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TRADES' UNION

AN ADDRESS

ISAAC IRONSIDE,

AT A PUBLIC MEETING HELD IN THE

TEMPERANCE HALL, SHEFFIELD,

ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1867.

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MR. EDWIN GRAYSON IN THE CHAIR.

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# TRADES' UNIONS :

AN ADDRESS BY ISAAC IRONSIDE.

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I have been requested by a deputation of gentlemen to deliver an Address on "Trades Unions." On duly considering the matter, and ascertaining that the request was of a *bona fide* character, I consented, on condition that no one was to be held responsible, except myself, for what I might utter.

It was a saying of Talleyrand that society was divided into two classes—the Shearers and the Sheared; and his advice to the Sheared was to get among the Shearers as soon as they could, inasmuch as they were always the better off. Sheep are dumb when before the Shearers. Even when clipped so closely that the skin is cut, a feeble bleat is all their remonstrance. Men are different: they spoil the shears and damage the Shearers when the clipping is too close. A remarkable instance of this is recorded in Exodus, beginning chapter 1, verse xi.—“The Egyptians did set over the children of Israel task-masters to afflict them with their burdens. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour; and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.” In the 2nd chapter, verse xi., it is said—“And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens, and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Now when Pharaoh heard this thing he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian.” In a subsequent portion of the account it is stated that the angel of the Lord appeared to Moses, and the Lord said—“I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest

any people the children of Israel out of Egypt." Moses went, and afterwards became a great and mighty lawgiver, a man after God's own heart. In this case Moses had no malice against the Egyptian whom he slew, nor any lawful authority for slaying him. No doubt there would be great outcry: the Egyptians—the *masters* of the children of Israel—would call Moses a murderer, and Pharaoh would have put him to death unless he had escaped. The Israelites, however, would not consider it a murder. Moses acted on the law of necessity, which was contrary to the law of the Egyptians, and he was afterwards fully justified. Mr. Cardwell, M.P. for Oxford, made his statement in the House of Commons on July 2nd, 1867—

There is the law of the land and the law of necessity; and any person acting under the law of necessity was responsible for his acts, and was liable to the established law of the country. Persons who took such a responsibility upon themselves were placed in a position of great difficulty." In Macmillan's Magazine for August, Mr. Thomas Carlyle said—"Unwritten if you will, but real and fundamental, anterior to all written laws, and first making written laws possible, there must have been, and is, and will be, coeval with human society from its first beginning to its ultimate end, an actual martial law of more validity than any other law whatever." These statements are merely declaratory of what is universally known: there is nothing new about them. This law of necessity rests on the instinct of self-preservation. When a man is born, the fact of his birth imposes on him the duty of preserving his life in the best condition for the longest period that is possible. The law recognizes this duty. If a man commit suicide, and the verdict of the coroner's jury is *felo de se*—felony on himself—the body is not permitted to have christian burial. If a man is apprehended in the act of attempting to commit suicide the law punishes him; and if a man neglects to provide for his family he is also punishable. All these rest upon the duty of self-preservation. When that duty can be properly discharged in a lawful manner, there is no violence, but when the law prevents it, the higher law steps in, and violence is the result. When anything is wrong and cannot be put right without violence, then, whether lawful or unlawful, violence is exercised. The violent thunder storm does some mischief, but it purifies the whole atmosphere. The gaoler uses violence to the garotter, and puts him on the treadmill to cure him. Jack Ketch—who does not like to be known, like "Mary Ann"—by his violence rids the world of a scoundrel. The turnpikes in Wales got wrong some years ago, and Rebecca and her daughters were very violent. Ultimately, however, they put the turnpikes to right.

Trades' Unions act on this law of necessity. On the blowing up at the Tower Wheel, more than 20 years ago, a public meeting was held in the Cutlers' Hall, and I there put this position clearly forth. No one then attempted to controvert it; nor has it been controverted. When the Social Science Congress was held in Sheffield, in 1865, there was a public meeting held on Trades' Unions, at which Mr. Hughes, M.P., spoke. I wrote to him on the 8th of October, and will read part of my letter and his reply:—

"I take the ground of *justifying the enforcement* of the rules of the Unions.

What is their ultimate object? Self-preservation. This is not a *right*, but a *duty*; a *law* higher than any Act-of-Parliament law. Who manufacture Acts of Parliament? Not unionists, but the ten-poundry. Who administer the parliament laws? Not unionists, but judges dependent on Parliament, and juries whose qualification is a much higher one than unionists can pay. Hence the parliament-law is invariably against Unions. Hence the impossibility of an accused unionist being fairly tried. Hence the atrocious and cruel severity of nearly all sentences upon convicted unionists. Hence the Unions are compelled, by the duty of self-preservation, to obey the higher law, to enforce obedience to the laws which they enact, in order to discharge this duty, and take the consequences of disobeying the Parliament-law, when the enforcement of their own laws renders that necessary. Were I an artisan, it would be my duty to obey the laws of the trade which I followed. If that obedience involved a breach of the Parliament-law, I would not be guilty of that breach, and it would be, therefore, my duty to leave the trade and get my living in some other way.

"There are Trades' Unions in diplomacy, government, the law, church, medicine, at Oxford and Cambridge. Those engaged in these trades elect the Parliament which enacts that their Unions are legal. Let Parliament do the same with the Unions of the artisans, or else let them have a part in selecting the Parliament.

"As perfection is impossible, I do not expect it in the management of Unions. No doubt they make mistakes; so do we all. Mine are manifold. Therefore, I refrain from meddling with the management of them: it is not my business. I heartily wish every Union could be managed with a clear eye and a pure mind; but my meddling would not bring that about.

"Were the golden rule to be the *practice* instead of the profession, Trades' Unions and strikes would never be heard of. There are manufactories in Sheffield where there has been neither outrage nor strike for generations. Why? Because the masters *practice* this golden rule.

Your obedient servant,

Thomas Hughes, Esq., M.P.

ISAAC IRNSIDE.

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"113, Park Street, W., Oct. 15, 1865.

