



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1897.

THE functions of a Labour Paper in a new community like Australia are necessarily greater, and less sectional and factional, than they are in older countries. There such an organ voices the claims and the despair of the hunted and cornered, and the aspirations of those of them who have been left long enough unmolested to have time to aspire; here it voices, or should, and must voice, the claims and the realisable hopes of the whole community.

Having come, we don't propose to promise widely. We know what wants doing, and we intend to try and do it. Our platform indicates how fearfully Victoria lags on the stream of realisation. It shows what has to be done, at present, somehow or other. Whether we're to be allowed to continue the attempt to do it is not a matter of much importance, provided it gets done. Till the work there laid out is overtaken, or the bulk of it, Victoria isn't a fit country to live in. That's the sum of the reflections that have prompted the starting of this paper. And Victoria must be made a fit country to live in—yea, if it takes a revolution to cleanse it. We are hopeful enough yet to think that less drastic methods may suffice, and, so, we publish the Tocsin.

We do not intend to make the mistake that Labour propagandists often make, namely, to pander to a mere class of labour. We don't particularly care whether the labourer uses a shovel or a theodolite, a tape measure or a violin bow, the reins of a sanitary waggon or the pen of a poet, we are Labour's Tocsin against Idleness, against Parasitism, against Caste, against Junkyism, against Expropriation. And we don't think we will have an impossible task to show that the interests of Labour are the interests of all who labour with whatever organ Nature or Fate or God has most adequately endowed them.

Nor do we intend to fall into another bitfall of similar ventures, namely, the divorce of Labour from Life. The labourer loves, suffers, aspires, dreams, reveres, and lives, in his own way, as a man, and his life is a living, breathing, and moving statement of the statistical column of supply and demand, even than of one man.

one vote." The studio is for him, to the symphony, the oyster song, if he so wishes, the race, and the halls of learning, with their great alcoves and bookshelves for an immemorial past. He has a sense, a vision, a feeling with faith and with reason. And if we are going to treat of him, we must treat of those which are part of him. He is not the soulless automaton of the political economy books or the statistician's tables; yet if you divorce him from life, if you shut out from your editorial chambers the rose-flats of his natural atmosphere, what worth is your monograph or your leader or your essay on the Iron Law of Wages, however wise it may be from the merely academic or Labour Party point of view?

The Focus is your own paper, owned by your trade unions, your labour leagues, your representative men, and many of yourselves individually. It does not draw its sustenance from sources which, in the end, are inimical to that form of social organisation which alone finds favour with the workers. Other papers have done yeoman service to you upon occasion, but this paper is yours, and yours only upon all occasions. It will try and do its part, and it sincerely believes that it will be able to achieve something, but it will never be what it hopes to be till it receives your whole-hearted support.