

extra pay. Almost in the same breath the same employer will plead that it is extremely inconvenient to change shifts in the middle of a piece of work that has to be done quickly; so the convenience of the master is the main reason for these oppressive hours, by his own admission. They much prefer the man on the spot; the man they know and can trust. Put the question to the men and they will tell you, "Aye, we're glad to work a bit overtime but we don't want to kill ourselves."

Let me introduce you to a crane-driver whom I am proud to call my friend, one of those "poor neighbours to whom we may be glad of an introduction in the next world." He is a fine-looking man, but at first you will be so much taken up with the sweetness and power of his personality that you will hardly notice his outward appearance. A life of sorrow and strain has aged him before his time, but it has not robbed him of his warm heart and triumphant trust in God. This winter's evening he comes in at seven o'clock after ten hours' work and in answer to his wife's question he says he has not got to go out to work again, though there is a rush on and his mates all have to go back to work after their tea. He gives no explanation, but perhaps a bad chest and sciatica may account for his being let off. "I should have thought ten hours was enough for anybody," I observed. "Aye, miss, it is, but we've got to keep going if they're in a hurry. Once I got a bit out-of-sorts and had to go to the doctor and he feels my pulse and he says to me: 'What have you been doing, Charlie?' he says. 'Oh, nothing, doctor,' I says to him. 'Come, now, you've been doing something out of the ordinary.' 'Well, doctor, I've been working—we've been busy.' 'Come, come,' says he, getting impatient, 'tell me what you've been up to!' 'Well, doctor, I've been working three shifts on end,' and the doctor, he looks at me, keeping his finger on my wrist all the time and he says, 'It's killing you, Charlie, it's killing you!' Oh, Miss, many a time you'd give a shilling just for five minutes' rest, and you can't get it. There you are with men's lives depending on how you move hand or foot and you're more asleep than awake, like this—" and he closes his eyes and nods sleepily as if overcome by weariness. Then he continues: "The ship has got to sail at such a time and we've got to keep at it till she's loaded. But supposing a little fog comes over"—and he lowers his voice and makes a wide, slow sweep of the hand—"they've got to stop then. Oh, Miss, it's *not* right, but they won't see it of theirselves. It's ask, ask, ask, and they won't give yer nothing unless it's dragged out of them. If they'd make things a bit easier without being asked, it'd make all the difference."

The speaker was no grumbler, no shirker, no humbug, but a true, bright, energetic man. He was simply stating facts, facts that anyone may verify for themselves, though so many people are ignorant of them. It is so easy to condemn

one side or the other, especially when we know little about either, and it is very difficult to make anything like a thorough investigation of the problem, but even a little honest enquiry will teach us that the whole subject is far too complicated to be made the subject of sweeping assertions and hasty judgments. Again, without going very deeply into the subject we may discover that the struggle is really a three-sided one, the men being driven by the masters, who in their turn are often harassed by the impatience and selfish heedlessness of the public, of which we form a part.

Those who in any sense come under the head of employers often ignorantly take it for granted that, because they personally are innocent of oppression, the working man must therefore always be wrong in his revolt against his employer, but while there are many masters who are both just and kind there are probably a great many more who are neither one nor the other. People of culture and refinement who often side with the employer as a matter of course have in reality no sympathy with the large class of small employers, agents and overseers who to a great extent represent capital to the working man. Remember he rarely comes into close touch with gentlemen of the sort who would command his respect, but he sees a great deal of the "boss" who can scarcely give an order without swearing and who commands neither his love nor his respect.

But, again, we are baffled perhaps by stories of the ingratitude, disloyalty and laziness of work-people and our hearts are torn with conflicting sympathies, the anguish of seeing both sides, until it comes to us to realise that a cause may be righteous even though many of the people involved are unworthy. Instead of seeking a blind adherence to one side or the other, let us face the fact that there are rights and wrongs on both sides, and in the fiery light of pain strive to learn our great lesson, "Condemn not, that ye be not condemned," for only so can we follow the road that leads to lasting peace and light.

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## FOREIGN LETTER.

### FROM SYRIA.

*"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the feast of the Passover."*

I think it may interest some of my nurse friends who are working among the Jews in England to know how the feast of the Passover is kept in Jewish houses in Syria. Our Jewish Dispenser kindly invited us to witness this ceremony at his house, which took place rather late in the evening. The father of the family having lately died, the eldest son presided. Eight persons were present, including two small children. Two of the men were quite old Spanish Jews, with strong features and very long beards.

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