

The Guardian.

"WITH HEARTS RESOLVED, AND HANDS PREPARED,
THE BLESSINGS WE ENJOY TO GUARD."

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE, LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ARTS, FOR THE MIDDLE AND WORKING CLASSES OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

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Vol. I.

Colonial Politics.

"Knowledge is Power," and "Union is Strength."

THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THE LABOUR QUESTION.

In an article published a fortnight back we devoted some attention to the making apparent the culpable *inertia*, the reckless apathy, with which our legislators are allowing the session to pass by without some effort on their part to arrest the progress of the wide spread poverty and destitution which have sprung up during the last two years amongst the lower orders of our colonial population.

The subject is of such vast importance that we offer no apology for returning to it.

We conceive, indeed, that we should be sadly neglecting our duty did we fail to seize upon every opportunity to reiterate our complaints, and to make our grievances known.

It is quite evident that the immediate wants of the operative will not be legislated for in this colony until his own voice is raised loudly in the assertion of those wants.

The Government, wrapped in the shroud of a petty selfishness, turns a cold and careless eye upon his silent sufferings—compared with the smile from Downing-street, attendant on an adequate revenue, those sufferings sink into insignificance. The present condition of the labourer and mechanic are not to be allowed to jeopardise Sir George's reputation as a financier. The future prospects of the colony, the contentment, loyalty, and good feeling of its population weigh not for one moment in comparison with Sir George's prospects of a future appointment.

The politics—the necessities—of the Government are opposed to the working man, and from this source at least, whether we look at it in the plenitude of its own legitimate power, or in its strong and arbitrary influence upon the Legislature, it is vain—it is visionary—to hope for relief.

Nor, we confess, looking at matters as they stand, do we feel much more sanguine respecting the efforts of our representatives.

Their opinions unfortunately are warped by too much of the heaven of self-interest.

Their hearts are hardened, and they will not let the people go from those restraints which the iniquity of the land sales and immigration measures have imposed upon them. The plagues of ruin and insolvency have been visiting amongst them. Their flocks and herds are being broken up; but they will not learn, neither will they consider that a community with an impoverished labour class can never become a prosperous or a thriving one; that limited means will supply but limited demands, and limited demands must compel low prices.

Of the twenty-four elected members we can name but one who is not more or less interested in keeping down the rate of wages.

We can name but one who has not shown time after time, in spite of the damning proof that the times have given, that low wages and no profits, pauperism, and insolence, are consistent, that the daily wish of his heart is to keep the price of labour down.

How can it be otherwise, when there are two members for the condensed population of Sydney, one of them a large stockholder and employer of labour in such pursuits,

whilst the other twenty-two are almost entirely representative of the agricultural and pastoral interest? Interests, from the regulation of which the labouring classes are as thoroughly and entirely shut out as he is from influencing the political destinies of the Celestial empire. Not only are the interests represented exclusive, but it is only an exclusive part of that interest which is represented.

It is the flock-owner, the grazier, and the farmer who are represented, and they are represented by men of their own class. Men whose energies have for years been turned to the effecting of those unjust, those crushing measures of Immigration which have brought about the present distress. Who blind to the ruin it was bringing on themselves, strove earnestly and perseveringly, for the very end of which the working man has now to complain—men, who by the rapacious greediness of their demands, seized on the land fund, spent it, pledged it, in cruel spoliation of the poor man's right, and are now the sole arbiters of the justice and the policy of their own measures.

Is not the history of our representative Legislature irresistibly illustrative of this glaring injustice, what ever wisdom may distinguish some of the measures proposed, and we think the amount is meagre enough, can the records of such assemblies show, so gross a display of class legislation, so gross a subservience to class interests.

We have had bills to facilitate the stockholder mortgaging his produce. We have had bills to enable the stockholder to borrow money cheaply—aye, and to get rid of the old liabilities which his reckless speculation, or his wanton extravagance imposed upon him. We have had bills to enable the landholder to turn his land into money. We have had bills to protect the farmer, in the price of corn. We have had committees to enquire into the price of land, and to recommend that it may again be sold to the destruction of the country, in order that the hungry maw of the cormorant capitalist may be filled. Committees recommending renewed emigration, whilst our shores are crowded with unemployed. Committees recommending a rate of wages which the labourers pronounce insufficient. Committees to enquire into every thing connected with the settlers and the squatters, to protect them from extortion, to uphold their rights, and that only when they are threatened with invasion.

Now for the Labouring classes what has been done? During the present session, the only thing which has been done, has been the passing of the vote of credit for £300 to complete the Custom House. A vote the effect of which slight as it is, to all real benefit, may possibly extend to November next. A vote, without the passing of which, some hundreds of persons would have been reduced to a choice between pauperism and starvation. This and the polite notice of our claims in his Excellency's opening speech is all we have heard of the labouring classes or their interests, within the sanctuary of the council chamber.

We heard a long speech from Mr. Cowper, with reference to the grievances connected with the territorial revenue. The settler, and the squatters, aye—and the church's grievances were expatiated on pathetically by

that worthy; but it never occurred to him to mention, that the application of 87½ per cent. of that revenue to the purposes of immigration, in spite of the claims of the working man, in spite of the claims of the colony and of posterity, for those works which should have grown out of this revenue. Oh, no, it never occurred to Mr. Cowper that this was a grievance.

