

AN INDUSTRIAL PROBLEM.

The social upheaval which has resulted from the differences arising between employers and employees, has in no small degree disturbed the public mind, and is in a measure responsible for the continuance of the industrial depression throughout the civilized world. Society, therefore, demands, both from employees and employers, a calm consideration of the points of disagreement, in order that their repetition may not repeatedly disturb business, hamper enterprise, and make uncertain steady employment. The employers' interests in the settlement of this industrial problem are identical with those of their employees, and hence neither party should dictate the terms upon which an amicable and satisfactory solution of it is to be made. The employer, on the one hand, provides the fixed capital which is expended in supplying buildings and plant; and he likewise advances the circulating capital which is necessary to pay either daily or weekly the wages of his employees. We are aware that there are those who have taken exception to the latter statement, claiming that the wages of the men are represented in the product of their labor, and that this product represents in value the material used, the wages paid, the interest upon capital investment, and the profit to the employer. While we do not deny the truth of this assertion, we yet affirm that the employer is obliged to put into his business, over and above the fixed capital, a certain amount of money, for the purpose of paying wages in advance of the sale of the finished product, and that he is entitled to receive as fair a return for this outlay as for the fixed capital, in addition to which the employer has a right to receive a fair remuneration for the superintendance and general financial management of the business. The employees, on the other hand, put into the business their intelligence, their skill, and their labor, and when, by reason of the proper application of these, the profits, over and above interest upon capital, cost of management, and wages, become abnormal, and are appropriated exclusively by the employer, the employees may well question his right to pocket the same, and agitate in favor of some reform by which they can become sharers in these profits. The question then reduces itself to one of co-operation, in which the employer and employees shall become sharers not only in the profits, but in the losses of the concern; and to our mind, such a reform is one that must ultimately be brought about. By the adoption of the co-operative system, the true interest of the employees and those of the employer, would be placed on precisely the same footing. The employer no longer fearing slighted work, strikes, and boycotts, could devote himself more exclusively to the furthering of his business interests; and while he would receive a fair return for his outlay of capital and time, he would likewise share in the increased profits of the concern. Under co-operation, the employees would have a double incentive to labor faithfully, and having obtained positions in industrial establishments in which they were earning a fair competence, receiving a stipulative wage, and sharing in the profits of the business, they will be slow to seek employment elsewhere; and hence their value as steady, skilled workmen would be greatly enhanced. In some parts of France co-operation on the basis outlined has been in operation for upwards of fifty years; and wherever it has been faithfully adhered to both employees and employers have expressed themselves as thoroughly satisfied. If employers must recognize the just rights of labor, so labor must recognize the just claims of capital. Neither capital nor labor can, single-handed, carry on industrial pursuits; but labor co-operating with capital can accomplish everything. The partnership, however, should not be one-sided, neither capital or labor can claim the exclusive right to appropriate the profits, nor should they singly be called upon to bear the losses. If employers and employees would approach this question on the lines we have laid down, we should seldom hear of strikes and lock-outs, and the public mind would be relieved from that disquietude which has prolonged the present depression far beyond its natural limit.

NOVA SCOTIAN PESSIMISTS.

With reference to what we have said in previous numbers with regard to Nova Scotian Pessimists, several correspondents have written warmly endorsing our utterances, and encouraging us while the matter is under discussion, to drive the nail well home. One correspondent, a well-known barrister, says:—"Pessimists are to be found in all countries, but Nova Scotia appears to have more than her fair proportion of such persons. To my personal knowledge, many young men have left this Province and gone to the United States; who, had they received the slightest encouragement from their relatives and friends, would have gladly remained at home, and made an honest endeavor to earn a livelihood in their native land." It is unfortunately too true that our professional, mercantile, and agricultural men seldom have a word of encouragement to offer a young man preparing to make a start in life. He is told that the professions are over-crowded; that business is overdone; that farming is existing, not living; and that he had better go to the States to seek his fortune. And yet this advice comes from men who, if they be industrious, honest, and intelligent, generally manage to make a comfortable living—as a matter of fact a far better living than is secured by nine out of ten of those who leave the Province. There is scarce a reader who cannot recall to mind the unwillingness of some young friend or relative who has thus been driven from the land he loves; when, had he remained, he might to-day be comfortably off. Our young men have to work much harder in the United States to earn bare necessities of life, than they have to work here, in order to secure competence; and yet, each year, hundreds of them leave our shores under the impression that they cannot obtain work in the Province. They are reluctant to go, but their Acadian Star of Hope having set, they leave Nova Scotia without ever having sought to obtain employment. Now, this state of things is directly traceable to the humbug and lack of patriotism which is

