

# THE CLUBMAN.

"Fizzled out" would make a suitable headline to describe the closing chapter of the most senseless and inane industrial strike that has so far taken place in New Zealand. It has proved absolutely abortive. The strikers have been the losers and not the gainers by their brainless act, while one of the main industries of the country has been at a standstill for months. The only persons to derive any benefit—and that purely pecuniary—from the strike have been the so-called leaders of the Federation of Labour. Happily one of the chief conspirators is now in Mt. Eden gaol and the other has fallen from grace among the workers. The power of these agitators has at last been broken, and the miners, who have languished in idleness for wasted months, now are coming to realise the folly of being blindly driven by self-seeking strike-mongers.

One of the most ludicrous aspects of the strike has been the childish way the miners have acted at Waihi under the directions of their leaders. For weeks it has been apparent that the cause of the Federationists was a losing one, and that public opinion was overwhelmingly against them, yet the highly-paid officials were too pig-headed to give their blind followers the chance of acknowledging their mistake and return peaceably to work. Instead the strikers were incited to defy the law and molest workers who had been engaged to carry on the work of the mines.

The outcome of this lawlessness was that forty odd miners were arraigned before a magistrate and bound over to keep the peace. Quite nominal sureties were demanded by the Court, so that each of the men found guilty could by little more than a formality secure his release from custody. The strike leaders, however, hoped that by inducing the men to go to prison rather than find sureties for their future good conduct, that they would arouse public sympathy. The reverse was the result of this ill-advised policy of flouting the law and defying order.

A handful of headstrong and brainless wharf labourers endeavoured to work up some feeling on the wharves, and make a demonstration, when the strike prisoners came up from Waihi. But beyond gathering together a curious and good natured crowd to cheer the "ten quid martyrs" on their way to gaol, the public took no interest.

The daily Press is very largely responsible for the strike having lasted as long as it did. They were hungry for news and consequently saw in the strike the possibilities of a good source of supply of the raw material from which news is easily manufactured. Each paper forthwith sent down picked men to hunt up copy. Nothing was easier. All that was required was to give the strike leaders the opportunity to appear in print, quote their names at frequent intervals, give expression to their rabid opinions, and the trick was done. Having thus kindled the fire the monopolist Press naturally had to keep the bellows going. In no time our consciousness dailies had worked up a good blaze, and the ignorant strikers took it to be a sign that public sympathy was with them. This was all a delusion.

The fact that several hundred people gathered together to see the strike prisoners as they arrived from Waihi, and that some thousands of idle people were present at a demonstration on Saturday night, by no means signified that the crowd in either case entertained any genuine sympathy for the strikers. Curiosity drew the people together, and as one man aptly remarked: "Half these jokers are here to see what fools the other half make of themselves."

The individual who made this remark was a typical embodiment of "The Man in the Street." He is a very interesting study, though not always an edifying one. He has many moods and many peculiarities, but his most conspicuous characteristic is his absence of self-will, when in the

company of his fellows, or to put it in other and more scientific words, he catches the infection of the crowd.

There is nothing more interesting than to study the psychology of a crowd. It is not so much a collection of individuals as a complete organism. It is subject to the same influences, swayed by the same impulses, and works in a common action. "The Man in the Street" is usually powerless of resistance against the almost magnetic influence of the crowd. This was amply demonstrated on Saturday night.

The fact is that the individuals of a crowd are rarely masters of them-

To return to the Waihi strike. It is difficult to appreciate how the miners ever came to place any faith in the men who have been responsible for the trouble, because none of them have shown any of the attributes of leadership, or have any personal qualities to recommend them. At best they are a hare-brained lot of noisy agitators who have pandered to mean prejudices, tickled the vanity, and played on the emotions of their followers. Yet they have succeeded in keeping the men in subjection and satisfied with strike pay while themselves drawing from the coffers of the organisation they control liberal salaries and extravagant expenses.

bear the misdeeds of others; but scapegoats who will be held responsible for the misdeeds they themselves perpetrated.

