

PUBLIC OPINION.

TRAINING MECHANICS.

A great defect in our social system is the neglect to train the youth of the country for the following of mechanical occupations. Several causes conduce to this neglect. Parents who themselves are mechanics are desirous that their sons shall be anything else than manual laborers. Their ambition is to have their boys attired in broadcloth, and engaged in "genteel" pursuits. They also wish them at an early age to be in the receipt of some salary. The consequence is that the lads are sent to commercial colleges for a while, and then join the great army of applicants for clerks of one kind or another, either to secure employment at a fair salary for a youth with scarcely any prospect of its advancement, or to sum sufficient for a man's necessities, or to waste the best years of their lives in subordinate, almost menial, positions about mercantile offices. The boys themselves share this parental ambition, and grow to despise the trades by which their fathers have been enabled to secure them a comfortable living during their childhood and to give them a good, plain education. Another cause of the failure of the home-educated mechanic supply is the want of a proper system of apprenticeship. Against the adoption of such a system the mechanic himself is a strong opponent through the trades unions. He seems to have an idea that it is better to limit the supply of skilled labor, and that by preventing more than a small proportion of apprentices in comparison with the number of journeymen he achieves that limitation. He loses sight of the fact that it is impossible to establish any other limitation than that afforded by the demand, and that if American mechanics are not available the demand will be filled by thousands of workmen from the other side of the Atlantic; and that, in refusing to allow his sons to learn trades, he is but giving the employment that should support them in comfort to foreigners. Again, aside from this restriction, the apprenticeship system is defective, because there is not sufficient provision for compelling lads to serve out the time for which they are bound. As soon as they have acquired a knowledge of the trade they are anxious to earn journeyman's wages, and wholly regardless of the debt they owe their employers for the knowledge obtained at their hands, they strike out for themselves. Should the employer follow up his runaway apprentice, he will in nine cases out of ten find his time wasted, because the magistrates will accept some frivolous pretext as a sufficient plea for the lad's defection. This leads to two evils—employers are far from anxious to take apprentices, and many of the trades are cursed with a number of only half-trained workmen.

Any scheme which promises to place this important matter of the training of mechanics upon a better basis is therefore of the greatest value to the community. Technical schools and colleges promise to do much in this direction. They tend to show that all labor is honorable, and that laborers are to be esteemed, and that those are most worthy of esteem who strive to attain the nearest to perfection in their respective callings. They offer a means of education independent of the dicta of trades unions, and they obviate many of the disadvantages of the apprenticeship system. They turn out workmen thoroughly drilled in the different branches of mechanics, and will provide adequately against the sometime threatened extinction of the American mechanic. A bill at present before the Legislature for the establishment of such an institution in this State. It has passed the House and is pending in the Senate. Under it a Mechanics' High School is proposed to be founded, in which the youth of the Commonwealth shall be educated and trained in the various branches of science, learning, and practical mechanics, as they are connected with each other. It is to be located within a reasonable distance of some manufacturing town or city, and is to be properly adapted to the instruction of youths in the theory and practice of the different trades. Power is given the trustees to make arrangements of contracts with employers in any of the trades, as shall be within reasonable distance of the school, to have pupils perform the manual labor required by its rules at their shops or places of business. The bill appears to contemplate an institution that cannot but prove of inestimable benefit to the Commonwealth, and it is to be hoped that the Senate will lose no time in putting it upon its passage.—*Philadelphia Evening Telegraph.*

The New Party Movement.

