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THE DUTY OF THE EMPLOYER TO THE EMPLOYED.



We have frequently, during the past four years that we have edited this magazine, urged upon the employer the advantage to be gained by their working faithfully for those under whom they have engaged, and, also, endeavoured to impress upon them the propriety, when they feel themselves aggrieved, to try, as far as possible, to obtain a redress of their grievances by calm remonstrances and reasoning, instead of resorting to strikes, which are sure to end disastrously to

both the employer and employed; although, in most cases it falls heavier upon the workmen, as the greater portion of them have families, and by their weak and helpless wives and children the misery is felt the keenest. We do not mean to say that there are not grievances that a body of operatives are not justified in resisting, for instance, when a prosperous corporation endeavours to grind down the wages of their workmen to the very lowest rate, not as a matter of necessity, but simply because they think the men must either submit to their hard terms or starve, whilst it grows rich on the sweat of the mechanic's brow. In such cases, strikes, however they may be deprecated, become a necessity—a struggle for justice and fair play, against greed and oppression. But, on the other hand, the combination of a body of men to strike for higher wages, or for certain rules or changes, simply because, by so doing, they think they can enforce compliance, and if this is done without ever considering whether the business of their employers could afford to pay a higher rate of wages is equally unjustifiable.

There is a certain duty that the employed owe to the employer, but it is with the duty of the employer to the employed that we desire to treat at the close of the present year.

Employers, or managers of companies, hiring many operatives, stand almost in respect to them, as far as authority goes, in the position of a colonel commanding a regiment of soldiers; and, therefore, according to the manner in which he wields this power, he may become a gentle ruler or a tyrant—either loved or hated. Every kind-hearted employer, who is a just man will always treat his men with fairness, and feel an interest in their welfare. He would naturally look upon them as a busy hive of human beings, whose social comforts and welfare, formed many links in the chain of his own success, by returning, in labour and skill, a fair value for what they receive from him in money.

Now, too often, employers are apt to consider that because they give employment to a body of men, the men so employed are under an obligation—whereas if we look at it in a proper light, the workman who faithfully fulfils his obligation to his employer, is under no obligation whatever—he simply renders back that to his employer, by the skill of his hands, which not only pays back his wages in cash, but a handsome profit besides. It has of late years been found a profitable rule to treat those we employ with kindness and justice. This is the system that has worked so admirably in the United States, where skill and talent is appreciated, and coarse words are not allowed to be used in their workshops. If men are found to be inefficient, idle, or careless, they are quietly admonished, and if they do not improve, are discharged. We are pleased to know that in these days the force of education has checked, to a great extent, the swearing at, and personal abuse, workmen were subject to for the slightest offence—thanks to education we feel more pride now in being a gentleman than a bully. Nothing is ever gained, or is more aggravating to a mechanic than constant finding fault, without cause, with his work, and it too often happens that this is done by a foreman who is not so skilful as the workman, simply to show his authority. This habit, unfortunately, grows upon those who have command over men, and they make it a rule to find fault with everything, and never acknowledge, by even a gracious word, the efforts of a skilful workman to excel and please. The consequence of such action, on the part of an employer is, that the man feels disheartened and offended, and ceases to exert himself to excel in that for which he receives no thanks. Nothing jars more on the nerves of working-