In a recent thoughtful article by George Barnes, an intelligent labour leader in England, the writer took a very logical view of strikes when he said: "Trade union combination no more exists solely for the purpose of engaging in strikes than does national government exist solely for the purpose of repressing thieves and murderers and attacking outside foes. With respect to certain classes of workers—those whose pay and general conditions are extremely low—I am inclined to say that strikes on their part are justifiable almost under any circumstances."

Dealing with syndicalists, such as Parry and Semple openly profess to be, Barnes says:—"To talk of the general strike (as did the Waihi strikemongers) as a general policy for organised Labour is sheer madness. Labour could only wage war upon the community by waging war upon itself. Labour is the community. Other classes are mere excrescences or special organs falling into atrophy, which it is the mission of Labour to hasten by disuse into decay."

The New South Wales League team concluded their engagements in Maoriland on Saturday when they defeated Auckland by 26 points to 2. This was the only return match played and in it the Kangaroos avenged the only defeat they suffered throughout their tour. We were told that the Welshmen came to this country to act as schoolmasters and instruct New Zealanders in the finer points of the Northern Union game.

It would be a hard thing to say that our instructors did as much harm to the game as they increased our knowledge of the code, yet it cannot be denied that in some respects the influence of our visitors on the game has not gained for it much favour in the eyes of the public. Several unsavoury incidents occurred in connection with the tour that have left a nasty taste, and the attitude of the visiting managers towards the New Zealand executive was, to say the least, undignified.

Perhaps in this the governing body were not entirely free from blame, but at all events it would have been better had any individual feeling been sunk, rather than be made the subject of semi-public controversy and personal incriminations. The Deane affair was most unfortunate, and although "The Clubman" frankly expressed the opinion that it was doubtless the outcome of a certain laxity on the part of the referee, the offending player thoroughly merited his disqualification.

After the confirmation of Deane's disqualification by the New Zealand executive the attitude of the N.S.W. managers was not sportsmanlike in threatening to abandon the tour unless Deane was allowed to play. The Dominion officials weakly gave way, but having done so should not have "turned turtle" again and refused to allow the offending player to take part in the last match.

Altogether the Kangaroos' tour has not done much to elevate the tone of the game in this country, and it is to be earnestly hoped that the next inter-colonial touring team will be able to mend the impaired relationship between Australians and New Zealanders that resulted from friction engendered over the present tour.

A wealthy New York dame, who died recently, left an annuity of £300 to her donkey. There is still hope for some of our strike leaders living in idleness and luxury.

It's poor policy to try and cure the blues by painting the town red.

The modern girl appears to marry because she wants to learn to cook; the young man because he's afraid of his landlady.



MR. OSCAR ASCHE AS OTHELLO.

selves, but are subject to that strange thrill—partly mental and partly physical—which passes through the gathering, and often creates a nervous tension. When one man cheers the crowd cheer. They know not for what, and they care not for what. In fact it requires an effort on the part of an individual to resist the infectious enthusiasm. But this artificial enthusiasm cannot be regarded as sympathy. It soon dies away.

The man in the street, who in his own home may be a man of quiet domestic virtues, and often quite an unemotional fellow, loses his individuality when he gets into a crowd, so that at the words of some blustering agitator he shows an entirely unnatural aspect of his nature. The man in the street is always ready to follow a leader, by a sort of amiable impulse, to see the fun and be in the joke.

It seems to be a characteristic of the working man that once he has accepted a leader he is prone to hero-worship, and it is difficult to shake his belief in any man that has once been put upon the pedestal. Once having called a man a hero, the most lamentable failure calls for his pity but cannot easily shake his faith; and open conviction of inefficiency only makes him suspicious of slander.

Yet the working man, like the man in the street, requires also a scapegoat upon whom he can visit the sins of omission and commission. And when his patience is exhausted and the folly of his loyalty comes home to him, the worker is not slow to dethrone his erstwhile hero and make of him a scapegoat. "The Clubman" looks with some confidence to Parry and Semple now being made the scapegoats of the Waihi strike. Not scapegoats, however, in the usual sense of the word, namely: the ones made to