SIR,—I am obliged by your letter. You are mistaken if you think (as some remarks in your letter seem to indicate) that I am opposed to Trades' Unions. On the contrary, for the last 16 years I have been fighting their battles as well as I could, and trying to do away with some of the absurd prejudices and fears so common in other ranks as to the objects and action of the Unions. At the same time I can't go to the length you seem to do, and therefore I could not pass in silence the subject of trades' outrages when speaking to a Sheffield working-men's meeting. The subject was uppermost in the minds of half the members of the association who attended the congress, and it would have been a great mistake if it had been passed over in silence. As it is, the men have had the opportunity of protesting against the popular belief concerning them and their town.

"I agree with most of your letter, but on one point must distinctly clear myself. You say you *justify the enforcement of the rules* by the unions. So do I, the enforcement of rules by fines, or by expulsion if necessary, *against their own members*. But if, as the context would seem to imply, you mean to justify personal violence directed either against members or non-members by unionists, for neglect or infringement of trades' rules, I must protest most emphatically against such a doctrine, which I most sincerely hope you don't teach the men. If you do, the guilt of such doings as the Acorn-street outrage is yours far more than theirs.

Isaac Ironside, Esq.

I am, very truly yours,

THOS. HUGHES."

When I received this letter my heart bounded. Here was a scholar, a gentleman, and a lawyer; and I was anxious to be put right on a most important matter, if wrong. No one can be more desirous to lay aside every weight, and to throw away anything wrong than I am; and I therefore resolved that there should be no mistake in my rejoinder, which was in these terms:—

"October 20th, 1865.

"SIR,—My letter was clear. I said, 'The unionists are compelled by the duty of self-preservation to obey the higher law—to enforce obedience to the laws which they enact—in order to discharge that duty.'

"As Parliament-law will not give the unionists a constable, they have to appoint him themselves, and see that he discharges the duty of carrying into effect their decisions. You say you are favourable to the Unions enforcing their laws 'by fines or by expulsion, *if necessary*, against their own members.' This is nothing. Were you unfavourable, what would it matter? Any voluntary association can do that. I maintain that all who get their living by a trade are bound to obey the laws of the Union of the trade. After entering a trade it is not a voluntary act of theirs to become members of that Trades' Union. The rebel States wanted to secede—to be expelled from the Union—but the United States thrashed them into obedience. So with Trades' Unions. It is their duty to thrash all into submission who get their living by the trade, and who will not obey the laws of the Union without thrashing. If in so doing they become obnoxious to Parliament-law, they take the consequences.

"Never in the history of the world have any men allowed a smaller number of men to do as they liked. No man can do so unless with the consent of those around him. There is either an eye to convey determined indignation, or a hand to strike down the offender.

"The Irish are brought down to seaweed, sawdust, and Fenianism. Thank God, Trades' Unions will prevent the English from being reduced to that condition.

"You hope I don't teach my doctrine to the men. There is no necessity. Their own instinct teaches them. I have not to teach them that the sun rises in the east, and sets in the west. Would an 'emphatic protest' from you

cause the sun to rise in the west? You have to show that the instinct of self-preservation does not exist—that no duty springs therefrom—and that a powerful body of men will submit to be coerced, and see their families starved, at the instance of a smaller body who have obtained possession of the law-making power. You may enact the laws; the natural law will beat you in the long run, as it does in the case of a deceased wife's sister marrying her sister's husband, and in the case of first cousins marrying. Nature rebels and laughs at your impotence.

Your obedient servant,

ISAAC IRONSIDE."

Mr. Hughes did not attempt anything further. I do not say that it was impossible for him to invalidate my position, but he did not attempt it. As I have said, no one has attempted to controvert it. I except the anonymous writers of the press, because I know something about them: they who write "we," and are very learned upon every possible subject. There is a prominent man amongst them, one upon whose words the newspaper nation hangs. He discourses upon everything, wherever it may occur. He has just now made his appearance in the Bankruptcy Court: his debts are large, but his assets are *nil*. He is a specimen of these gentlemen who can govern all States, and manage everybody's business but their own. Some years ago, one of them who is now connected with a London daily paper, had been writing in favour of local self-government. At an interview with him, I strongly advised him to make his voice heard at the vestry meetings of the parish in which he resided. I was afterwards informed that he had no house of his own—that the lease of the house in which he lived was held by a friend, who had a bill of sale on the furniture. Another had been writing very fully on the capabilities of the land. He and I were visiting a mutual friend who was a large farmer, and during the visit we were in one of the fields which contained 17 acres. On being asked to name the quantity of land in the field, the learned "we" estimated it at nearly an acre. So that although he could write on the land, his agricultural and farming knowledge was limited to growing mignonette in a cigar box. These are some of the reasons why I never meddle with the anonymous press. Let me have a gentleman with a name and I rejoice to try conclusions with him. Mr. T. G. Taylor, F.S.A., sworn broker, in his steam-shipping circular, dated 11, Tottenham-yard, London, August, 1867, makes these remarks—"The press is omnipotent for evil as well as for good. There is no court of appeal from its unjust decisions. It will not let you fight it on its own ground. It declares itself pure and incorruptible, and you have no voice in denial except at vast expense." This is an exceedingly truthful and accurate description, and therefore I do not descend to encounters with the press. The worst feature in this point is that you cannot find anyone now with whom to converse and exchange ideas. They are all only so many copies of the day's newspapers. None consider, study, and come to judgment themselves. It is all the gossip of the press.

The position I take is well and concisely put by a gentleman who has written to me. He says, under date September 16th, 1867,—“I have seen a

paragraph on what is called an extraordinary discussion in your Town Council on Trades' Unions. I should like to see the best report. You are right. Depend upon it, the working men of England will assert their right to give in one way or another, and so long as the law remains one-sided and unjust, so long will they resort to violence." This gentleman is a manufacturer, and a distinguished member of the Chamber of Commerce in the place where he resides.

