

Truth's Contributors.

THE RIGHTS OF LABOR.

BY THE REV. E. A. STAFFORD, A. B.

When these labor troubles are finally settled the world's civilization will recognize ideas on the subject of speculation widely different from those now entertained by respectable people. Now the world languidly admits that gambling is bad if done under that name. But modify the form, and give it another name, and even the people in the Christian church can see nothing improper in it. On this subject the best moral sentiment is alarmingly low. It offers no restraint to any man's selfish ambition to become the owner of towering millions. It is not by industry that such giddy accumulations can be amassed. That is only possible through a course of reckless speculation. But, when once a man gets fairly on in the way to wealth, he is seized with a passion to found what, by foolish courtesy, is called one of the first families. First family indeed, founded upon reckless but respectable gambling! If he is what is falsely called fortunate, and gets well up into the millions, then he can control the markets used for speculation, or at least know their temper absolutely, so that he no longer takes any risks, but has only to divide with others, in the same position as himself, all that small operators are insane enough to risk. By such a course the Vanderbilts, and the Goulds heap up their vast accumulations. In many cases it has been clearly shown that these millions were diverted from channels which would have carried them naturally into the hands of the laborer. The claims set up that the laborer should have a larger share of the wealth produced are right and just in fact, but they are often laid at the wrong door; for the employer is frequently utterly unable to divide a larger dividend with them than he has done because so much has, through speculation, been diverted from the channels of legitimate business to swell up the useless millions of some speculator on a gigantic scale of gambling. The lot of the working man will not be greatly and permanently improved until he, and all the rest of society, come to entertain a different sentiment from envy, towards the position of the man who has accumulated millions by respectable gambling. Now, the only fault the laboring man, and the average Christian, has with such an abnormal development of wealth is that it is not owned by himself. He would gladly change places with the owner. He would not trouble himself much about right and conscience in the matter. Now this conflict will never end until all good men come to feel that these things are wrong, and guilty, and offensive, in the sight of God. Good men must rise to such a refinement of moral sensibility that they would not be a Vanderbilt by the same methods if they could. Christian people must learn to count the fear of God as better than great riches not gotten by fair methods. This is one of the side lights which shine upon this conflict waged by the "Knights of Labor."

If this difficulty were removed there would be no trouble in reaching an adjustment which would grant to the laborer his rights as fully as recognized in the three principles laid down by Mill.

But, if this were done, still the working man would find themselves face to face with one of the most difficult problems of socialism. An equal division even on Mill's principles would be most unjust. Another element which must be taken into account is idleness.

All men will not work. The Scriptural principle that, "If any would not work neither should he eat," must be upheld. To ignore it is not civilization but retrogression. There is evidence enough that much acrimony and bitterness are added to the present disputes, by this element entering into the problem. Laziness can clamour more loudly than honest industry for a juster division. It has always been so. Probably it always will be so. No solution of the problem will entirely eliminate this unknown quantity.

Another weighty factor which must be taken into account is incompetency, even where there is willingness to do all ones part. Men are not equal, and no laws can make them so. No labor, or other organization has any right to demand that all hands be put upon a basis of absolute equality.

But another graver question, in which every good citizen is interested, is thrust up in this conflict. Not only are the rights of labor and of capital up for re-adjustment, but incidentally the liberty of the citizen is involved. Capital is of no use without labor. Certainly, its power lies in being able to employ labor. That is all clear enough. But labor, in order to enforce its demands goes upon strike. But the strike can have no efficacy if other laborers, who are not in the strike, may enter the places vacated by those who are in it. Supposing such laborers to be on hand, and willing to work, the strikers have no means of enforcing their claim, unless they can in some way intimidate these men, who are willing to take their places, and work. How can they do this? Not by any legal process, for no Government can uphold strikes. There remains then only to the strikers to take the law into their own hands, and restrain all citizens from entering upon the work they have for a time abandoned. But that is an unauthorized interference with the rights of free citizens, which, if tolerated, will overturn all our modern ideas of government. That method of controlling men will carry us back into the feudal ages, when one man, because he was stronger than another, compelled that other to follow him as his man, in life and limb, and held him absolutely subject to his command. Every member of the community is interested in preventing such unauthorized interference with the liberty of citizens. Free institutions do not permit even the Government to infringe upon a citizen's liberty except by a regular process, and the Government must not make any long delay in showing why it has restrained a man's liberty. Will the same civilization allow a labor organization, or any other organization, to restrain any citizen's liberty, without any process but violence, and that, too, for an indefinite time? If it be said, in extenuation of such a course, that the strikers have no other way of enforcing their will, then why not say the sandbaggers and the garroters have no other way of getting a man's money, and that the thief has no way of escaping but by shooting the owner of the house which is being burglarized. That is poor justification. Free men will object to be ruled by any unauthorized authority. If the Knight of Labor cannot carry their points without setting up an irresponsible government over their fellow citizens, then their time for action has not yet come. All reforms have had to endure vexatious delays. By delaying the time of action, under such circumstances, they will go forward, when the right time comes, with a great increase of influence. The most ardent friends of the laborer must feel that the maintenance of established authority is of incalculably higher importance than the triumph of any movement a few years earlier than it could do by a strict adherence to lawful methods.

ment a few years earlier than it could do by a strict adherence to lawful methods.