There is no mistaking the temper of the people in reference to the new party movement. The announcement that such a project was contemplated immediately attracted attention and inquiry. "Who asks for a new party?" is the question which passes from man to man, and the answer is prompt: "A corrupt Democracy whose treason to the Government has made them forever obnoxious, and an irreligible collection of broken-down Republicans, whose excesses, when they were deemed faithful to the Republican organization, were and are the only blurs on its fair escutcheon." These are the men who propose to organize a new party, and the organization is sought, not to correct any clear and well established abuse, but to raise themselves once more into power. There never was a new party organized in this country under such circumstances. Disgraced demagogues

have not the power to collect any considerable number of honest men together for the purpose of breaking down a party which saved the Government from treason, and which has administered it for nearly twelve years impartially, economically and justly. When a new party is to be organized, it is done by the spontaneous uprising of the people, moving enthusiastically against the usurpations and faithlessness of corrupt rulers. In this manner the Republican party was called into existence. It was not an intrigue of a collection of disgraced political hacks. It was not the work of such men as now propose to organize against it, but the creation of the virtue and wisdom and patriotism of the lads moved to combine to preserve and perpetuate free government.

The intelligent people of the country recognize in the new party movement as proposed at present, the first evidence of remaining life in the Democracy and Liberal Republicans, since their fearful defeat last year. It is only this and nothing more. Let it take shape and acquire substance, and we will have Jeff. Davis, John C. Breckinridge, William B. Reed, and all the other choice spirits of defunct Democracy and defeated treason, once more placed in the front of American politics. These are facts which the people too keenly appreciate to be deluded by them. Hence the impossibility of organizing a new party out of the material named, which will command any other support but that which has been opposing the Republican party since 1860, and which still continues to cling to the issues which traitors made with the national authority. There is no strength or cohesion in such elements; and no party founded upon them, would stand the test of a single election.—*State Journal.*

General Railroad Laws.

The only sure mode of preventing a monopoly from acquiring the power to oppress any portion of the country, is to make competition free, and unobstructed save by those legal restraints essential to keep all men within bounds. It seems to be preposterous for any set of men to ask that they should have the exclusive perpetual right to carry on a certain business, for which others have like capacity and capital to conduct; and yet the secret tendency of business in the United States, has been towards this, for the last twenty years. There has been a quiet, though great effort made, by combinations of men, to get the exclusive control of the carrying business of the country, by which they expected to dictate whatever prices they chose to fix on its agricultural, mining and manufacturing products. At first, the people were not able to comprehend the stupendous importance of this intrigue, and acts of incorporation for railroads and canals were allowed to go on the statute books of the States in which it was claimed certain parties acquired the right to monopolize all the railroad privileges of a certain territory—that its advantages belonged to them, and that they could expel all others from engaging in the same pursuits within such specified limits. We are just beginning to realize the effect of such a condition of affairs, in the oppression to which the farmers of some of the Western States are subjected, and the monopoly shortly to show its power in Pennsylvania, on the subject of the coal trade, will still further enlighten us, when its full force of exaction is applied to our own purses. The only remedy to these evils is a system of general free railroad laws, which will apply to all the States—that is, for all the States to pass uniform railroad laws, so that a company can make communication, starting in any one State, with all the other States of the Union. One of the great arguments against secession and disunion has always been that a disrupted Union would destroy the blessings of our vast inland communication by means of navigation. The rivers of the country were advanced as the strongest bonds of the Union. But what are these bonds worth if we allow a monopoly of railroad communication, permitting one corporation to levy tribute on the industry of the people and reap all the advantages to be derived from our mineral resources? Without a well balanced system of free railroad laws this will be the result of the efforts now being made to control the carrying trade of the country. But let all the States place upon their statute books liberal, just and comprehensive free railroad laws, the result will be a regulation of the carrying trade by fair competition and managed. The people are becoming more convinced, annually, of the necessity of such legislation, and it will be demanded hereafter with a force which will amount to revolution. Corporate monopoly has been built up by corrupt and unconstitutional legislation. It must be checked and brought within proper limits, by a system of just, liberal and impartial laws, that will place all men on an equal footing, and give capital a free opportunity for investment in whatever risks its owners may choose to assume.

The Legislature of North Carolina adjourned a week ago, after a protracted session, having passed but a single act during the term, and that was a resolution declaring that "Beaufort is a good harbor." We suppose that matter is definitely settled, then, and without the interference of lobbyists. We have no more curiosity than other people, but we do wish we knew how the North Carolina legislators amused themselves during the time they were not passing the bill.

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