As the acts of violence of Trades' Unions are of comparatively modern occurrence, it is necessary to refer to the period when they were unknown, and to ascertain why it was so, and how the alteration came about. In ancient times, the Church was the mother of the people and their protector, resisting those who would have oppressed them, and who, therefore, had to strike through the Church at their victims. The Church was the only public institution, and by its machinery all public matters were managed. Good and devout men left their property to the Church, and the revenues were administered by one-third being appropriated to the service of the Church, one-third to the relief of the poor, and one-third to the maintenance of highways and bridges. There were no rates and taxes then. This state of things was put an end to by what is spoken of in history as "The great Reformation." The Church was subjugated and shorn of her power, and the poor of their patrimony, by the great Reformer, Henry VIII. The only remnant of that wholesome and restraining power now left on the Continent, is the temporal power of the Pope, and every vile means is used to subjugate him. Falsehood, misrepresentation, violence, and deceit, are unscrupulously employed with that object. The statements made by the anonymous press as to the condition and feeling of the people at Rome, are false, and you are deceived. The phrase employed is "The temporal power of the Pope:" the real object is, to remove the only safe-guard, the only existing barrier between the taskmasters and the people. Let the conspirators only succeed in subjugating him, and you will soon have to suffer in consequence.

The natural result of this robbery by King Henry, was the enactment of the Poor Law, in the reign of his daughter, Elizabeth; and when the new Poor Law was enacted some years ago, the avowed object was to make the poor live on a coarser diet.

There does not appear to have been any laws relating to Trades and Workmen in Sheffield, before the time of Elizabeth. The people having lost the powerful protection of the Church, appear to have combined in order to create by their union, a substitute for the restraining influence of which they had been deprived.

In Hunter's History of Hallamshire, (the edition of 1819,) the regulations of the first Trades' Unions are set forth in these terms, p. 119:—"The actes and ordinaunces made and agreed upon the firste daye of September, in the two and thirtieth yere of the reigne of oure Sovereigne Ladye, Elizabeth, by thee grace of God, Queene of England, Franncce, and Ireland, Defender of the Faithe, &c., As well by all the hole fellowshippe and company of Cutlers and makers of knyves within the Lordshippe of Hallamshire, in the Countye



of Yorke, whose names are particularly expressed in a sedule hereunto annexed, As also by the assente of the Righte Honorable George, Erle of Shrewsburye, Lorde and owner of the said Lordshippe of Hallamshire, for the better relief and comodytie of the porer sorte of the said fellowshippe."

The first article makes a provision that "no person engaged in the said manufactures, either as a master, servant, or apprentice, shall perform any worke apperteyninge to the said scyence or mysterye of cutlers," for eight and twenty days next ensuing the eighth day of August in each year; nor from Christmas to the twenty-third day of January; but shall apply themselves to other labours, "upon payne of forfeiture for everye offence founde and presented by twelve men of the same fellowshippe, of the some of twentye shillings, to the use of the said Earle, his heirs, and assignes, to be levied as other his fines and amercyaments within the said Lordshippe have bene accustomed." 2. No person to exercise the said trade, who had not served an apprenticeship of seven years, or been instructed by his father for that term. Penalty, forty shillings. 3. No person to have more than one apprentice in his service at one time, nor engage another till the former be in his last year, nor take any for a less term than seven years. Penalty, forty shillings. 4. No person occupying any wheel for the grinding of knives, to allow of any work being done there during the holiday months. Penalty, as before. 5. No occupier of a wheel to suffer any person to grind or glaze any knives there, who does not reside within the Lordship and liberties, on the same penalty. 6. No person to be suffered to exercise the trade, who has not sufficiently learned it, within the said Lordship. Penalty as before. 7. No person to strike any mark upon his wares, but that which is assigned him in the Lord's Court. Penalty, ten shillings. 8. No hafter shall haft any knives for any chapman, hardware man, or dagger maker, or other person not dwelling within the liberties. Penalty, twenty shillings. 9. Nor shall knife blades be sold to any person not dwelling within the liberties. Penalty, six shillings and eightpence. 10. No journeyman to be employed under the age of twenty, except such as shall be allowed by the jury, or who have been apprentices, or taught by their fathers. Penalty, forty shillings. 11. No person who has not served an apprenticeship, or been instructed by his father, to set up in the trade, except he first pay to the jury or twelve men of the cutler's occupation for the time being, five pounds, the one-half for the Earl's use, the other half for the poor of the said corporation, to be distributed by the jury. Penalty, forty shillings. 12. Every apprentice to be presented to the jury, within one year, and the indentures to be sealed before them. At the expiration of the term, each apprentice to bring his indenture to the jury, and to subscribe the rules here established. Penalty, ten shillings. 13. All persons summoned to serve upon the jury, to appear, on pain of forfeiting six shillings and eightpence. 14. Each juryman to appear when summoned by the foreman, to settle questions touching these ordinances, on the like penalty. The 15th article gives power to the jury, with the concurrence of the Lord or his learned Steward for the time being, to make fresh regulations. 16. At the great Court of the Earl, holden at Sheffield, in Easter week, twelve men of the said science and

mystery, to be nominated by the Earl or his learned Steward, to inquire into offences and to punish offenders. The last article declares that, if these ordinances do not prove so beneficial as is expected to the poorer sort, the Earl may make them or any of them void.

Upon this, Hunter says—"There is something amiable in the spirit of attention to the condition of the poor, in which these regulations are conceived. We may observe in them also a laudable attention to the maintenance of that reputation which the manufacturers of Hallamshire had obtained; and I wish I could add that the records of the Manor Court did not present instances in which in some of their best points, these ordinances were violated. The entlers' jury were frequently called on to levy the penalties for unworkmanly wares."

Hunter afterwards goes on to state that an Act of Parliament was passed in 1624, which embodied these rules. He says, p. 120,—“The Act is entitled ‘An Act for the good order and government of the makers of knives, sickles, shears, scissors, and other cutlery wares, in Hallamshire, in the County of York, and parts near adjoining;’” and in its preamble is set forth, that whereas the greatest part of the inhabitants of those parts consists of persons engaged in the different departments of the cutlery manufacture, and that by their industry and labour they have not only gained the reputation of great skill and dexterity in the said faculty, but have relieved and maintained their families, and have been enabled to set on work many poor men inhabiting thereabout, who have very small means or maintenance of living, other than by their hard daily labour as workmen to the said cutlers, and have made knives of the best edge, wherewith they served the most part of this kingdom and other foreign countries, until now of late that divers persons using the same profession, in and about the said Lordship and liberty, and within six miles compass of the same, not being subject to any rule, government, or search of any others of skill in those manufactures, have refused to submit themselves to any order, ordinance, or search, but every workman has taken liberty to himself to take as many apprentices, and for what term of years he pleases, whereby and by the multitude of workmen, the whole trade and the exact skill formerly exercised therein, is like in a short time to be overthrown, by means of which want of government and search, the said workmen holding themselves free and exempt from all search and correction, are thereby emboldened and do make such deceitful and unworkmanly wares, and sell the same in divers parts of the kingdom, to the great deceit of his majesty's subjects and scandal of the cutlers in that Lordship and liberty, and disgrace and hindrance of the sale of cutlery and iron and steel wares there made, and to the great impoverishment, ruin, and overthrow of multitudes of poor people; which offenders not being subject under any oversight, survey, or authority, do pass unpunished for their offences, abuses, and misdemeanours. For the remedy whereof, it is enacted, that all persons engaged in those manufactures within the aforesaid limits, shall form one body politic, perpetual and incorporate, of one master, two wardens, six searchers, twenty-four assistants, and the rest commonalty of the said Company of Cutlers of the Lordship of Hallamshire. It is further

