

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

Reflections on Current Events by the Boarders.

"The world moves, and pretty fast at that," said Brown, "even if some people are too ignorant to understand it. While in England and America socialism is regarded with fear and distrust, and everything possible is done to retard its growth, the Government of Switzerland is quietly nationalizing the manufacture of matches, thus illustrating in a practical way the feasibility and advantage of State ownership and control of the tools of production. The existing match factories will be purchased at a cost of about two million dollars, and the annual profit is estimated at about \$150,000. Hereafter no private individual or corporation will be allowed to manufacture matches in Switzerland, thus giving the Government full control and a monopoly of this industry."

"It seems hard," replied Phil, "that any Government should prevent anybody from manufacturing matches or anything else, because a man should be absolutely free to make his living in any honest way; but if you will look closer into the workings of our industrial life you will find that since the advent of the factory system with its great subdivision of labor, this right to make a living how and where you like has been lost to the great mass of the people, and is only enjoyed by those who possess the necessary capital to purchase the complicated and expensive machinery necessary to carry on whatever industry they may select. For workmen to-day there is no such thing as liberty of contract, or even choice of occupation. As boys they were placed, not to trades of their choosing or for which they were specially adapted, but had to accept what opportunity offered, and as men they must labor, not at what they choose, but content themselves with that kind of work which is offered to them. No Swiss workingman will feel bad because the Government won't allow him to manufacture matches, because there, as here, the laborer has hardly enough money to buy whatever matches he may use, much less a match factory."

"But," said Gaskill, "unless the wages of those employed in the match industry are raised by the Government of Switzerland where does the laborer derive any benefit by the nationalization of that industry? Clearly, if he receives no more pay and his hours of labor are not shortened, he will be no better off now than formerly, the only difference being that, instead of working for a private individual or corporation, he will now have the privilege of slaving for the Government; this, to me, seems a distinction without a difference."

"Yet it will make all the difference in the world," said Phil, "even if he don't receive a single cent more in wages or if his hours of labor are as long as before. With the control of the match industry in private hands the profits accruing from his labor flow into the pockets of private individuals and are lost to him forever, but with the ownership and control centered in the Government these profits find their way into the public treasury for the benefit of the whole nation, of which he is one. And whether these profits are expended on him directly, by the erection of sanitary and well-appointed dwellings for himself and his family, as will most likely be the case, or whether they are expended in public works or furthering education, or whether they will be used as a revenue for administrative purposes of the commonwealth, he must of necessity receive his share either in his home or his children's school, or else in a reduction of taxation made possible by the profits accruing from his labor. He will get back something, where in the past he received nothing. Then, again, with this industry throughout the land under one

control it will be possible to regulate it in such a manner as to meet the requirements of the trade, and prevent men from the necessity of working fourteen or sixteen hours during one part of the year and working half time or walking around idle for the remainder. The productive capacity of all the factories will be known to a box, and a twelve month's experience will enable the department to correctly estimate the amount of matches that will be required on an average during the year, and with this information for a guide it will be an easy matter to so regulate the number of employees and hours of labor as to provide constant and steady employment all the year round for all who are engaged in that industry. Whether this would be a boon to the Swiss workingman or not I leave those to answer who can most appreciate it. The large number of our people who at this time of the year either walk our streets in enforced idleness or who must content themselves with half time and scant fare—ask them."

"It amounts to this," said Brown, "that as long as private individuals and corporations are allowed to own natural opportunities and the tools of production, the disinherited, the workers, will have to be content with the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table; nationalize them, as the Swiss Republic is doing, and there will be none so poor but will derive the full benefit of advancing civilization. May the men who inaugurated this greatest of reforms in the smallest but most democratic Republic of this world thrive and prosper, and may their undertaking prove successful beyond their expectations, for that act is the first step towards the establishment of a Government in which an injury to one shall be the concern of all."

BILL BLADES.

Tariff Pointers.

In discussing the tariff question don't forget:

1. That all the basis of wealth rests in land and labor.
2. That the people of this country cannot consume more than about one-half of the bread-stuff raised in the United States.
3. That there can be no export of the products of this country to foreign countries without importing equal value of the products of other countries.
4. That foreign money is not money in this country; it's simply merchandise.
5. That England will not buy a cargo of wheat from this country unless we will take in return the value of that cargo in English products.
6. That a tariff that throws out of employment the "pauper labor" of Europe will not prevent the aforesaid "pauper labor" from coming to this country and working for the same "pauper wages" that they did in Europe.
7. That a high tariff enables the protected manufacturer to pay high wages, but does not compel him to. He has the benefit of free trade labor every time.
8. That the population to the square mile in Belgium is 451, in England, 389; Italy, 237; Germany, 193; United States, 11. That is the reason why wages are higher in this country.—The People, Scranton, Penn.

Fine Spun Quartz.

"People commonly speak of a hair as representing the utmost conceivable fineness," said a physicist to a writer in the Washington Star, "but a copper wire can be spun much finer, so that its diameter will be little more than one thousandth of an inch."