That the license of the squatters should be raised, was unjust, and extortionate. That it should be raised whilst his profits are small was absolutely monstrous and inhumane. But that the working man should be told by the Government, that it has no money to employ him, whilst he sees the very fund which the wisdom of the Imperial Parliament has appropriated for his benefit, snatched from him, and pledged to the very increase of his misery, is no grievance at all.

Mr. Wentworth too in enumerating grievances of another description, talked amazingly liberally on the despotic encroachments of irresponsible taxation, and on the representative principle. Did it not occur to him that it is a grievance for the working man to be totally unrepresented; to have the nominal form of elective privileges whilst he is legislated for by a class entirely antagonistic to his interests and his claims.

The question as to the privileges of the honorable house, may serve to amuse and interests members. It may gratify the spleen and malice of those whose flippant impertence has brought chastisement upon themselves. But if the Legislation of this colony would not sink beneath the contempt of an indignant community, it will do well with broader views and a graver purpose, to seriously set about the consideration of those questions of domestic policy where by the diseases of the state may be remedied or arrested.

We must say that without some very signal expression of feeling on the part of the working classes themselves, we have but little hope of seeing anything done during the present session. The attention of the Council during the time it may be disposed, or be allowed, to sit, will be sufficiently occupied by the all-interesting topics we have before enumerated.

The estimates, too, with their protractive consideration, form work to come; and whether it be that the novelty of the thing is worn off or not, we will not pretend to say but assuredly there is much less disposition to work, less of energy, less of purpose, than was displayed during the last session.

Are, however, the working classes in a position to be left unlegislated and unprovided for? Will the Council be prepared to leave them to that utter destitution and misery which must insure on the termination of the Government employment? Will it, in these dark times of gloomy prospect, leave the working classes to the tender mercies of a Government which has already declared its tendency to introduce a system of pauper relief? Will it be content to turn the hearts of the people against those who ought to stand in the position of their friends and protectors?

The Roman senators were termed the Fathers of the people; but it is little of paternal care our modern legislators evince.

It is but little they look to the peace, the comfort, and the happiness, of those whose interests are confided to them.

Let them however beware how they incur the responsibility of teaching the rich man's name to be heard in the cottage of the poor only as a term of hatred and reproach. Let them beware how they cultivate feelings of hostility, jealousy, to spring round the hearth of the poor man as he thinks of his wealthier neighbours.

Once sown, and the seed will bring forth fruit: long, long years may elapse; but the taint of discontent, and of aversion, will be irrevocably instilled, and in the day of retribution, which time never fails to bring, the grievances which are now scorned and neglected will be remembered, on the one hand in resentment and indignation, on the other with misery and repentance.

MUTUAL PROTECTION ASSOCIATION.

ON Tuesday evening the usual weekly meeting of the Mutual Protection Association took place at Clarkson's Rooms, Mr. R. Stewart in the chair.

The Secretary laid before the Association the balance sheet of THE GUARDIAN newspaper to the end of the quarter.

It was moved and seconded that the balance sheet presented was highly satisfactory, and that the thanks of the Association were due, and were hereby tendered to the Committee of Management.

Mr. Egan, in speaking to the motion, said that notwithstanding the difficulties with which the Committee have had to contend with during the first quarter, he was happy to say that arrangements had been entered into to secure the permanency of the paper, and that its publication, at least to the end of the present year, was fully guaranteed.

The motion was then carried unanimously.

Mr. Mullins gave notice that at the next meeting he would move "That the Secretary do bring before the Association on next Tuesday evening, July 23, the number and names of the members of the Association who support THE GUARDIAN newspaper."

Mr. Egan gave notice that at the next meeting he would move "That a fund be opened by this Association, to be called the Election Fund, for the purpose of defraying all expenses of the approaching election, and that the same be closed after the first day of November, and the balance be handed over to the fund of THE GUARDIAN newspaper."

GOVERNMENT SHABBINESS.—We last week had to record the shabbiness and cruelty of the Government in the matter of Jemmy Narang, the aboriginal native. We could not help feeling renewed contempt for this disposition in our rulers. On Saturday evening last, when the learned judge was forced to enter into a long and rather undignified explanation with the jury, who were about to be locked up, that he had not the power to order them necessaries on his own responsibility, but he was quite of opinion that they should be so provided; there were no funds appropriated to such a purpose and his Honor was doubtless aware, however reasonable or however just the demand, it was not likely to meet with a very gracious reception from the head of our present government.

PORTFOLIO OF ROMANCE.—The first number of this publication is before us, and we have much pleasure in expressing our commendation on the taste evinced in the selection of the articles, and its neat appearance. We trust it will repay the Conductor's well directed efforts.

DARING BURGLARY.—About half-past ten o'clock on Friday night a rap was made at the door of Mrs. Tait, lodging-house keeper, Market-street, a few doors west from York-street; on Mrs. Tait inquiring who was there she was told Mr. Molloy. When she opened the door three men entered, closed the door, presented a pistol at her, and ordered her to unlock her drawers, which they ransacked, taking £4 in notes, 15s. in silver, a patent lever watch, and two gold rings. The total value of the property taken is estimated at £11. One of the fellows was a tall man dressed in a white shooting coat and trousers, and had on a black hat; the other two were short men, had on blue jackets, light coloured trousers, and cabbage-tree hats.

PLEASE NOTE

**THE FOLLOWING PAGE
HAS BEEN
INCORRECTLY
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