

A NEW PHASE OF THE EIGHT HOUR LAW.

ATTORNEY General Evarts has given his long pending decision respecting the construction or meaning of the Eight-Hour Law, adopted by Congress on the 25th of June last. The terms of the law simply made eight hours a legal day's work for mechanics and others in the employment of the United States Government. The labor of the employees was reduced from ten to eight hours, and nothing was said about the rate of wages. The inference was that Congress intended that no reduction of wages should take place, and that as much money should be paid for eight hours labor as had heretofore been paid for ten hours work.

In the absence of specific legislation upon the subject, the question was raised by the United States officials as to their authority to pay ten hours wages for eight hours labor. A former act of Congress had provided that mechanics in the employment of the government should receive the same rate of wages paid by private employers and manufacturers in the vicinity. As this law was not repealed it appeared to conflict with the new eight hours bill, and the question was therefore submitted to the Attorney General and pending his decision the workmen received only eight hours pay for eight hours work.

Mr. Evarts' opinion is marked by careful study and research. In effect he decides that it was not the intention of Congress to pay more wages for labor than was paid for the same amount of work in neighboring private establishments. If the workman can perform as much work for the government in eight hours as he formerly performed in ten hours, then he will get ten hours pay—if not then he gets only eight hours pay. The government inspectors and superintendents respectively, are to be the judges of the quality and quantity of the work, and the rates of wages to which the workmen are entitled.

This is manifestly a common sense view of the law. It places the eight-hour man exactly in the position assigned them by their so-called friends and advocates in and out of Congress. The theory of the eight-hour champions was that a workman having 16 hours out of the 24 for physical and mental relaxation and recuperation, would be able to perform as much work and do it as well if not better than if he were compelled to labor 10 or 12 hours. It was upon this plea that the law was passed. Congress took the workmen at their word. If they can really perform as much work in eight hours as in ten then they will get ten hours pay. The government officials are to be judges. They are unbiased, have no pecuniary interests at stake and may be relied upon to pass an impartial opinion. There never was a fairer field for establishing the merits of any cause. If the results are favorable to the eight-hour theory an important point will be settled. Employers all over the United States and throughout the world will hasten to abridge the hours of labor of their workmen, and save the extra wear and tear and expense of machinery and motive power. To the workman the boon will be equally advantageous, as it will diminish the hours of toil.—*N. Y. Bulletin.*

ABOUT STRIKES.

THE question of the equity and the utility of "strikes" may still be an open one. The antagonism of labor and capital results partly from human selfishness, but in a great degree we think from a misunderstanding of each other's motives, which circumstances and errors have created between the employer and the employed. The former cannot or will not explain his affairs to his workmen, the latter, acting, as he believes, in self defence is too apt to forget that capital as well as labor has its rights. The natural remedy for this evident evil, we think, in that union of capital and labor which is known as the co-operative method—a plan which, if it could only be pushed into wide activity, would render "strikes" as obsolete as waging war with bows and arrows, or travelling by stage-coaches. Meanwhile, as the struggle goes on, it should be understood that nothing is permanently gained on either side by the adoption of unfair and violent expedients. Here, for instance, has been a "strike" by the cigar-makers of Westfield, Mass., which, if the facts are correctly reported is entirely indefensible. A certain firm employed a widow the workmen demanded that she should be discharged; the firm refused and the hands all turned out. If the statement of their motive for this course be a true one, there is nothing to be said for them—they have simply acted in a wicked, selfish, and ungentlemanly way. But their subsequent proceedings were still less to be extenuated. They had a right to say that they would not work for Harrison and Carpenter at least they had a legal, if not a moral right. But where did they get authority to say that others, if they pleased, should not labor for this firm? Harrison and Carpenter hire another set of hands; they are assaulted and forced by violence into involuntary idleness. The clerk of the firm is mobbed in the streets. If this method of intimidation and brute force is a sound and just one, there is no reason in the world why the strikers should not burn the cigar factory and bludgeon its proprietors. Do workmen suppose that they gain anything by such shameful and tyrannical conduct? On the other hand, cannot they see that it would irrevocably damage the very best of causes? Here are two cigar-makers, A and B. The first is willing to make cigars for so many shillings per hundred and has no objection to working in the same establishment with female operatives. But B says to A: "You shall not make cigars for so much per hundred, and you shall not work for any manufacturer who employs women." "I will!" says A. "And I will break your head if you do," says B; while C, and D, and E, standing about cheer Mr. B. and promise to assist if necessary in the persuasive assault.