enacted, that it shall be lawful for the said officers or the greater part of them, to make such laws, acts, ordinances, and constitutions, as to them shall appear good and wholesome, profitable, honest, and necessary for the good order, rule, and government of all the members of the said Company, their apprentices, and servants; and to levy reasonable penalties on those who neglect to observe them; the money so raised, to be given to the poor of the said corporation. Three hundred and sixty persons immediately enrolled themselves members of the Company, and by their proper officers proceeded to enact such laws as at that time appeared to be convenient and necessary. They passed a law that all persons should serve the offices to which they were regularly chosen, should attend necessary meetings, and answer summonses. To the six searchers, power was given to enter dwelling-houses where they had reason to suppose that deceitful wares were concealed. The restrictions on taking apprentices, already sufficiently rigid, were made yet more so. The members of the body were prohibited from working for strangers, or selling to them unfinished wares. Twopence annually was required from every member of the corporation, under the description of mark-rent.

The first of these regulations, (7th of Elizabeth, 1565,) provides that all engaged in the manufacture of cutlery shall have two holidays of a month each every year, at seedtime and harvest. The wisdom of this provision is manifest, and it would be well if we could return to it, although it would be going 300 years back. This silly objection would be as much to the purpose if applied to the sun, which shone thousands of years ago. I want all persons engaged in the manufacture of any article, to meet together in a fair and proper spirit, and make regulations for the good government of that particular trade. It is foolish to blame the masters for their exactions; they only obey the natural law of capital. When working men become masters, they act in a similar manner—often worse. I want to see a trial of intellect—the heads of the masters against the heads of the men. The twelfth of the regulations, providing for the sealing of the indentures of apprenticeship, gave rise to the custom in Sheffield, of having a half-holiday on Shrove Tuesday. Apprentices signed their indentures before the Cutlers' Company on that day, which was therefore called, and continues to be called, *Fasten* Tuesday. The same regulations show that the sophistry, fallacy, and nonsense now uttered with reference to unionists and non-unionists was not then known. "At the expiration of the term, each apprentice to bring his indentures to the jury, and to subscribe the rules here established. Penalty, ten shillings." If a workman got his living by the trade, he was bound to obey the rules of the trade. I moved a proposition in the Town Council with reference to this subject. After reciting the rules, the proposition was—"That, in consequence of the repeal of these powers without the consent of the 'porer sorte,' they have had to form themselves into Trades' Unions, to protect themselves, their wives, and families, and to enforce the observance of the rules thereof by acts of violence, when such acts were considered necessary. That in order to prevent any recurrence of similar acts of violence, and to promote the wellbeing of all the inhabitants of the Borough, it is essentially requisite that the artisans should have restored to them

the same power of lawfully enforcing obedience to their rules, for the good government of their trades, which they possessed in 1565, 1590, and 1624, as herein rehearsed." It was artfully objected that I wished to revive the same rules as existed 300 years ago, although the proposition distinctly says "The same *power* of lawfully enforcing obedience to their rules." The rules would have to be agreed upon now by "all those engaged" in the trade, masters as well as men. In 1843, Mr. James Wilson, Law-clerk to the Cutlers' Company, published an epitome of the present constitution of the Company, from which it is clear that these rules are now valid, if they were honestly put in force. He says—"The power of imposing reasonable fines upon the non-observance of bye-laws, is still unrepealed. I consider that the bye-laws made before the 31st and the 54th Geo. III., are valid and binding, and that the Master-Wardens, Searchers, and Assistants, still retain their power of making bye-laws." It will be well recollected that some years ago, Master Cutler Broadhurst *rattened* a large quantity of cast iron cutlery, and that he invited the inhabitants, by placard, to Paradise Square, in order to see the cutlery destroyed. You know how large a meeting assembled, and how delighted they were at the sight, although it was "restraint of trade." Mr. Wilson further says—"Every person who shall have served an apprenticeship for seven years, to any member of the Company, is entitled to the freedom of the Company, and the officers are required to grant him the freedom without his paying any fee whatever." He also suggests, in conclusion, that the members of the Company should use their influence to induce persons to become members. I mention these facts to shew that my proposition is at least no innovation, although the press may call it strange and peculiar. More than fifty copies of the proposition were printed and sent to public men who had written on Trades' Unions. There was only one response from a clear-minded writer and an accurate logician, whose writings I never read without being instructed thereby. His first answer was in the slip-slop newspaper style, and it was evident he had not studied the matter. In his second letter he said—"Do you mean that those who are engaged in a trade, should make regulations for the government of the trade, to be enforced by the magistrates?" I replied that this was my proposition, and I asked who ought to regulate a trade except those engaged in it, who understood it? This question has not yet been answered.