"With spun glass you can even excel the copper wire in point of thinness, making it one one-thousandth of an inch thick. However, silk fiber is finer by far than spun glass can be made. Each fiber of a silk cocoon is only one two-thousandth of an inch thick. "But suppose you want something finer than hair, or drawn copper, or spun glass, or silk fibre, you can get it by melting quartz under an oxygen blow pipe and pulling it out. So fine is the result obtainable that a length of quartz fiber can be thus procured many yards long and not more than one five-thousandth of an inch in thickness. Yet these are coarse beside others which you can get from the same material, which may be drawn out in a diameter that has been estimated at one millionth of an inch. Such threads can be made in this way, but they are invisible under the microscope of the highest power. You can get a notion of

their fineness when the fact is stated that an inch cube of quartz drawn out to this degree could go around the world 658 times. To put it otherwise, a grain of sand, barely large enough to be visible to the naked eye, would make 1,000 miles of thread. The finest of such fibers is stronger in proportion to its thickness than the best quality of bar steel.

"Such minute figures, however, cannot be dealt with comprehension. Suppose that you draw your quartz fibers to the thickness of one fifteen-thousandth part of an inch. That is comparatively coarse, but, if you were to take 100 of them and twist them into a bundle you would produce a cable of the diameter of a single silk worm's thread. I do not mean the silk for sewing that is wound upon a reel, for that is composed of an enormous number of such threads, but of the fiber as it is wound from the cocoon."

"It is an interesting experiment to make imitation spider webs from these quartz fibers. The thing is to do, and it is readily possible to coax a spider from the real web to the false one by the buzzing of a fly. It is not readily practicable to make a fly buzz just so as to produce the result aimed at, but the object in view is accomplished in a moment by making an ordinary tuning fork buzz against the web. Immediately the spider jumps for the imaginary fly, and your purpose is accomplished. Unfortunately, Mistress Arachnid is not able to climb about without great difficulty upon the artificial web, because it is so slippery. The web will not catch flies either, for the reason that it is not sticky, as is that made by a spider; but you can make it sticky by stroking the quartz fibers lightly with a straw, wet with castor oil, and then the web will capture flies like a real one."

"If you will examine such fibers under a microscope, you will observe that they exhibit the most beautiful coloring. You can make bubbles out of the quartz, too, which have all the perfection of form and rainbow tinting that is possessed by the soap bubbles blown with a pipe."

The Year's Strikes.

There are at present but very few serious disputes pending between the employers and workmen in the United States, but the showing for the past year is quite large. According to recent statistics there were during the last fiscal year throughout the country 6,258 strikes in 170 trades. Of these 5,586 were successful, 169 were compromised, 465 were unsuccessful, 58 are pending. Number of persons engaged in strikes, 93,984. Number refused work after strike, 5,049. Amount lost in wages, \$1,398,164.32. Amount expended for relief of strikers, \$131,518.65. Estimated gain in wages for one year, \$3,122,883.10. Loss to employers from all causes, \$481,524.42. Expensive as those figures show those disputes to have been to both sides the results show, after all, a large margin of gain to the workmen, and those gains naturally tend to advance wage rates in a much larger circle than that of the workmen immediately involved in the strikes. They show also that the general tendency of wages has been upward.

A Glasgow Bell.

Probably the longest inscription on any bell in the country is that which J. S. Hadden takes from the bell in Glasgow Cathedral. It is dated 1790, and is as follows: "In the year of grace 1594 Marcus Knox, a merchant in Glasgow, zealous for the interests of the reformed religion, caused me to be fabricated in Holland for the use of his fellow-citizens in Glasgow, and placed me with solemnity in the tower of their cathedral. My function was announced by the impress on my bosom—'Ye who hear me come to learn of holy doctrine;' and I was taught to proclaim the hours of unheeded time. One hundred and ninety-five years had sounded their awful warnings when I was broken by the hands of inconsiderate and unskilful men. In the year 1790 I was cast into the furnace, refounded at London, and returned to my sacred vocation. Reader! thou shalt also know a resurrection—may it be unto eternal life."—London News.

Old Watches.

Some old watches have considerable value and some have very little. In the first category are watches with hog's bristles for regulating the vibrations, egg watches, all watches with one hand, with or without ornamentations; watches without balance springs and without regulating arrangements, those with perforated cases, those with finely chased cases, if the chasing is distinct; enamelled gold watches of fine workmanship, watches of wood or ivory or with iron or porcelain cases, and nearly all watches with peculiar movements. Old watches of little value are those that have chased cases, the figures of which are worn off, or, if well preserved, are of inferior workmanship; painted pinchbeck cases, cases of four-colored gold layers with ordinary designs, and painted dials that display poor workmanship. Watches with figures striking on bells are of little value.

One of Nature's Freaks.

Ezekiel Eads, who died in Greene county, N. Y., in the spring of 1885, was surely a fit subject for a dime museum, even though he never descended to that level. Strictly speaking, Eads was in several respects a most remarkable creature. He was born without ears, not even having apertures where his ears should have been. His deformity, sad as it was, may be said to have been partially alleviated by the curious construction of the inner portion of his head, which enabled him to hear common conversation through his mouth. When addressed he would instantly open his mouth and readily give answers to interrogations put

to him in an ordinary tone of voice. But Ezekiel's lack of ears was not his only lack of distinction. He had a heavy crop of black hair spotted with white, the spots themselves being in the exact shape of human ears, feet, hands, etc. When he was quite a small baby it was noticed that his black hair was interspersed with oddly shaped spots of white, which, however, did not take on their distinctive spots until after he had passed the age of 15.

When Mr. Eads died he left one son aged 41, whose hair was as black as a coal, not a single gray hair being discernible, and another son, 12 years of age, whose hair was as gray as that of a man of 70.—St. Louis Republican.

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