In this connection a queer conundrum is suggested. The Governments of Canada and the U. S. proceed upon the principle of affording protection to manufactures. Since this policy has been adopted the troubles between laborers and employers have increased. Protection may not be the cause, it may be simply due to the natural development of a great movement. All the same, one cannot but enquire after the true value of a protective tariff, if, as some are beginning to admit, no Government can protect manufacturers in the right of hiring other men who may be available when their hands go out in a body on strike. The question of protection to home industries will soon mean more than simply a high tariff.

This difficulty experienced by the organized laborers in securing their rights without restraining the liberty of any in an illegal manner, can be overcome as soon as they are numerous and strong enough to elect Parliaments, and make Governments, like-minded with themselves. If this be not possible then the success of the movement will have to wait until a nobler moral sentiment grows up in all civilized communities, on all the side issues affected in this struggle. In this improvement of moral ideas the laborers, alike with their employers, and professional men, will need to participate.

If labor organizations combine to affect elections they will help this movement onward. They will form a political party around one of the living issues of their time, instead of abdicate the right to pronounce upon the deeds of their chosen legislators, as so many electors do who think it almost a sin to vote differently from what they have always done, and their fathers before them.

Take any view of it we will, this is not an agitation that is going to end in a little time. It is one of the great movements in the thought of people which often take centuries to work out their results. In its progress much that now seems violent and wrong will be found to be a stepping stone to a grander civilization, and only the storm which leaves the earth a purified atmosphere.

TORONTO, ONT.

THE HOSPITALITY OF A CANADIAN FARM HOUSE IN THE OLD TIME.

BY JOHN FRASER, MONTREAL.

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"Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease. How often have I paused on every charm, the sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, the never-falling brook, the busy mill, the decent church that topt the neighbouring hill."—Let us attempt to picture in its primitive simplicity and unbounded hospitality one of those plain old Canadian farm houses as they existed over fifty years ago.

Those old homesteads were to be found at convenient stepping places all over Upper and Lower Canada and were noted for their hospitality. Their stables were always open for the traveller's horse, and the best from their cellars, pantries and poultry yards was spread before the self-invited, but ever welcome guest. Every Lower Canadian has heard of the open houses of the French Seigneurs in the old time. It is to be regretted that those old families have been so much broken up and scattered.

Those old halting places were not only useful but necessary in early days in Canada, when money was scarce and few inns stood by the wayside. The hospitable open farm house was a recognized institution over a century ago in the New England States and

along the banks of the Mohawk, by which the farming community extended their hospitality to brother farmers on travelling, and they looked for a similar return when they, in their turn, had to travel on business or for pleasure.

In those early days when a farmer had to travel from fifty to one hundred miles he could calculate to a certainty, his midday halt, or his resting place for the night, and he could also count upon the warm reception he would meet with. There was a kind of Oddfellowship—or something dearer—existing among the scattered farmers of old Canada, by which the visitor and the visited were mutually benefited.

This was a means of conveying and receiving the year's news from widely separated friends at very little cost. This was usually done during the winter months.

The old farmers of Canada looked upon each other as of the same family—as brother Canadians. They were proud of the country of their birth or adoption. They had a common aim—to make homes for themselves and their families. A farmer in those early days might travel one hundred miles with his outfit in winter; say, for instance, from the Dutch settlements in and around the township of Markham, behind Toronto, to visit his friends on the Niagara, without spending five shillings in cash, if he wished, because every farmhouse on the road was open to him, and it was then considered a slight for a traveller to pass by the open door and spread tables.

The people of the present generation know very little of the old-time hospitalities. The writer can recall many of his early tramps, on foot, over forty years ago, through the Niagara and Home Districts, and, in retrospect, fancy himself again entering some one of those old U. E. Loyalist farm houses of Upper Canada, to make some simple enquiry as to the road. The reception was different then to what it is now.

Railways have changed everything in the country parts. The days of Acadian simplicity have passed away; new manners have supplanted the old. All is now changed!

You would be informed on entering such a house:—That it was near the mid day meal, or that night was approaching, and a pressing invitation would be given to partake of food and rest for the night; or you might be informed by the good wife of the house that the good man was out in the fields, and that he would be greatly disappointed if he missed the news from town.

The country people of those days were anxious to get news about markets, etc., and they extended their hospitality in return. Our old readers will recall those days of primitive Canadian hospitality.

The writer, in one of his early tramps, chanced to visit an old U. E. Loyalist settlement, and met with so kind a reception as induced him to spend a week. It was in the Autumn, a charming season. There was plenty of hunting, and being a good shot he enjoyed it to his heart's content, so much so that his sojourn was extended to nearly a month. Deer, partridge, duck, &c., were then plentiful. How often we think of those by gone days spent in the backwoods of Upper Canada. Besides outdoor sports there were also many indoor ones.

Were you ever, fair reader, at a "Husking Bee?" If not, let us give you an inkling as to how such things were done in country parts in the old days. The corn (Indian corn) with the husks on was gathered and piled in a large heap, like a stack, on the barn floor. The neighbouring girls and boys