With reference to the acts of violence by Trades' Unions, at Sheffield, and the Inquisition thereon, it was an act of marvellous insanity on the part of the working men, to fall into the trap of their taskmasters by praying for the inquiry. As Englishmen, it was their duty to resist it. All enquiries of that character have a sinister object, not a *bóna fide* one. The law ought to be administered by the regular judicial tribunals. The object of crown-appointed commissions—inquisitions—is to register foregone conclusions. It is to manufacture evidence by manipulation, bullying, threatening, coaxing, excluding, refusing, and modifying by the use of rose water and lavender, so as to support the case already made. When the newspapers were loudly declaring their satisfaction at the appointment of the Jamaica Commission of

Enquiry, the Sheffield Foreign Affairs Committee wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Cardwell, telling him that his object was not to further the ends of justice, but to thwart them, and shield the guilty criminals. That letter was published in the Jamaica papers, and the prediction was singularly verified to the letter. None of the criminals have been put on their trial. Some have even been promoted. Instead of praying for the Sheffield Enquiry, the working men should have recollected that they were outside the law, and that everything would be against them in that sense; nothing in their power. They should have simply stood on the defensive, ready to have met any special charge against any individuals, and not have floundered into the general proposition on which the Inquisition was based. Did they not recollect the circumstances of the late Mr. Wilson Overend's appointment as a magistrate; his determination to put down Trades' Unions; his invariable sentence on all unionists being the extreme penalty; the great public meeting, and petition signed by 18,000 inhabitants; its presentation by the late Mr. Duncombe, M.P.; the result of the subsequent enquiry, which was that after Mr. Overend's appointment, every Trades' Union conviction under him, was accompanied with a sentence of three months' imprisonment, with hard labour; and that most of the cases had been quashed on appeal to the Court of Quarter Sessions. It is unpleasant to dwell on that idiotic act of the working men, and their silly leaders, who appear to have altogether lost their heads. Had the proposition been mooted of a similar enquiry into the sayings and doings of manufacturers, coal owners, and others, with reference to their trade secrets, it would have been scouted; nay, it would never have drawn breath. The witnesses on the Enquiry should have resolutely refused to give evidence which might criminate them, and have relied upon a writ of *habeas corpus* in case of committal. I firmly believed that on the argument upon such a writ the prisoners would have been discharged from custody on the ground that the Act of Parliament authorising the inquisition was in contravention of the law, the constitution, and Magna Charta. The ultimate object of the taskmasters in the enquiry, was to reduce wages, and the necessary step was to destroy the power of the Unions, by getting them painted as black as possible in newspapers. A letter appeared in the *Standard*, the other day, which concluded in these terms:—"Capital cannot be cheaper, skill is on the rack, profits will not permit of curtailment. *Labour at continental rates, is the only alternative known to myself as a Manufacturer.*—City, Sept. 20." The object is here plainly avowed, "Labour at continental rates." What is the meaning of this phrase? It may perhaps be gathered from another letter, in the *London Daily Telegraph*, in these terms.—"Sir,—Allow me to call your readers' attention to the following paragraph, taken from the *North Devon Journal* of the 19th Sept., 1867."

"BARNSTAPLE.—Last week, a poor man, named Robt. Milton, was sent to gaol for 21 days, by the Mayor and G. E. Kingson, Esq., for allowing his two children to become chargeable to the parish. His master, Mr. Richards, a farmer, of East Buckland, gave the man a good character, and said that he was a first-class labourer. On being asked how much wages he gave him,

farmer Richards replied that he received *four shillings a week*, and that this was considered *first-class wages* in that part of the country. The prisoner said that out of this 4s., he already paid 2s. 9d. for the support of one child, leaving only a balance of 1s. 3d. for himself."

This is an instructive lesson. The case is one of free labour to perfection. There was no "tyranny of Trades' Unions" at Barnstaple, to interfere between Robert Milton disposing of his labour to farmer Richards, who gave him a good character, and said he was a first-rate labourer receiving first-class wages, which were four shillings a week.

With reference to the Sheffield Enquiry, iniquitous though it was, the enquiry at Manchester was more barefaced. After one of the witnesses there had given his evidence, this exhibition took place, according to the report:—"The witness before leaving the box said the society wished him to mention one fact which told against the masters. After Mr. Marsden's strike, the Masters' Association issued a circular, containing the names of the thirty-two members who had struck, the object being to deprive them of the means of obtaining employment. The circular was despatched throughout the country, and at this moment fourteen of the thirty-two were still out of work. The Chief Examiner said this was not one of the cases which he thought they were to enquire into. The general commission now sitting in London was the proper tribunal to refer the matter to. The witness added that for the last twelve months he had been out of employment. The masters objected to employ any official connected with a trades' union." Is it necessary to add a single word to this statement?

The first manufacturer who was a witness, at Sheffield, was Mr. Eadon. His evidence was of the puling character. He said he had often been *rattened*, and he did not know the reason. He had never informed the police, and had always made matters up. Had the enquiry been in a regular judicial court, Mr. Eadon would have been cross-examined, and asked whether the whole of the goods sent out from his establishment bore his own mark or not. It is said that most of the goods he sends out, do not bear his mark, and that he manufactures goods with any mark upon them that may be ordered. This most reprehensible practice was prohibited by the trade regulations in the reign of Elizabeth, under a severe penalty, as I have already shewn. It was considered very prejudicial to the welfare of the town, and it tends greatly to the production of "deceitful and unworkmanly wares." Mr. Bragge was another witness. He boasted that John Brown & Co., Limited, would not employ Trades' Unionists, and that the practice was successful. Had Mr. Bragge been cross-examined, he would have admitted that the business of John Brown & Co. was merged in one of Limited Liability in April, 1864; that a month afterwards, £20 per share had been paid up, and that the shares were at £11 premium. At the present time, there is £70 per share paid up, which is at a discount of £35. In other words, every £1 invested in May, 1864, was worth 30s., and now every £1 invested is only worth 10s. That is the value which the public has placed upon the undertaking. I will give another illustration. When any

application was formerly made to me for a house, and the applicant said he worked at Brown's, no further enquiry was deemed necessary. The conduct, however, of these men as tenants, has recently been so bad that we have reversed the practice in my office, and if an applicant for a house now says he works at Brown's, we immediately close all negotiations with him. It is possible that the low financial condition of the concern may not be owing to the disreputable fellows employed there, but at all events, it is a state of things somewhat like that historical Sheffield character, 'Tet Hague, "nowt to brag on." I have had considerable experience of Trades' Unionists as tenants of property under my management, and I have invariably found that rents were better paid by them than by "knobsticks," who cheat and defraud whenever they have an opportunity.