Who are the tyrants now? The "bosses" or the "strikers"?

Yet it is by such maladroit manoeuvres that almost every effort on the part of those laboring for wages to increase their incomes has been spoiled. Society does not love violence—why should it, since peace and order are the condition of its existence? The cause of the workman becomes more and more unpopular, the employer little by little strengthened, and finally the operative goes back to his work in a worse condition than before. It is an old, old story—how many more repetitions of it shall we be compelled to listen to?—*N. Y. Tribune.*

WOOD PRESERVING.

A COMMITTEE of gentlemen visited Jersey City yesterday to inspect a process for preserving wood, patented by Mr. Louis S. Robbins. The right to the invention has been purchased by the National Patent Wood Preserving Company, of which Mr. J. Richard Barret is President, and Mr. Henry Steers, of this city, is Vice-President. Its application will evidently form a new era in wood manufacture, for, in addition to the preserving qualities engendered, the method insures the wood against cracking, shrinking, warping or chipping, and renders it far less liable to break than in the original state. The plan is simple. The wood is placed in an iron chamber, connected by pipes with an iron still, in which coal tar is placed. The coal tar is distilled by heat, and the naphtha vapor is passed into the wood receiving chamber, at a temperature of from 250 to 300 degrees. As this far exceeds the temperature of boiling water, vapor from the still penetrates the wood, coagulates the albumen of the sap, and expels both air and moisture. The pores of the wood, being expanded and rendered void, the heat under the still is increased to nearly 400 degrees, and at this temperature the vapor of creosote, or carbolic acid, is generated, and passes into the chamber. The wood thus becomes thoroughly permeated by this subtle element. Creosote is a powerful anti-septic, and will effectually prevent fermentation or putrefaction. It cures the wood as it cures smoked hams and tongues, being a component part of the smoke. It is not sufficient, however, merely to drive out the moisture and coagulate the albumen of the wood. The fibre must be protected. By increasing the heat under the still to nearly 600 degrees, the vapors of the heavy oils of coal tar are carried into the chamber. The wood is thus subjected to a third bath in the vapor of oils. This condenses in the wood, permeates thoroughly and furnishes to the fibrous portion of it complete protection against atmospheric moisture.

There is no branch of wood manufacture in which this new process is not desirable; but more especially is it needed for wood exposed to the action of water or earth as that of ships, piers or fence posts. The cost of railroad ties is becoming a very serious item of expense. The new process will preserve them for an indefinite period. A similar system, though inferior, has been applied to them for a considerable period in England, ties as well as piles, that have been in use there 25 years, remain as fresh as any newly sawn lumber.—*N. Y. Mail.*

Foreign Exports of Petroleum from the United States, January 1st to November 27th

From—	1868.	1867.
Boston	2,276,586	2,127,935
Philadelphia	85,637,313	26,495,097
Baltimore	2,419,669	1,312,767
Portland	683,116	800
New York	60,102,807	22,959,247
Total gallons	91,076,607	69,786,858

Corresponding period 1867 gallons	60,344,779
Do	23,288,228

Receipts at New York, Jan 1 to Nov 27, 1868	864,024
Do	1,167,723

DANGER FROM BOILING THE EARTH.—We are not aware that science has made the least approach to even a probable account of these phenomena. All we know for certain is that there exist the materials for almost any conceivable disturbance below our feet. There is the fire below, the water above, and the combustible matter and imprisoned gases between. Magnetism also reveals other forces and other currents pervading the solid globe. It is known what effect the abstraction of water by an artesian well has on the whole stratum from which the supply is drawn, and here are we digging out of the earth millions of tons of coal, carrying it off and dissipating it in the atmosphere. That must here and there affect the natural balance of material, diminishing the pressure here, increasing it there, and making new settlements, or faults, in the rock we stand upon. That may seem but a trifling matter, but we may one day find the dreaded exhaustion of our coal fields anticipated by catastrophes of a more sudden and violent nature. Man is now claiming to be master of the climate. He can open or close the windows of heaven as he lists, by making the surface a forest or a desert. Perhaps he may find that he has shaken the earth, whether he willed it or not, whether harmlessly or not.—It will take ages to show.