observable in every section; humbug it is to assert that money is not made in business here as elsewhere; that our professional men are not remunerated for their services; and that farming leaves no margin of profit; or that fishing, mining, and manufacturing do not pay in Nova Scotia. Lack of patriotism it is, in view of the need of increased population, to urge our young men, the bone and sinew of the country, to leave Nova Scotia, when the best interests of the Province demand that they shall remain at home and help to build up a commonwealth strong and great. We must have faith in our country, faith in its resources, and faith in its future; and our young men, inspired by this faith, will fight out the battle of life in their native soil, thus insuring a progress and development far beyond anything we have hitherto realized. The man who believes that his son or sons can not make as good a living in this Province as he or they can elsewhere, is a pessimist, it may be unwittingly; but, holding such a view, he discourages Nova Scotians from remaining in Nova Scotia, and by so doing, hinders the progress of one of the fairest Provinces that ever the sun shone on. We have English, Scotch and Irish Societies flourishing in our cities, but it is time that we had a Nova Scotian Society, through which we might inculcate that spirit of patriotism which makes the soil of England, Scotland and Ireland so dear to the men who wear the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock.

POPULAR ERRORS.

We are all more or less wedded to our own opinions, and, believing ourselves right, we are loath to have our preconceived notions disturbed, and in fact we are generally ready to back up our opinions by arguments which we consider logical. A writer in *Chambers' Journal* has given some striking illustrations of a few of the leading popular fallacies or illusions, from which we cull the following:—

It is by no means uncommon to find educated men and women obstinately dispute the fact of moist air being lighter than dry air. They say they cannot understand how anything can be made lighter by being moistened, and their almost invariable illustration is that of a sponge. It certainly at first sight does appear an anomaly when put in this way; but it is just this false way of putting it that has been their stumbling-block.

That smoke is lighter than air is another very common belief, and this doubtless arises from the smoke issuing from a chimney being invariably seen to ascend; but if we follow the warm smoke in its upward course, we shall find that as soon as it has lost the impetus derived from the draught in the flues, and has in addition become cool and condensed, that it begins to descend, for the most part in the annoying shape of "blacks."

POISONOUS GASES.—There is a very common superstition that sewer and other poisonous gases are more deadly in themselves when they are inodorous than when they appeal forcibly to the olfactory nerve. We do not of course refer to those venomous gases which are originally void of scent, such as nitrogen, but to such pungent ones as carburetted hydrogen or coal gas, the fragrance of which is unmistakable. The fact is that gases may be deprived of their smell without losing their destructive properties.

LIGHTNING.—But perhaps there is a greater amount of misconception concerning lightning than almost any other natural phenomenon. As an example, we may quote those who consider that the lightning invariably "cometh down from heaven," and that it never ascends. The tower of Dundry Church, which was struck in March 1859, furnished a clear proof of its ascending, the lightning entering at the base and passing up through the tower.

Bearing upon the subject is the following extract taken from a back number of the *Builder*:—

"I was much puzzled for some time," says the writer, "by a solicitor's strong-room, which I had built, obstinately refusing to become dry, although favorably situated for the process, and a jet of gas being kept burning day and night. The consequence, however, was that the papers and parchments became flaccid and damp. The mischief has been entirely and speedily remedied by inserting two ventilating bricks and extinguishing the gas;" clearly proving that where there is no ventilation, gas, instead of exciting evaporation, produces moisture, and consequently condensation.

That damp air is lighter than dry air, that smoke is heavier than air, that inodorous gases are poisonous, that lightning ascends as well as descends, and that a burning light does not ensure dryness in a room, are facts everybody ought to know, but which few do know.

A colony of Wurtemberger engineers in Palestine have made roads, multiplied plantations, and so cleared and cultivated the Plain of Jerzeel that, in spite of the interference of the Latin monks of Mt. Carmel, they have completely transformed it, and now have a prosperous colony there.

The rigid, but antiquated, rules of caste in India meet hard shocks from modern scientific improvements. The Bengal Agricultural Department persuaded an intelligent native to use bone manure in cultivating beet-root. His crop was the largest he ever had, but was unsalable on account of his using bones. The Pundits have now decided, greatly to popular satisfaction, that to handle or use bone manure involves no loss of caste.

The New York State Board of Health has prepared a report on the pathogenetic powers of contaminated ice, in which it is stated that ice formed in impure water may contain from eight to ten per cent of the organic matter dissolved in the water, and in addition a very large amount of the organic in it. It may also contain living animals and plants, ranging in size from visible worms down to the minutest spores, and the vitality of these organisms may be unaffected by freezing. Such ice is unfit for use in drinking water, for it may cause serious illness.