Everything was done upon the enquiry to make it appear that the death of Linley was a murder. This is notoriously untrue. According to the evidence there was no malice against him; nor was there any intention to kill him. Had there been any trial at York, the evidence of an eminent surgeon would have conclusively proved that the shooting did not cause his death. It was owing to other causes. The grinder at Oughtibridge named this point. In the letter of "Paul the Aged;" he says, "Lindley was not murdered, the assertion oft repeated; that he was is *gross Hypocrisy*. 'murder is the deliberate taking away the life of a man, woman, or child who does not deserve to lose it.' Lindley deserved to lose his—the Children starved to death during the past ten years did not deserve to lose theirs." It is unpleasant to have to speak of the dead, and I should not have done so unless from absolute necessity, arising from the pertinacious parading of the statement that he was murdered.

I shall now notice a few specimens of the manner in which those outside the inquiry have commented upon it. The Archbishop of York spoke in very strong terms on two occasions immediately after the close of the inquiry. One of his statements was that "hiring a youth and paying him for it appeared to be an offence which deserved the penalty of death." No phrase could be more full of perversion and fallacy than this. His Grace knew, in the first instance, that there was no intention to kill Linley. Besides, is the taking an apprentice simply hiring a youth and paying him? Has the master no moral responsibility? Has he not to instruct, guide, and govern the apprentice? Can a working-man do his duty to his employer, and have the care and instruction of six apprentices at the same time? The thing is utterly impossible. In the time of Elizabeth, due care was taken to prevent this, as you have seen. Apprentices were formerly under much more control than at present. Fifty years ago a Sheffield gentleman, now living, went to the Three Tuns, in Orchard street, during the last week of his apprenticeship. When the company knew that he was not of age he was turned out of the house, though he was a very respectable young man. At that time men did not permit apprentices to consort with them. Now, apprentices are married almost before the signatures to their indentures are dry, and numbers of low beer-houses are entirely supported by boys and girls. Let the statement of His

Grace be applied to himself. He has valuable church livings in his gift. Instead of appointing duly qualified clergymen when vacancies occur, let him hire youths to discharge their duties and pay them for it, pocketing the emoluments himself. Would he be permitted to do so? Would his shallow fallacy be taken as an excuse or justification? Men may take academical degrees and become Archbishops, and yet their logic be of a most indifferent character. The exhibition of His Grace at Barnsley, after the Oaks Colliery explosion, was a pitiful one. Whilst hecatombs of men were entombed in the earth, undergoing the most frightful and hideous deaths that can be conceived, His Grace said, at a public meeting, that it was satisfactory to know that no one was to blame for the occurrence. Was not this almost blasphemous? The coal which was in the bowels of the earth emitted gas which caused the explosion. If the coal had not been disturbed there would have been no catastrophe. If it were possible to get the coal without an explosion, then there was blame somewhere: if it were not possible, it ought not to have been attempted, and still there was blame. The horns of this dilemma disposed of, His Grace's statement, and the evidence on the inquest, showed that there was great blame in various quarters. When the jury considered their verdict they had to make a compromise between the evidence sworn to at the inquest and the declaration of His Grace. The result was the cautious and unmeaning verdict to which they agreed.

I now come to the two clergymen who wrote to the *Times* saying that the Rev. Mr. Stainton was not a clergyman of the Established Church,—he did not belong to that Union,—and that they disapproved of his conduct with reference to Crookes. I do not know the names of these clergymen and wish to remain in ignorance, because I desire to hold all clergymen and ministers of religion in respect, and I could not respect these two. I was at a public hotel in Bristol when the paragraph announcing this fact was going the round of the papers. My reply to an enquiry as to the meaning of it was that Mr. Stainton had waited on the employers of Crookes, and put the case in this manner—that the conduct of Crookes could not be sufficiently reprobated, but the question was, should he get his living by labour, by criminal means, or by becoming a pauper: and that Mr. Stainton pressed the employers to continue Crookes in their service. In my judgment, Mr. Stainton was the true christian, the good Samaritan. There is a beautiful passage in one of the prayers of the Church service, which is read twice every Sunday, but from these recent exhibitions it is not read with a living eye, nor heard with living ears. I will read it from the prayer book. “Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodness all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; that it may please thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities, giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions.” No man can read or hear this prayer without being influenced for the better. These two clergymen would alter it; and instead of simply saying “all” who were in any way distressed, they would add the words “except Broadhead and Crookes.” How can they truly say “Forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive them



that trespass against us." A humorous incident occurred during my stay at Bristol. As soon as it was known that I was from Sheffield there was a chorus of loud condemnation at the public table. I took all very quietly, and then said the case was a very simple one; the working-men of Sheffield were determined to live by their labour,—to have beef, mutton, bread, beer, broadcloth,—and not to be brought down to the condition of the Irish, or the first-class labourer of Barnstaple at 4s. per week. They were in earnest to secure this, and rattened those whose conduct prevented it. If that was not sufficient they blew them up, and, in extreme cases, shot them. Upon my saying this, the chorus became more loud and fierce, and some of the gentlemen actually frothed at the mouth. They said, amongst other things, that I justified murder. I retorted by quoting the incident of Moses slaying the Egyptian. This made the matter worse. The next day, however, they were very cautious in saying anything to me on the matter. At breakfast, on the third morning, one of the gentlemen who was very loud in his condemnation, was leaving for London. He said that he was a cabinet maker; that he dealt largely in veneers with piano-forte makers; that he took piano-fortes in payment; the price in the shop being 25 guineas each, while he calculated the value at £16, and charged for his veneers accordingly. That his mode of disposing of the pianos was in this wise:—He had the last taken to his residence, and employed a music-master to sell it, giving him instructions to invent any story whatever so as to dispose of it. One morning the music-master told him that a lady and gentleman were coming to examine the piano, and informed him of the story which he had invented. It was that the cabinet maker had a favourite daughter to whom he had presented a new piano on her last birthday; that she had subsequently married contrary to his wish, and that he had wholly disowned her. The lady and gentleman came, and in the course of the negotiations they alluded to the story which had been told to them. The cabinet-maker said it was perfectly true; he was dearly fond of his daughter, but he could not forgive her, nor could he bear the sight of the piano in his house. They ultimately gave him the price which he asked—20 guineas. As soon as he had finished his recital, I ceased eating breakfast, and told the company that I knew I had only to wait. On my arrival they were all loud and fierce in condemning Sheffield, the London gentleman being the loudest of all. He now boasted at a breakfast table of English gentlemen, that he had been guilty of a conspiracy to defraud by means of gross falsehood. He admitted the falsehood. I then asked the company what was their conduct? After he had finished his recital, did they rise in indignation and say they would not sit at table with such a monster? No. Their looks and gestures were those of approval; and yet they condemned Sheffield. The president of the table then observed that if there were a commission appointed to examine into all trade secrets, perhaps Sheffield would not look so bad. My reply was that there was a mote in the eye of Sheffield, and a beam in theirs; that the doings of Sheffield were to support the wives and children of the working-men in comfort, whilst they cheated and defrauded each other in order to prey one on the other. Nothing was said to me about the atrocities of Sheffield after that.

