

in oppressing a comrade or neighbour. We have very frequently seen him made a victim of a tyrannical combination, —unmanly odds taken against him if at all formidable for native power,—but rarely, if ever, enacting the part of a tyrant himself. In a little work recently published, entitled the “Autobiography of a Working Man,” we find an experience of this kind so truthfully rendered, that we cannot resist submitting it to the reader. The working man’s story is illustrative of a class of cases incalculably numerous, from the existence of which, too often and surely tested, we derive our chief dread of universal, or even household suffrage, and the abandonment of a property qualification. It was in the year 1830, when the cry for political reform in this country was so loud and general, that the following incident in the history of the working man took place :—

“A number of masons were hewing the blocks of stone, and each hewer had a labourer allotted to him to do the rougher work upon the stone with a short pick,—technically, to ‘scutch’ it. The masons were intolerable tyrants to their labourers. I was in the quarry cutting the blocks from the rock when the tide was out; and when the tide was in, I went and scutched with some of the hewers,—chiefly with my friend Alick. One day, when we had been reading in the newspapers a great deal about the tyranny of the Tories, and the tyranny of the aristocracy in general, and some of the hewers had been, as usual, wordy and loud in denouncing all tyrants, and exclaiming, ‘Down with them for ever!’ one of them took up a long wooden straight-edge, and struck a labourer with the sharp edge of it over the shoulders. Throwing down my pick, I turned round and told him that, so long as I was about the works, I would not see a labourer struck in that manner, without questioning the masons’ pretended right to domineer over labourers. ‘You exclaim against tyranny,’ I continued, ‘and you yourselves are tyrants, if anybody is.’ The hewer answered that I had no business to interfere; that he had not struck me. ‘No,’ said I, ‘or *you* would have been in the sea by this time. But I have seen labourers who dared not speak for themselves knocked about by you, and by many others; and by every mason about these works I have seen labourers ordered to do things, and compelled to do them, which no working man should order another to do, far less have the power to compel him to do. And I tell you it shall not be done.’