

Ontario Workman.

THE EQUALIZATION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF SOCIETY IN THE SOCIAL SCALE SHOULD BE THE TRUE AIM OF CIVILIZATION.

VOL. II.—No. 42.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 1874.

No. 94.

Labor Notes.

Owing to the reduction of wages from \$3 50 to \$3, the ship carpenters of Philadelphia and Camden are on strike.

The men employed at the Mammoth Copperopolis Mine, Utah, have taken possession of the mine and mean to keep it until they get the three months' wages due them.

THE POST OFFICE EMPLOYEES.—Petitions from Liverpool have been presented to the Postmaster-General asking that their present scale of pay may be advanced, and that Sunday labor may be abolished. The postal employees of Ossett have also presented a petition against Sunday work.

There was a great meeting of ironworkers in Wolverhampton on Wednesday, upon the proposed new arrangements for settling wages. The meeting approved by resolution the action of their representatives at the meeting of masters and men in Birmingham, but as to the scale of wages to come into operation in April, difficulties exist which masters and men will not find it very easy to adjust, and mass meetings will have to be held.

THE NOTTINGHAM LACE TRADE.—The strike in the lace trade, by which 1,000 men and several thousand women and children are out of work, has reached the twenty-second week. Though much distress has been the result, the men hold firm, notwithstanding that the masters have threatened to lock out all the men who are at work and supporting those on strike.

The ironmasters and colliery proprietors of South Wales and Monmouthshire have formed themselves into a trade union, the object of which is stated to be "to unite the employers into a body so as to maintain the proper interests of capital against any unfair demand or unjust action on the part of the united body of workmen." Among the provisions in the deed of association is one "regulating the action of the employers in their contract arrangements with the workmen throughout the district.

The Trades' Congress, which is to be held at Sheffield next month, is expected to be more than usually important. Delegates will be present from the new International League. This is a league representing the Trades' unions of the continent, and is not to be confounded with the political organization of the same name. Delegates will also be present from Paris and Geneva. The subjects to be discussed by the Congress have reference mainly to recent legislation, such as the Master and Servants' act and the Criminal Law Amendment act.

The statement telegraphed to various newspapers that the miners of Pennsylvania had resolved to submit to reduction rather than remain idle longer is denied and repudiated by the miners. As already stated, the indications are that the miners will not insist on an advance over last year's basis, provided steady work be guaranteed them, but they are still firm in saying that they will stand out against a reduction.

LABOR PROTECTION LEAGUE.—A meeting of the executive council of the above league was held on Friday, Jan. 2nd, at the Council Chambers, Swan Street, Minorities, when Mr. Morgan presided. Mr. C. Keen, secretary, read the correspondence, and announced the receipt of £8 10s. 6d. from the Southampton branch towards the strike of the General Steam Navigation Company's men. The chairman announced that week would terminate the lock-out, as nearly all the men were again at work.

AMALGAMATED ASSOCIATION OF MINERS.—The quarterly conference of the North Wales branch of the Amalgamated Association of Miners was held at Wrexham, on Tuesday. Sir Robert Cunliffe, M. P., attended the meeting, and took part in a discussion on various topics of interest to miners, especially those relating to legislation. He said he did not believe they would obtain the absolute repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, but doubts it would be amended. Several resolutions were passed.

The effect of the American financial crisis has indeed spread far and wide, for even in Switzerland the workman engaged in the greatest industry of that country—watch making, complain that there is but little employment for them in consequence of a check on the export business to the United States. The case makers and engravers are particularly slack of work, and one of the largest firms in Chaux-de-Fonds has been compelled to discharge all its workmen. To increase this trouble the price of provisions is now so exorbitant that great anxiety is felt on all sides.

A deputation from the Trades' Guild of Learning, waited on Tuesday afternoon on a sub-committee of the London School Board, at the invitation of the School Management committee, in order to urge upon the Board the adoption of systematic training in mechanics, &c., with the object of adapting the scientific instruction, provided or contemplated in the Board schools, to the future employments of the children. A memorial to the same effect has been presented to the Board, and is now under their consideration, in favor of the elementary teaching of applied science and art in the schools, in such a manner as to lay the foundation of a connected system of technical education.

