

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 Notes.

The coolies at Beaver Falls, Penn., are on a strike to the number of one hundred and fifty.

Three thousand factory operatives have struck for higher wages and shorter hours in Alcoy, Spain.

The machinists are on strike at Erie, Pa., against a proscription of members of the Machinists and Blacksmiths' Union, in the Presque Isle Iron Works. The Union is confident of winning.

The Burnley weavers have failed to obtain the full extent of their demands for an increase of wages, and, from what transpired at a recent meeting, it is extremely probable that a strike will take place next month.

The strike of clinkers connected with the Leicester boot and shoe trade has virtually terminated. Three hundred of the men on strike for an advance of 15 per cent. have returned at an advance of 10, and the remainder have either obtained work elsewhere, or will resume on the old terms.

The boatmen of Douglass, Isle of Man, have struck, in consequence of taxes having been put on their boats. The Clyde dredgers, bargemen, and divers who struck work for an advance of 2s. in their wages, were paid off recently, and work on the river was generally suspended in consequence.

The Turkish Government has sent some engineers into Albania, with the object of constructing a line of railway in that country. The first line is to be laid down between Soutari and Antivari, and is to be continued to Prizren and Pristina. Another line is to proceed from Scutaria via Alessio, Tirana, and Elbasan to Velona.

The journeymen carpenters and masons of London, Eng., have made a demand for an increase of wages, with payment at noon on Saturdays. Conferences have been held with the master builders and masons, which, however, have failed to result in an accommodation of differences, and a general strike is threatened on Saturday, the 19th inst.

The strippers of Ashton and district—having demanded an advance of 15 per cent. in their wages, and the masters having only conceded 5 per cent.—have given notice at three of the mills to cease work. On Tuesday, 24th ult., the master spinners held a meeting, and resolved that unless the men withdraw their notice, they would look-out all the mills in the district on July 5th.

On Tuesday, 24th ult., Mr. Rupert Kettle, of Wolverhampton, conducted an inquiry at Saltburn respecting the wages of the Cleveland ironstone miners. Several witnesses were examined, and a mass of documentary evidence was put in on behalf of the masters. The inquiry terminated at three o'clock. In the course of a fortnight Mr. Kettle will give his award.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

From statements made in Parliament it appears that the experiment of compulsory education in England is a success. The average attendance in the schools in England and Wales has arisen from 1,063,000 in 1839 to 1,558,000 in 1873, or nearly fifty per cent.; and in the City of Leeds, where education seems to have been only a tradition before the compulsory law went into effect, the increase this year is equal to sixty-three per cent. London shows the lowest average, but even in that overgrown city, where it is extremely difficult to catch the vagrant children, or to coerce careless or vicious parents into compliance with the law, the results are unexpectedly encouraging. New schools are springing up in all parts of England, and there are accommodations for 2,300,000 pupils. The London Times says: "The increase of fifty per cent. upon which we may fairly congratulate ourselves has chiefly occurred where compulsory powers have been put into operation." American educators who have been prominent in their opposition to the compulsory system may gather some useful information from these accounts of the progress made in England.

THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

We clip the following from the *Machinists and Blacksmiths' Monthly Journal*:

Much has been said by the public press about the arbitrary decrees of Trades' Unions in the matter of prohibiting the employment of more than a certain proportion of apprentices to a specified number of journeymen. The press in its imputations has been sweeping and general, including all Trades' Unions and excepting none, merely presenting one side of the question, and seeking to turn public opinion against the Unions on the plea of injustice to those who seek a trade and are prohibited by the rules of the Union. These arguments look very plausible so long as but one side is presented. But when we take into consideration the right of every man to keep what belongs to him or give it away just as he pleases, we encounter no particular reason why the mechanical knowledge of a man is not as much his property as is the house or lot of which he holds a clear title, and for which he has given value received. We cannot see then that the mechanic, by refusing to impart his knowledge to whoever his employer may see fit to dictate, commits a crime any more than the manufacturer who refuses to lend himself to an enterprise the tendency of which is to decrease the value of his products. The knowledge a man possesses is his property, and he, therefore, has a God-given right to keep that knowledge or impart it just as he may deem proper. No man can deny a man's legal right to his own property. If this is conceded, then the mechanic has a legal as well as a moral right to the exclusive use of his own property, whether that property be a house, lot, or mechanical knowledge; and to compel him to dispose of either is not only an injustice, but an outrage and a crime.

We do not wish to be understood as being in favor of limiting the number of apprentices by arbitrary means, or that we favor a limitation solely from selfish or narrow-minded motives. But we favor a limitation in the number of apprentices for the reasons:

1st. That the great aim of the employer, as well as the employee, should be to instruct the apprentice fully in the arts and mysteries and in every branch of the trade at which he is employed, which, without a limitation of some kind, is utterly impossible.

2nd. By an overplus of workman at any trade the wages are reduced in proportion as the overplus is increased, which would be alike injurious to the apprentice and the journeyman.

