

THE ADVANTAGES & BENEFITS OF
CO-OPERATION.

Every true Radical must deplore the fact that the working classes of this country have not in the past, been fully conscious of, and as fully determined to obtain, the manifold advantages and benefits of co-operation, as the wealthy upper classes.

We need not seek far to ascertain the cause, it is mainly contained in the following facts:—Bad Management, the condemned Truck system, the demoralising Credit system, the pernicious Book system, have been great obstacles to success, but the greatest obstacle to reformers in this direction has been the apathy, pessimism, and mistrust of one another, (which by the way, is the present product of past landlordism, past tyranny, past oppression, and past imposition,) that exists amongst a section of the working classes, that, only too often, has baffled and defeated the well meant efforts, of their more intelligent fellow men, to confer upon them and themselves the undoubted benefits of Co-operation.

Before going further we would like to explain to the apathetic ones what Co-operation is, and what its benefits are. Co-operation consists in a number of persons combining together for the purpose of establishing an enterprise to do away with Capitalist's, Middleman's, and Retailer's exorbitant profits. The advantages and benefits thus obtained are:— The distribution of the profits thus saved, by means of dividends, and low prices, amongst themselves; and the Prevention of adulteration, and the imposition of inferior articles, so common to-day.

We have many successful Co-operative Societies in this Colony, notably amongst which, are the Schools of Arts, Mechanics Institutes &c. most of which are largely co-operative in principle; and in addition to these, we have in our midst Co-operative Societies at Hamilton, Lambton, Burwood, (only established 5 months) &c. all of which are eminently successful.

In England and America, some of the co-operative societies are worked on a huge scale, and in many instances have many thousands of members on their books, and as an illustration of their rapid growth and progress, I would give the Civil Service Co-operative Association of London, which was established less than 25 years ago by the bank clerks combining together to obtain the necessaries of life. To day this Association is one of (if not actually) the largest and wealthiest co-operative societies in the known world.

In this district, we have a remarkable illustration of the before mentioned dangers which co-operative enterprise has to overcome, before being successfully established, in the Co-operative Colliery at Plattsburg. This Colliery was established and nearly opened out on co-operative principles, and when almost on the eve of a gigantic success, was by bad management, apathy, pessimism and mistrust, turned into a gigantic failure.

I would earnestly appeal to the working men to strive to obtain for themselves, the same advantages and benefits as the upper classes by establishing where practicable, co-operative societies for themselves, to strive to avoid the preliminary dangers by profiting by the past experience of others and by educating the apathetic ones to abandon their pessimism and mistrust,

to strive to abolish the miserable credit system by setting an example and taking advantage of the benefits of any existing co-operative societies that are accessible to them, and the gain —intellectually and pecuniarily— will be theirs.

C. B.

Hamilton: 5, 4, 87.

SELECT POETRY.

THERE MUST BE SOMETHING WRONG

When earth produces fresh and fair,
The golden waving corn,
When fragrant fruits perfume the air,
And fleecy flocks are shorn:
While thousands move with aching head
And sing this ceaseless song:
"We starve, we die; oh, give us bread!"
There must be something wrong.

When wealth is wrought, as seasons roll,
From off the fruitful soil;
When luxury from pole to pole
Reaps fruits of human toil,
When from a thousand one alone
In plenty rolls along,
While others only gnaw the bone,
There must be something wrong.

And when production never ends,
The earth is yielding ever,
A copious harvest oft begins,
But distribution never;
When toiling millions work to fill
The wealthy coffers strong,
When those are crushed who work and till
There must be something wrong.

When poor men's tables waste away
To barrenness and drought,
There must be something in the way
That's worth the finding out.
With surfeits one great table bends,
While numbers move along
While scarce a crust their board extends,
There must be something wrong.

Then let the law give equal right
To wealthy and to poor;
Let Justice crush the arm of Might,
We ask for nothing more.

Until this system is begun
The burden of our song
Must and can be, this only one,
There must be something wrong.

—Elihu Clark.