The Executive Committee of the National Agricultural Laborers' Union met at Leamington, on Monday, Dec. 29th. Mr. Arch, the President, was, with three other delegates, appointed to confer with some influential Berkshire landowners, with a view to arrive at a mutual understanding as to questions respecting agricultural labor in the county. The National Union contemplate the adoption of the co-operative farming principle, and they on Monday appointed a committee to examine a Warwickshire farm of 300 acres, on which they hope to try the co-operative system. It was reported that in various districts farmers threatened a reduction of wages, which the union ordered should be resisted.

THE ROTHERHAM PAINTERS.—Circulars will shortly be issued to the master painters of the Rotherham district—being part of a general movement—from the workman, asking for an increase of one penny per hour on the present rate of wages, to take effect on the 27th of April next. The application is based upon two principal facts, viz., the short time frequently worked during the winter months, and the high price of all the necessaries of life. It is contended by the painters that their trade is very largely exceptional, and as full work is generally impossible for several months of the year, justice and equity warrant them in seeking higher wages when trade is brisk. The movement is a general one throughout the country.

At Zurich the workmen engaged in the bookbinding trade have struck work. They had addressed a memorial to their employers demanding fourpence an hour for a day of ten hours, that is to say, 3s. 4d. per day. The employers, however, while accepting the fourpence per hour as the ordinary tariff, refused to limit the day's work to ten hours, but they offered to compromise at ten and a half hours. To this the workmen willingly assented, and then the employers, construing this readiness on the part of the men to compromise as a sign of weakness, revoked their former decision, and refused to limit the day even to ten and a half hours. The employers' society or union further decided to fine any member of their society who should employ any workmen who had joined the strike which naturally ensued. They also applied to the police to watch and arrest any man on strike found speaking to those few workmen who had not struck. Notwithstanding these severe measures, three employers have already yielded to their men's terms, and appeals are made for assistance for the remaining men on strike.

The Home Labor Market is hardly yet sufficiently clear from holiday-making and stock-taking to admit of a useful report. Indications are, however, generally in favor of at least average employment in

most branches during the year now entered upon, and in those which supply the raw materials to the great industries full activity may be expected. In the coal and ironstone-mining districts, if the prejudice against new comers can be got over, there will probably be plenty of work for many hands, and even in Ireland the prospects of minors are better than for some time past. In Cornwall, the return of many from America has already visibly affected the local labor market, and men are not now so scarce as they were reported to be some months since. In the textile branches spinners and manufacturers are for the most part well under contract. At Birmingham the hardware trades are, on the whole, well engaged; and at Sheffield, though for the present works are slack, no permanent depression is expected. Agricultural laborers are still busy with the processes of Migration and Emigration, and recent official advices show that Colonial Governments are likely to assist the spontaneous movement of the country workpeople.—*Labor News.*

In Paris the greatest distress prevails among the working classes, and some papers state that there are as many as two hundred thousand men now out of employment in consequence of the depression of commerce and trade generally. We trust that this estimate is greatly exaggerated but still all parties are agreed as to the distress which is now unfortunately undeniable. At the Iron works of Messrs Cail, we hear that no less than 1,500 workmen have been discharged, and the present stress on public charities far exceeds their powers of relief. As French workmen but rarely emigrate, and do not even migrate very frequently, the present crisis is thus intensified. In defiance, however, of these difficulties the different and numerous Paris trade societies have continued to hold their customary meetings; have increased the extent of their organizations and enrolled many new members. The reports to be drawn up by the men delegated to the Vienna Exhibition are not yet all completed, but we hear every week of the meeting of some trade to receive the report of the delegate they had appointed to represent them at the last great concourse of the world's industry. The workmen, however, who are employed in the carpet trade have not been so successful in any of these matters. They had some two years ago a society of their own, which met at No. 29 Rue Moliere, and elected syndics to represent the interests of this trade. But these latter were either very badly supported or did not understand their business and felt but little devotion to the cause; in all cases instead of uniting all the members of the trade together, obtaining subscriptions from them and creating a fund for the benefit of the society, they managed affairs so badly that the syndics were finally obliged to make good their escape, as they could not pay the landlord the £16 they owed for rent. This disgraceful proceeding has, however, been mitigated by the action of ten other societies, who have decided to pay all the debts of the carpet workers' union rather than allow a society composed of fellow workmen, though belonging to another trade, to end its days in so ignominious a manner.