Returning to the enquiry, Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P., has delivered himself on the subject very recently. He stated at a public meeting that "He was very strongly of opinion that the course which had been taken at Sheffield was not the right one. He did not think that the terms ought to have been such as were made between the public authorities and murderers in Sheffield. He did not think that, in order to obtain information to make a Blue Book, they ought to have allowed such murderers as Broadhead and Crookes to flaunt their murders through the streets of Sheffield, and to say that they had successfully defied the law and the police. By so doing he thought they had done something to lessen, if that were possible, the sense of the gravity of murder in the minds of the community. Whatever was done ought to have been done upon the old principle of Queen's evidence, and he believed that upon Hallam's evidence they might have convicted Broadhead and Crookes." Was ever such nonsense uttered? Yet Mr. Forster is an "advanced liberal." Everyone knows that none of the evidence extracted at the Sheffield Inquisition could have been used in an assize court. No council of standing could have tendered it; no judge would have received it. It is notorious that no value is attached to evidence obtained by favour, fear, or threat. The worst part of Mr. Forster's statement was that the sense of the gravity of murder was lessened in the minds of the community. He was Under Colonial Secretary when the hideous Saturnalia of murder, arson, and robbery took place in Jamaica. Did he then do anything to lessen the gravity of the sense of murder? Did he declare that unless the law was enforced against the criminals he would resign his post? On the contrary, he apologised for the scoundrels. What gross hypocrisy. Lessen the sense of the gravity of murder! The bombardment of Kagosima without any declaration of war; the bombardment of Canton in a similar manner, and based, as Mr. Gladstone declared, "on an acknowledged lie." Sir John Bowring was guilty of the "lie" in that case. He also is an advanced liberal. What was done to lessen the sense of the gravity of murder in the Indian insurrection, when we blew our victims from guns, and shot them down like rabbits? Was it not then said at an agricultural meeting, at Oughtibridge, by one speaker, that he "would not leave one black Sepoy alive?" and was he not loudly applauded? Again I repeat what gross hypocrisy and inconsistency.

The most recent comment has been by Mr. Rathbone, at the Social Science Congress held in Dundee. He said—"The real remedy against the tyranny of a union, lay, he believed, in the formation of a free-labour union, as had been done at Stavely. \* \* To sum up, the moral he thought to be derived from the Trades' Union Inquiry, seemed to him to be that—1st. When trade outrages occur in a trade, the union should be held responsible." He also said that it was a question whether artisans ought to have high wages, because they spent them in sensual indulgence. Could there be more insufferable insolence than this? One who does not labour as a producer, saying that it is a question what portion of the produce the producers should be permitted to have. Suppose the producers were to deal with him in the same way, and say that it was a question whether he ought to have anything, inasmuch as he

produced nothing, and deal with him as the working bees do with drones. His "moral," too, is an atrocious one, wholly unworthy of any consideration.

The Inquisition being over, the result was anxiously expected. When Mr. Overend took his work in to be examined, he said, amongst other things—"During the course of our investigation, matters connected with trades' unions (such as the number of apprentices allowed to each workman, and the class from which they may be taken, the remuneration of labour, the restraints exercised upon voluntary action, and the rules and general policy of trades' unions) have frequently been brought before our notice. These, however, are questions for the consideration of the Royal Commission sitting in London, and we purposely avoid making any observations upon them. We are convinced that the most material disclosures made to us were so made in reliance on our promise of indemnity made in conformity with the act of parliament. *Had no such indemnity been afforded, we are satisfied that we should never have obtained any clear and conclusive evidence touching the most important subjects of our inquiry.*" In other words, he said that he had cleansed the cesspool, and nearly poisoned the nation with the foul effluvia; that he could not have succeeded without the help of those who had filled it; that he had heard a good deal as to how it came to be so full and foul, but he had nothing to do with that, and if it should become full again, he was ready to cleanse it at statement prices.

After this abortion, and partly in consequence of it, I brought the case before the Town Council. There were two objects in that proceeding;—to state the case, and to ascertain what the taskmasters who were in the Council proposed to do. The case was partially stated, and it has to be answered before there can be any further repressive legislation. The taskmasters had nothing to propose. They were, like Mr. Overend, all at sea. Some rambling statements were made to the effect that Government would do something, and that there should be free-labour. The Government will carefully consider the whole case, before doing anything. Their legal advisers know the utter impossibility of safely governing the people with any increased repression of Trades' Unions. As to the phrase, "free-labour," it is too absurd and ridiculous to require any lengthened notice. Nor is it necessary, as Mr. Austin shewed at Preston that he fully understood it. On that point, he is reported in these terms:—"What men called free-labour institutions, he denounced as a device of the capitalist to divert the attention of the men from their societies, which were the only protection of their labour, in order more easily to destroy the trade organizations." Nothing would be more desirable than to carry out the idea of free labour in its integrity. Let a short act of parliament be passed, declaring it to be expedient that there should be free-labour throughout the country, and that after a certain day, all salaries and statement prices dependent upon the votes of parliament, or in any other public manner, should be withdrawn. The Lord Chancellor, all the Judges and other administrators of the law, all Bishops and Clergymen, all Ambassadors and diplomatists, and all Members of the Government, would then be free. The Chairman of this meeting might put himself forward as a free magistrate, hearing cases at

3s. 6d. each. Another might set up as a free County Court Judge, at half the statement price now paid. I might even become a free Archbishop. The absurd imbecility of this nonsense is only equalled by the conduct of those who assume to be the leaders of the Unions in reference to it—Mr. George Potter and the chattering magpies and parrots who surround him. Mr. Potter was once a good man, when he was an artisan. Now his object is to sell the *Beehive* and become a Member of Parliament. These gentlemen have passed a resolution excommunicating some of the Sheffield trades. This is a ridiculous act of suicide. Did anyone ever hear of any assistance coming from any organisation in London? Nearly thirty years ago, there was a strike in the Potteries which lasted seventeen weeks, and the sum of nearly £8,000 was advanced by the Sheffield trades in support of the men. There were no amalgamated associations and executives of Trades' Unions then, but there was substantial help, and the men in the Potteries almost worshipped Sheffield for the assistance rendered. Besides this, is it not madness for the Unions to quarrel among themselves when the foot of the taskmasters is on their neck?