3rd. The mechanical reputation of the American workman, which has in a great measure sunk below par, and his occupation brought to the level of a mere laborer, was caused by the wholesale slaughtering of his trade by the *avariciousness*, and not the *sympathy*, of employers; for the boy without a trade can be regained only by limitation.

4th. We favor limitation only where the value of the mechanic's labor is reduced, and the chances of the apprentice to acquire a thorough mechanical knowledge are lessened by an overplus of apprentices.

5th. Because through limitation the mechanic is enabled to obtain a fair living price for his labor, whereby he is enabled to clothe his children respectably, and send them to school long enough to acquire an education that will enable them to compete in the race of life with the favored and pampered children of fortune.

Thus far we have written simply in answer to a biased press which has done much to reduce the mechanics of America to a condition of serfdom and slavery. But the press is not alone to blame for the grand army of botch or inferior workman which infests nearly every mechanical calling in the country. The employers have done much to swell the ranks of this grand army by the nefarious system of keeping the apprentice at but one thing during his apprenticeship, which is done in order to make him more profitable to his employer, regardless of the interest of the boy.

The journeyman mechanic is not free from blame; through his selfishness in withholding knowledge from the apprentice, he has done even more than the employer to increase the number of inferior workmen.

The sooner our mechanics recognize the fact that no man can be elevated in point of intelligence to the detriment of another, the sooner will they assist materially in building up our dilapidated trades by making good workmen of every man who possesses the ability or capacity necessary who follows these trades for a livelihood. The destructive and suicidal selfishness that prevents their instructing each other in the higher branches of mechanism, has been the means of reducing the number of competent workmen, until their number in the United States is much smaller in proportion to the inferior workmen, than in any other country in the world representing the same number of intelligent and enlightened people. If every man at work at our trade were a first-class mechanic, they would be more independent, and, consequently would receive much better wages and be compelled to work fewer hours than they now are. How important is it then, that every man working at our trades should, as far as possible, be made a competent workman? Let us cast aside the old, exploded theory that "Knowledge confined to the few is beneficial to those possessing it." Nothing could be more injurious to a man than for him to possess the wisdom of even Solomon and have the remainder of the human family in ignorance. "Knowledge is power," but only when diffused among the masses of the people. Let us turn the meeting-rooms of our Unions into school-rooms, and let the more advanced impart their knowledge to the others. Take the poor workman, whose limited mechanical knowledge has placed him at the mercy of the employer, who compels him to work for a price that has a tendency to reduce the wages of good workmen, and lift him out of his dependent condition, extend to him the right hand of fellowship, and then we will receive his co-operation, for without his aid the accomplishment of the objects we have in view is very uncertain.

What is needed most at present is the establishment of a regular apprenticeship system by law. A system that will compel the apprentice to serve an apprenticeship of at least four years, and compel the employer to give the apprentice an opportunity to acquire a thorough mechanical knowledge at every branch of his trade. When this is once accomplished, the American mechanics will no longer be put to blush by a comparison with the mechanics of other countries.

ARBITRATION.

The many disastrous disputes between employers and employes—disastrous alike to both parties—has brought the question of arbitration prominently before the public; and its expediency, justice, or injustice have in every phase been ably commented on. Arbitration was, we believe, first tried in England, where trade disputes, resulting in strikes or lock-outs, have in the past assumed proportions scarcely dreamt of in this country, and we hope will never be experienced. When from one to twenty thousand members of a trade or calling quit work, or are forced to quit work, the subject ceases to be a mere local sensation, but affects a whole nation, and sometimes the whole civilized world. The long continued disputes among the colliers of England and Wales have unsettled every manufacturing business in those two countries, and the influence thereof is felt to a very great extent even in the United States; as witness the increase in cost of pig-iron, and the exporting of American coal to places formerly supplied by the English colliers. These facts demonstrate the immense power that is in organizations of workmen; and this demonstration of power, if continued in, must inevitably secure to labor thus organized the many rights that it has in the past pleaded for in vain. The compact organization of

laborers, and their system of mutual assistance, has killed the starving-out process resorted to in times past, when labor would, when driven to the wall, turn on its tormentors, and endeavour, by an appeal to their pockets, to secure that which an appeal to their other attributes had failed to secure. Capital could then afford to lay idle for a time, knowing that when labor would become literally starved into submission, it could readily repair any losses by forcing labor through reduced wages, and consumers through a supposed scarcity, to double their usual profits for a time at least. The days when this could be done have vanished for ever, if labor is only true to itself. Through organization and mutual assistance it can inflict such losses on capitalists, and continue a strife so long without danger of starvation, that employers are generally ready and willing to resort to any other means that will give them even the slightest show of an advantage. And that which they have for centuries prated upon—the identity of interest between capital and labor—is being slowly arrived at, notwithstanding their most bitter and persistent opposition. While they have always asserted this identity of interest, yet they never believed in it, and only used it as a means toward an end—the defeat of labor's aspirations.