MINERAL STATISTICS.—A summary of mineral statistics of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for 1873, has just been published. The total increase in the quantity of coal carried by railways and canals, as compared with that distributed in 1871, was 4,300,000 tons. There were some important coal-carrying lines, however, from which no returns has been received, and the actual estimated increase has been placed at more than 5,000,000 tons. The consumption of coal in the iron manufacture is computed, upon the information furnished to the Royal Coal Commission, at the rate of three tons of coal used for all purposes to each ton of pig iron produced. The total value of coal raised in the United Kingdom in 1873 was £43,000,000 sterling, while the mineral produced from mineral ores was estimated at £22,000,000.

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. GEORGE ODGER.

LONDON WOMEN'S SHOEMAKERS' SOCIETY.

The occupation of shoe-making, and even of shoe-mending, it has often been proved, has produced many men who rose from the humble stall to intellectual eminence. In the time of our own fathers, it was from such a man that the modern Tory party received the law which governed their tactics in the reign of George the Third. When Pitt and Liverpool were Premiers, Ellenborough, Lord Chief Justice, and Eldon, Chancellor, Wm. Gifford was the oracle they consulted with docility and obeyed with deference. An orphan in Devonshire, he was apprenticed to a shoemaker, and on taking to mathematics, worked out his first problems on scraps of sole-leather with a blunted awl. Such was the beginning of the man who became the friend of Pitt and associate of Canning, and who ended by becoming first editor of the *Quarterly Review*. The chief differences between this character and the subject of the present notice are, that while Gifford laid down the awl to take up the pen, Odger as easily became a politician without even ceasing to be a shoemaker.

Mr. George Odger was born in the year 1820 in the village of Roubro', formerly called Jump, lying between the towns of Plymouth, and Tavistock, in the county of Devon. His father, John Odger, was a Cornish man and a miner. The surroundings of the early days of George Odger were not of the most pleasing description. The elementary education of his native place, and consisted of its simplest materials. The poor position of his parents necessitated his going forth, at an early age, to battle with the world in the great field of physical toil; consequently, as soon as he was considered capable of handling the awl and setting a stitch, he was duly enrolled under the wide spread banner of St. Crispin. He commenced a course of study and self-culture, and he began to think and even occasionally to write. George Odger quitted the locality of his birth-place, and went forward to seek employment in town scenes among strange shoemakers. He travelled north and south, east and west, and eventually came to London, where he joined a society for the protection of labour in his own trade.

From that time George Odger has devoted himself to the interests of his trade, and he is considered to be a first-class shoemaker.

As a working man, George Odger has had to contend with those peculiar difficulties which beset the generality of the English workmen. When machines were first introduced into the boot trade they were strenuously opposed by bootmakers, and numerous disputes arose, in consequence of their introduction, between masters and men. George Odger showed the folly of such imposition, and considerably modified the views of workmen relating thereto; and he openly condemned the conduct of the notorious Broadhead and his associates, and repudiated the cowardly practice of ratting and secret assassination.

In 1839, during the great lock-out in the London building trades, he was brought forward with good men of other trades to help the great movement for a reduction of the hours of labour. At the delegate meetings of the London trades, George Odger represented the Cordwainer's Society, and was then introduced prominently to the London working men.

