or on moonlight evenings under rustling leaves. The time for that is quite gone by, and they would feel as bashful as a school boy reciting a piece, were they to essay a compliment now to the lady at the other end of the table. They have forgotten that home has its inalienable rights, and among them first and chiefest the right to their personal presence. Nothing rears a man or woman who has been busy about one set of things, better than a total change of employment or feeling. A day on the lounge is all very well, but after a half hour of it, if the most tired man will shake off dull sleep, and have a romp with the children or a game of bo peep with the baby, he will be rested much more thoroughly than if he drowses away the whole evening, as so many business men do.—Hearth and Home.

CURRENT EVENTS.

The Leeds co-operative society have subscribed £25,000 in a joint stock company for working Tipton-green colliery, near Birmingham.

Miss Brewood, an American lady, has performed the perilous feat of attaining the summit of the Jungfrau mountain, in Switzerland.

A new company is floated, under the title of the Irish Midland Coal Consumers Company, on a co-operative basis. The coal fields to be worked are in the province of Connaught, near Lough Allen.

The first sod of a new colliery, the enterprise of a number of workingmen who have formed themselves into a company under the title of the "Broughton Moor Co-operative Mining Company," has recently been cut near the village of Dean near Thornechwaite.

The revenue of Newfoundland for the last financial year was \$807,000. In 1872 the revenue was £177,342. The progress of the country does not therefore seem to be very rapid. The principal exports are cod-fish seal-oil, cod-oil, seal skins, herring, and salmon.

In order to encourage the workmen who will be engaged in the new Ebury Junction Iron Works, situate between Barnsley and Wakefield, now in course of construction, the directors have decided to reserve three hundred shares for them if they choose to take them up.

A correspondent of the Washington Star sends the following statements, saying that he knows the parents of the children and has recently received an account of their birth from a personal friend: "Mrs. J. B. McCrum, residing at No. 58, Parsons street, Kalamazoo, Mich., is the mother of twins so small that they are a marvel of humanity, putting in shade all stories of Lilliputians ever heard of. One is a boy and the other a girl, and weigh, together, three pounds and four ounces! They are perfect and seem to be in good health. Their bed is a little paper box, filled with cotton, and they are dressed in doll's clothes. The mother and children were doing well at last accounts. These twins are the smallest living creatures ever heard of. They take food naturally and make a noise like very young kittens. Quite a number of citizens have called to see the little wonders. A tea cup will cover the head of either. Their hands are about the size of the bowl of a teaspoon and their bodies less than six inches long—the boy a trifle the larger."