All is now changed: through organization labor is likely to get the upper hand; it is slowly but surely, in spite of repeated defeats, encroaching on the "God-given rights of capital." Capital sees the handwriting on the wall, and is disposed now to temporize and conciliate; a little justice must be conceded, or full justice will be enforced; some concessions must be made, or one of the contending parties must be overwhelmingly defeated. Labor (the many) will not always strife with capital (the few). Civilization and education, walking hand in hand, have broken down the shackles of ignorance that held the people in subjection. Labor is beginning to know its rights, and will dare all to maintain them. Thus two contending armies are brought face to face, both well equipped for the fray, and if fight they must, the world will stand aghast at the misery and desolation that must inevitably follow. Philanthropists, statesmen, and all lovers of their kind, dread this combat, and seek the means to prevent its taking place. They appeal, not to the baser nature of either party, but to their sense of justice, an appeal to which organized labor is or must be ever susceptible—and Arbitration is the word.

Can labor receive justice by and through arbitration? We have not had sufficient experience to give an emphatic answer; but we are unequivocally in favor of giving it a fair trial, determined that when we enter into it, to abide by its results, no matter how unfair to us or how distasteful; and after a fair trial of its workings, and it is found to be only another engine of oppression, then to cast it from us, and seek other means of securing justice. We have no fears of its proving a failure; the most unlettered of Trade Unionists can in his own person, and with intuitive knowledge of the right, advance unanswerable arguments in behalf of labor: and the power of mind over matter is an axiom. Labor is, and must be, right in all its demands: and backed by organization, which places it on equal footing with capital, it must, with right on its side, conquer beyond a peradventure.

LABOR STATISTICS.

We take the following from the New Haven (Conn.) Union of the 13th inst:—

The Legislature has finally passed the bill creating a Bureau of Labor Statistics. The bill as it now reads is but the shadow of the original, but we are confident that great good may be accomplished for the laboring classes through the agency of this bureau as it now stands, provided it is conducted by men who are non-partisan and are sufficiently acquainted with the duties devolving upon them to present all

the facts in a complete and methodical shape. Of course it can hardly be expected that with an appropriation of only one thousand dollars for office rent and expenses that much information can be obtained the first year. No doubt the next Legislature will see the necessity of being a little more liberal. In Massachusetts, the first year, the bureau expended more for printing blanks to be filled in with answers to questions propounded than the whole of the sum apportioned to this bureau for legitimate expenses. But we have had a beginning of legislation in the right direction. The bureau must be conducted honorably and fairly, and prove itself of benefit to the manufacturer and merchant as well as to the workmen, so that there may be a disposition in the future to widen its scope. We are glad to notice that in the House this measure received the almost unanimous endorsement of both parties. The effort in the Senate to take from it its best feature (power to send for persons and papers) was defeated by the efforts of leading men in the House, who insisted on its passage in its original form.

LORD DERBY ON THE PURCHASE OF THE RAILWAYS.

Lord Derby spoke at considerable length at the Society of Arts on the 13th ult., against the purchase of the railways by the State. His lordship, while promising that if the public really wished the railways to be purchased by the State, it could be done, asked the meeting whether it was a wise thing, without the very strongest necessity, to make the State responsible for six or eight millions of debt more than it bore already. He believed that the purchase of the railways would involve that of the canals and steamboats also, unless the Government was to compete with private enterprise. The noble lord also warned the advocates of State purchase that they had no security that railways would not be superseded as coaches and canals had been. The inventive powers of the human mind could not be limited. What would have happened if the Government of the day had bought up stage coaches and canals? Lord Derby further asked whether it would be wise, remembering the contests between capital and labor, to make the State the largest employer of labor in the country? Railway servants would be forming unions and demanding more money and less work; while a refusal would lead to a political outcry, and a concession would upset the market value of labor throughout the country. But the serious objections to the proposed change would be, that the Government would possess such an enormous political power in its appointments, and in extensions of accommodation, which would go to towns returning Government members, while places represented by the Opposition would get nothing. Thus wholesale corruption had resulted from State management of public works in France, and they would find it difficult to keep from it in England.

PAPER BEFORE BOOKS.

Papers before books is the rule, now-a-days, with most readers. The time for reading is so brief and so uncertain, the character of the book so remote from the ever-varying activities of the hour, that the eye searches for the picture of passing events, or the light, spicy article of the lively periodical, rather than the solid matter of the book. Go into any family and you will see that from the old grandmother who still reads with her spectacles, to the little boy or girl that can spell out the words in easy reading, it is the paper or magazine that is first wanted and first read. Look in the cars, the parlor, or any other place, and you will discover the same fact—the paper or periodical first, the book next. What then should the Press do but supply this great and growing want; what should the friends of the young and the old do but encourage such papers and periodicals as are fitted to promote right principles and virtuous and useful practices?