George Odger has been connected for many years with the London Trades Council—a body which has gone through many fluctuations—and until lately occupied the office of secretary. He has also visited many towns as the representative of that body, during agitation to raise wages and reduce the hours of work.

A period of nearly forty years have elapsed, as Mr. Odger lately told us, since he first devoted himself to the assertion and vindication of the trade rights of his brother workmen. His strictly political career is of much more recent date. Although he embraced every fair and favorable opportunity of declaring and defending his Radical principles, he did not offer himself as candidate for a seat in Parliament, until the second Reform Act had made such an enterprise rather more feasible than it would have been under the first. The four attempts to which he has already committed himself have been alike, though in widely

different degrees, unsuccessful; the fifth attempt will be crowned, we hope, with a happier termination.

His connection with the Reform League led to his candidature during the general election, 1868, for the newly constituted borough of Chelsea. He says, "I went to Chelsea at the invitation of a thousand electors, and the cry was then raised that I was dividing Liberal interest, and in deference to a great principle, in order that I might not jeopardise Mr. Gladstone's power in Parliament with reference to the Irish Church Question, I, at the request of the working men, who said there was a principle at stake, accepted arbitration; which being against me, I left Chelsea."

Mr. Odger played a conspicuous part in the Trades Demonstration, on Whit-Monday of 1873 in Hyde Park. He took the chair, as a working shoemaker, upon the first of the six platforms erected for as many simultaneous meetings in that enclosure. He read the manifesto, denouncing as invidious, unjust, and cruel, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the criminal clauses of the Master and Servant Act, and the application of the Law of Conspiracy to breaches of contract. The speech which he made on that occasion, affords a fair example of the manner and spirit in which he handles the most exciting topics of common interest to the working-classes. For there he claimed a full share of credit as to the high place that England occupies in the eyes of the world; and for then, also, he resented the indignity by which they had been repaid in home-made laws dooming them to a position of injury and degradation worse than they had ever known before. If Englishmen feel a law to be harsh and oppressive, they openly proclaim the fact, and, by rational discussion among themselves, lead each other along the safe and open path of manifest reason. Why, asked Mr. Odger, should a workman be sent to prison for the violation of a contract with the master, and the master be allowed at pleasure to break his engagement with him? And there must be many, even in the master class itself, who see plainly that without any further extension or more equal distribution of the franchise these cruel and one-sided laws cannot long be kept on the Statute Book.

THE ISLAND OF CUBA.

All eyes have been turned towards Cuba—a sunny isle, the largest of the West India group, some 630 miles long, and its greatest width 107 miles. Lying just within the tropics, its climate is perpetual summer, tempered by cooling sea-breezes. There is one record of snow having fallen in a central town of Cuba, in 1856, and hail is not unfrequent; but while the heat is rarely oppressive, the thermometer seldom falls below 60 degrees, except occasionally in the interior. Havana is a special resort for invalids. This important commercial city has outgrown its original walls; but for its defence, and that of its harbor, there are half a dozen forts and a citadel. The long and narrow channel which leads to the city is defended on the east side by the great castle El Morro, and on the west by the powerful fortress La Punta. La Habana is said to be the largest and strongest of all the defensive works of Havana, requiring in time of war a garrison of 2,000 men. In 1762 Havana, after a siege of forty-four days, fell into the hands of the English; but the next year it was restored to Spain in accordance with certain arrangements made by treaty. Havana is regularly laid out, and though its streets are narrow, many of them are well paved with granite. It is well lighted with gas, and supplied with water, by an aqueduct. The city also has its public promenades, its fountains, its universities, libraries, and museums, and there are numerous daily, weekly and monthly publications. Havana, to a greater degree than any other Spanish city, has adopted the mechanical appliances of industry, and the various improvements which have been brought to it through its commercial relations with other nations.

The public debt of Italy amounts to \$1,000,000,000. The annual deficit has been less lately in former years. Looking back for a period of thirteen years, there has been a deficit every year, varying from \$126,000,000, the greatest, in 1866, to \$27,000,000, the least, in 1873.