Under these circumstances, the proposition of restoring to the working men the power which they formerly possessed of legally enforcing obedience to their rules, is put forth. It is not a theory, a speculation, a wild vision, an innovation: it is simply a restoration. Some of these London people do not want it. They say that moral force and persuasion are sufficient. If they can do without legal force or illegal violence, let them do so. Baron Bramwell, however, has recently given them a lesson on this point of moral force and persuasion, which will probably not be without its effect. After his exposition of the law, on the 22nd of August, in the case of the tailors who were convicted of picketting, I wrote to him in these terms:—

“Sheffield, August 30th, 1867.

Sir,—I have read your charge to the jury, on the 22nd instant, in the prosecution against Druitt and others for picketting, with ‘respectful amazement.’ As reported, the charge appears to be illogical and inconsistent throughout. There is one passage in your remarks, when sentencing the defendants, which is wholly incomprehensible. It is this—‘The aggregate of the happiness of mankind was created by each man being left to his own discretion, and to do what he pleased in reference to his own affairs.’ In that case, why are you a judge? Why were the ten commandments promulgated? Why is there law?

“Previous to this statement, you had said that the lock-out of the masters had nothing to do with the enquiry, the object of the lock-out being to prevent the men being left to their ‘discretion,’ and to do what they ‘pleased’ in reference to their own affairs. You also observed that the lock-out had been successful; that is, that the men had been coerced by means of the lock-out. Your observation that the masters had as much right to combine as the men, is true, only it so happens that magistrates, juries, and judges, who belong to the class of masters, invariably decide that the action of any and every combination of masters is lawful, and that the action of any combination of men, is unlawful.

"In the current number of Macmillan, Carlyle says—'That a good man be *free* as we call it; be permitted to unfold himself in works of goodness and nobleness, is surely a blessing to him, immense and indispensable, to him and to those about him. But that a bad man be *free*, (left to his own discretion, and to do what he pleases,) permitted to unfold himself in his particular way, is, contrariwise, the fatallest curse you could inflict upon him—curse, and nothing else, to him and all his neighbours.' Is Mr. Carlyle right, or are you?"

Your obedient servant,

ISAAC IRONSIDE,"

MR. BARON BRAMWELL.

If after Baron Bramwell, the London people say that sugar and barley-water will be effective, nothing more is necessary.

It is clear that if things go on as at present, or if there are more cruel and vindictive laws and sentences against the Unions, the acts of violence will be more frequent. It must not be supposed that the lads of Sheffield are ignorant of what took place at the inquiry. They would devour the revelations there made, with eagerness and avidity, and as they grow up, they will know and practice the like deeds, if compelled thereto. Being a man of peace, and opposed to violence, I desire to avoid this, and confidently propose a return to the practice of ancient times, when acts of violence in connection with trade were unknown. There is no legal difficulty in the way. Let the Friendly Societies' Act be amended in this sense; the Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice might settle the terms of the emendation; then let masters and men meet to agree upon the rules, which might be sent to Mr. Tidd Pratt to be certified.

One word to those who are called "knobsticks." It is your conduct which has caused all this deplorable misery. If you had acted like men, there would have been none of it. You would have been respected by your fellow-workmen and by society. I trust that you will cease to be the cause of any more acts of violence, and that you will agree and act with your fellow-workmen.

In conclusion, I ask you to dismiss from your minds all that has been said, for a few minutes. It is not often that I meet you face to face, and I wish to take this opportunity of giving a little advice. You and I find ourselves living upon the surface of the earth, surrounded by every variety of animate and inanimate objects. The more we investigate the nature and properties of these objects, the more thoroughly we become convinced of the extent of our ignorance. It is not possible for us to penetrate the mystery of the universe; the mystery of life: and our case would be a hopeless one if there were not a sure and unerring guide for us under all circumstances. That guide has been followed by all the great and good men who have ever lived, of whom there is any record. It is declared by Christ to be the second great commandment, like unto the first:—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. St. Paul left no doubt as to the meaning of the term "neighbour" in his magnificent sermon at Athens, wherein he said—"God hath made of one blood all nations of men to

dwell together on the face of the earth." You are to love your neighbour as yourself, whatever his colour or condition. In proportion as you do this you will become possessed of the peace which passeth all understanding, which will rest upon you and remain with you; and when you are summoned to the silent land—"to that bourne from which no traveller returns"—it will be said of you, "THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED."

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Since the delivery of this Address, the question has been put, as to "whether duly qualified medical men would have the same reason for committing acts of violence against quack doctors, as saw grinders exercise against 'knobsticks?'" The answer is simple—the medical man goes through a course of study and examination; if successful, he obtains a diploma; this document is his certificate of qualification. The saw grinder serves an apprenticeship of seven years to learn his trade. At the expiration of the term his indentures are given to him, which are his certificate of qualification. The medical man, armed with his diploma, is entitled to have his name inserted in the "Medical Register," a publication authorised by Her Majesty. No quack doctor can get his name inserted therein, and anyone holding himself out, or practising as a qualified medical man, whose name is not in the "Register," is punishable by a heavy fine. The medical authorities can also withdraw the diploma of those who offend against the medical Trades' Union. There is no Saw Grinders' Register published by authority, nor any punishment of quack saw grinders by the law. In addition to this, the quack doctor is prohibited from recovering by law any charge for medical services. There is no prohibition of quack saw grinders from recovering their wages by law. Let the saw grinders be put in the same legal position in these respects as the medical profession, and then the question will be a proper one.

I. I.