CATTLE PANIC IN ORANGE COUNTY.—The Newburgh (N. Y.) Journal says that on Saturday last Dr. Monfort of Newburgh, resident Cattle Commissioner, went to Warwick on the summons of Mr. Duse, owner of that town, among whose dairy cows a deadly disease had broken out, supposed to be the dreaded Spanish or Texas cattle fever. Mr. Lunsbury, dairy numbers eighteen cows. On Thursday last they were turned into a corn-field on his farm, and on Friday one of the animals was attacked with the symptoms of disease, dying in a few hours after being taken between Thursday and Saturday no less than six out of the eighteen had died. Dr. Monfort made a post mortem examination of several of the animals, but found no symptoms of the Texas or any other disease, the organs all being in an apparently healthy condition, the brain only being slightly congested. Three of the animals became mad before succumbing to the disorder. The symptoms indicated corn-brood-spinal disturbance, and it is supposed that the cows found in the corn field some poisonous substance of which they partook freely—possibly corn smut—of which there was a good deal there.

FIRE-DAMP.—The Paris Academy of Sciences reports favourably on an ingenious invention of M. Delaunier, for preventing many of the accidents now caused by fire-damp. There is a copper conductor placed through the mine in all directions. This conductor is broken at intervals by the interposition of a very fine gold wire soldered to the copper. The gold wire is surrounded by flowers of sulphur, which ignites easily. Strong currents of electricity passed through the conductor makes the gold wire red-hot, igniting the sulphur, and of course flaming the noxious gases; so that if any are present in the mine before the working hours commence, timely notice may be received, the gases being at the same time destroyed, and dangerous accumulations of fire-damp prevented. It is unnecessary to point out the carelessness of all connected with mines. Can, then, there be any security that the flowers of sulphur will be renewed daily?

THE DRY GOODS CLERKS.—It makes a vast difference where one goes "shopping," so far as comfort is concerned. At least so say the ladies, and an occasional experienced connoisseur us that we are right. There are stores on Broadway that some ladies will never enter, simply because of the coarseness and impertinence of the clerks. And there are stores that get one-half their trade from the fact that their clerks are gentlemen. To be polite a clerk must not be oppressively attentive. And to be impudent he need not be grossly insulting. In the first place, most ladies like to be "let alone" when they are looking at goods. The everlasting chatter that some clerks keep up only injures their cause. Nor do ladies like to be chided about the store with constant inquiries as to what they will have. The gentlemanly clerk keeps his place, says little, and asks few questions. There are many such in our Broadway stores. But there are more who actually drive away trade by most impertinences and vulgar coarseness.—*Mail.*

CANADIAN OILS.—A few enterprising petroleum refiners are engaged in the laudable undertaking of improving the status in the English markets of Canadian refined and lubricating oils, which have hitherto not occupied the first rank. The London Free Press says:—

Mr. Keenleyside (of the firm of Spencer & Keenleyside) leaves by the steamship "Russia" on Wednesday next for Liverpool, with a view to introducing Canadian refined and lubricating oils to the English market. It has previously been mentioned that this firm, in conjunction with Mr. Samuel Peters & Co. have shipped to England about a thousand barrels of prime double distilled refined petroleum, being the first shipment of a superior sample that has ever been made from Canada. The oil is first-class, being white, free from much odor, of the high-fire test, and equal to the American standard white. A sample of twenty-five barrels of lubricating oil has been forwarded via New York. It is with a view to place the shipment on the English market that Mr. Keenleyside is making the journey, and the petroleum interests of Ontario will be very much influenced by the success attending this venture.

NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Traffic receipts for week ending Nov. 21, 1868.

Passengers	\$ 3,694 64
Freight	6,293 61
Mails and sundries	218 65
Total	\$ 9,196 79
Corresponding week, 1867	8,241 73
Increase	\$ 954 97

GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

Traffic for the week ending Nov. 13, 1868.

Passengers	\$23,229 72
Freight and live stock	41,620 50
Mails and sundries	1,552 09
Total receipts for week	\$76,402 30
Corresponding week, 1867	78,163 93
Decrease	\$ 1,761 63