

### The Miller, Past and Present.

There is perhaps no individual in industrial circles who has undergone such a metamorphosis during the past century as the miller, which is not to be wondered at when we take into consideration the wonderful revolutions which have attended the history of his trade during that period. The peasant who a hundred years ago looked up to the miller as a man of local importance, could he but wake from his now forgotten grave, and view the individual of the same calling in the present day, would be as much astonished at his once respectful bearing to the man of dust, as was Titania when she awoke from the influence of Pucks amor-producing drop, at her hideous fascination for Bottom with the ass's head.

To reach the miller of the past it is necessary to go back to the slaves of the ancients who performed the duty in the most primitive manner, to the state selected individuals who superintended the slightly more advanced methods on the banks of the Tiber two thousand years ago, or even to such persons as the jolly miller by the River Dee, who retained his cynical independence to bluff king Hal. The matter of a hundred years is sufficient for a backward step to find the miller a not very advanced personage, and his mill quite a primitive institution. The older portion of the present generation can remember the days of high box wheels, and open races, and the miller of their childhood may not yet be forgotten. On this continent, where natural water powers were plentiful and easily obtained the miller was not such a person of note as in Britain, where so many existing rights had to be recognised in the utilizing of these gifts of nature. There the miller was frequently into a lawsuit about his water power, and he was sometimes a person of sufficient importance to risk a suit with the landlord, and not unfrequently came off victorious in such a contest. He was not supposed to be over scrupulous as to honesty in his business transactions, but there was a certain amount of jolly good nature attributed to him, which made up for any little peculations he indulged in when handling the farmer's grain. Indeed his respectability was such that in England he was frequently a church warden, and in Scotland a member of parish, and in some instances county boards. In the latter country he was often the distributor of relief to outside paupers; and in proportion to the goodness of the miller's heart would be the measure of meal dealt out periodically to the poor of the parish. His social qualities were also famed, and Burns refers to them in his Tam O'Shanter, who

"At ilka melder wi the miller  
Thou eat as long as thou had siller."

Altogether the miller of the past was a good type of the man of his day, guilty no doubt of many faults, and troubled with many failings. His position in business made him as a rule beyond the struggles of the ordinary trader, and the routine of the same was so confined, as to allow of little knowledge of the outside affairs of the world, and savored much of monotony in its sameness.

Compared with the unsophisticated individual above described the miller of the present

day furnishes a striking contrast, and equally so does the huge roller mill of to-day compared to his unpretentious institution. Turbines have superseded box wheels, and subterranean water leads, open races; and the steam engine has been called in in many instances for the milling interest. The miller's popularity or notoriety, as the case may be, is no longer confined to the limits of the society of a village. Instead of meeting his customers at fairs and markets there to indulge in sundry bumpers, he meets them on change, and in a few minutes sells his hundreds of barrels of flour or secures his thousands of bushels of wheat. Instead of depending on the reports of pedlars and tramps for news regarding the trade of neighboring village mills, the telegraph flashes him reports of markets from distant continents. Socially the outside world knows nor cares nothing about him, and if he should enter the political field his aims are as a rule to benefit the industry with which he is connected. His neighbors around him may scarcely know by test the quality of the goods he manufactures, while he is calculating upon the probable demand to feed the millions of a distant continent. He no longer depends upon the toll taken from the farmer's grist for his merchantable supply, but is frequently a member of a powerful and unsailable combination that in a great measure dictates the price of grain for the agriculturists of 50,000 square miles of country. Altogether the miller has made amazing progress in the field of trade importance; but with all the power held by his class in the present day, it is questionable if he is after all so happy as his representative in the past; whose tolls were as liberal as his potatoes, and who had in his power more chances for doing little acts of charity, than any other man in the ordinary walks of life.

### Wheat Crop Estimates.

Under this heading the *Millers Journal* of New York has some caustic criticisms upon the estimate of the United States wheat crop by some of the leading daily newspapers of the country. We give the greater portion of the article:

"Concerning crop prospects in Dakota, the *Tribune's* conclusions from statements compiled from 'exhaustive reports sent in by careful writers scattered throughout the territory,' are that 25 per cent. is none too high for the increase of area, and that 'nearly one-half of the entire wheat area has been seeded; but' (telegram from St. Paul, April 21) 'since April 16 rains have somewhat delayed seeding, and in the Red River valley farmers have been overflowed by a gradual rise in the river, which still continues.' From this, to the ordinary mind, rather unfavorable weather conditions for seeding and increase of 25 per cent., the *Tribune*, in its editorial summary, arrives at the highly logical conclusion that 'Dakota will almost double its acreage and possibly double its yield.' Finally, the *Tribune* sums up thus: 'From Minnesota, Nebraska, Indiana, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa and Dakota, the great wheat-growing sections, the reports are all favorably for a fair average crop, and in

some cases for an increase over that of last year.' All of this is alleged in the face of the fact that not one half of the seed for the spring-wheat crop has been placed in the ground, and the further fact that the April report of the National Bureau of Agriculture stated the condition of the winter wheat at only 80 per cent., as against 104 last April, from which 503,000,000 bushels were gathered, and 85 per cent. in 1881, the crop of the latter year turning out only 380,000,000 bushels. The area under winter wheat, as returned by the same authority, is this year 27,734,000 acres, and was last year 27,482,000 acres.

But what do the best commercial authorities say of the crop prospect—firms whose sources of information are and have been for years eminently trustworthy, as results have time and again proven. Last Saturday, McCormick, Adams & Co., Chicago, wrote: "Wheat continues to rule very strong. Advancing foreign markets, light receipts and decreasing stocks, and the outlook for a very serious shortage in the crop this year, are encouraging an enormous speculative demand which, before it has run its course, will doubtless give us much higher prices. Under the same date, Wm. P. McLaren & Co., Milwaukee, say: 'In some localities the further development of the season shows a little improvement in the appearance of the plant, and a better stand than had been expected earlier, but this improvement is not so general as to be really important, and the prospect still is that the winter wheat crop will be decidedly below that of last year.' It is to be noted that winter wheat comprises nearly three-fourths of the total crop of the United States.

### Printing on Earthenware.

The first manufacturer who decorated earthenware in the Staffordshire potteries was Josiah Wedgwood, of Etruria, and the designs first used in his embellishments were imitations of figures and objects, such as are now sometimes to be met with on the old blue china porcelain since its first introduction, embellishing on earthenware has made great progress, and articles of domestic use, with printed landscapes, figures and floral decorations, exhibiting considerable taste, are now so cheap that they to be found in every workingman's house.

Some of the earthenware is decorated with colored prints, which are transferred to the ware while it is in the biscuit state, this is called "under glaze." Some of the earthenware is "dipped" or "glazed" before printing, this is called "on the glaze," or "overglaze."

This printing on earthenware forms an important branch of industry in the decorative pottery trade, and it finds constant employment for numbers of men, women and children, all of whom work together in the same workshop.

The men engaged at the press are known in the trade as "printers," the women who work with the printers, as "transferers," and the little girls who assist the transferers, as "cutters."

The apprentice printer is generally taken at adult age to the press, growing lads not being strong enough for the labor.

He usually serves but a short apprenticeship.