

THE OPERATIVE Bricklayers' Society's Trade Circular, AND GENERAL REPORTER.

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL AND GENERAL SECRETARY

"Unity is Strength." "Knowledge is Power."

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TO THE WORKMEN OF FRANCE FROM THE WORKING-MEN OF ENGLAND.

BRETHREN OF FRANCE,

Your welcome visit to us, on the occasion of our great meeting, convened to express our indignation at the wrong doers who have for so many years inflicted the most atrocious insults and cruelties on that noble but unhappy people, the Poles, has inspired us with the hope of seeing a brighter and happier future for the neglected and despised peoples of Europe.

That visit could not have had a better origin or a nobler purpose than the cause of Poland; a cause made sacred by the devotion, truthfulness, and self-sacrificing heroism of a people, whose righteous struggles for freedom have won for them the sympathy and admiration of all the wise and good, whether in high or low station, in Christendom.

We were proud to welcome the representatives of the liberty-loving French people, who came forward to initiate, what has been too long delayed, a grand fraternity of peoples. None could have commenced the work with a better prospect of success than the enthusiastic and generous-hearted Frenchmen. Your skill in manufactures; your proficiency in art, science, and literature; your love for all that is beautiful in nature and pleasing in design, have long secured for you a high place in the estimation of the world.—Your right to that position could not be better sustained than by the step you have now taken towards bringing together in

common council those whose labours produce all that is essential to human existence, in order that their united efforts on behalf of liberty may counteract the evil influences of those who have brought degradation upon nations by making promises and professions which they never intend to see carried into effect, and by agreeing to treaties that weak countries must strictly obey, but strong ones may violate as they please.

Kings and emperors have their meetings and feasts, and their pomps and ceremonies are blazoned before the world; pleasing the frivolous, and gratifying the fortunate; at the same time, creating heavier burthens for the honest and industrious poor to sweat under. At these meetings successful crimes are justified, and unscrupulous ministers legalise them and exalt the criminals; whilst men with the highest talents and most God-like virtues, whose manly bearing quails not before affluent arrogance, nor panders to the vices of voluptuous courts; men who advocate the freedom of nations and rights of the masses, are, if they escape death, chained in endless bondage, or with their families, ruthlessly driven forth to seek that shelter and rest from the stranger which are denied them in their native homes. This is a state of things as unworthy of the deeds of our forefathers as it is disgraceful to the age in which we live. We therefore caution those who suffer such evils to continue, without using every honorable means in their power to remove them, that they share in the responsibility of neglected duties, and must, sooner or later, make atonement for such debasing apathy.

BRICKLAYERS' TRADE CIRCULAR.

As a means then to check the existing abuse of power, we echo your call for a fraternity of peoples. Let there be a gathering together of representatives from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, England, and all countries, where there exists a will to co-operate for the good of mankind. Let us have our congresses; let us discuss the great questions on which the peace of nations depends; let us bring our reason and moral right to bear with becoming dignity against the cajolery and brute force of the so-called rulers; and our conviction is, that the power of despots will be weakened, and wily tricksters, instead of disgracing the highest offices committed to man by using their sacred trust to baffle the noblest efforts of human genius, will find their level in obscurity. This would clear the way for honorable men with comprehensive minds to come forth and legislate for the rights of the many, and not the privileges of the few.

A fraternity of peoples is highly necessary for the cause of labour, for we find that whenever we attempt to better our social condition by reducing the hours of toil, or by raising the price of labour, our employers threaten us with bringing over French men, Germans, Belgians and others to do our work at a reduced rate of wages; and we are sorry to say that this has been done, though not from any desire on the part of our continental brethren to injure us, but through a want of regular and systematic communication between the industrious classes of all countries, which we hope to see speedily effected, as our principle is to bring up the wages of the ill-paid to as near a level as possible with that of those who are better remunerated, and not to allow our employers to play us off one against the other, and so drag us down to the lowest possible condition, suitable to their avaricious bargaining.

To do these things is the work of the peoples. The few liberties held by the masses were won by themselves, and recent experience has shown that the more we trust to princes and potentates, the surer we are of being betrayed and sneered at. In proof of this let the achievements of the Italian liberators, when led by one of their own class, be compared with the dastardly conduct of those who betrayed and shot down the greatest of all modern chiefs, Garibaldi, after they had received from his hands the fruits of his perilous enterprise, leaving him a bleeding witness of a government's ingratitude. Pass from that to the breaking up by a foreign despot of the Roman Republic, the freest and purest govern-

ment ever seen in Europe; then remember the ungrateful attempt on the free government of Switzerland, followed by the mischievous meddling in Mexico for the base purpose of setting up an Imperial for a Republican form of Government there, which is obnoxious to the true though suppressed spirit of the Mexicans, and entirely opposed to the traditions and sympathies of the whole of the people of that vast continent. To these crimes add the disgraceful manner in which our rulers have provoked a cruel war in China, at first with the Imperialists, now with the insurgents, and we think our case is clear, as we are sure that these wrongs will produce future convulsions unless protested against by the united voice of the peoples.

We again say "fraternise." Let us have a perfect understanding with all men whose prospects are in peace in industrial development in freedom and human happiness all over the world. Do this, that the strong and brave, instead of being led forth with fire and sword to kill and destroy, to satisfy the craving desire of traders for gold, ministers for place, and despots for conquest may live to make their homes happy, and use their strength to assist the weak, the aged and the destitute, with the consolation of being free from the miseries produced by war.

We say with you, let our first united effort be for the freedom of Poland; the justness of her cause demands it, treaty obligations make it imperative, and duty points the way. Petitions must be prepared immediately by the people of both countries, setting forth the indisputable claims of the Poles to belligerent rights, and presented simultaneously to our respective governments, supported by an earnest determination to act again and again in behalf of that deserving people. We must do this to prevent the intrigues of secret diplomacy (that scourge of all nations), by which the devil's tragedy would be played over again,—Poland's noblest sons be murdered,—her daughters become the prey of a brutal soldiery, making that fair land once more a huge slaughterhouse, to the everlasting shame and disgrace of the civilized world.

Signed on behalf of the working men of England,

COMMITTEE.

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