

THE RUSSIAN TOILER.

Seridom Outdone—Long Hours—Low Wages.

A report on Russian wages and hours of labor, presented to Parliament, appears in a recent issue of the Board of Trade Journal. From observations extending over 1214 manufacturing establishments it appears that the hours of labor vary from six to twenty per day. In one or two special cases uninterrupted work continues for 24 hours. The long hours are chiefy in establishments of primitive production, and belong to employers who are ignorant, or profess to be ignorant, of modern technical development. It is remarkable that in the same branches of industry where the same market price is realized a difference occurs of one to eleven hours.

The exceptional cases where work is carried on from 12 to 20 hours are few, as in a very large majority of cases (80 per cent.) the hours of labor are 12 and under.

Manufactories with 12 hours' daily labor number 36 per cent.; with eight hours, 1.6 per cent.; with seven hours, 0.2 per cent., so that an average of 12 hours' daily may fairly be assumed as the normal working time throughout Russian industrial establishments.

By the law of 1885 children are not allowed to work before the age of 12 years, and up to 15 years must not work more than 8 hours a day, or more than 4 at a stretch. In special circumstances and if the health is not injured, they may work 5 consecutive hours. Children work eight hours in 60 per cent. of the factories visited by the chief Inspector, seven hours in 9.1 per cent., six hours in 21 per cent., and for less than that time 10.2 per cent. Owing to the strict regulations which have come into force respecting the labor of women and children, night work is at the present moment tending to disappear, but in mines more than half the men are employed in underground work at night preparing coal for removal in the daytime. By the law of 1890 children may work for 9 hours, but not for more than 4 1/2 at a time. This is arranged so that their hours shall coincide with those of adults. The following are the hours in the majority of the cloth works of Moscow:

Day work begins at 4.30 in the morning and lasts till 7 o'clock; half an hour is then allowed for breakfast, after which it recommences at 8.30 and continues till 12.30, and then with an interval of an hour for dinner is carried on till 8 o'clock in the evening.

Night shifts begin at 8 o'clock in the evening and go on until 4.30 in the morning, comprising a period therefore of 8 1/2 hours, consecutive work; 3 1/2 hours are then allowed for rest, which, with the interruption of work for half an hour from 8 o'clock to 8.30, continues until 12.30, when work is again carried on for an hour.

M. Yanguel severely criticises this system of distributing work on the ground that there is no possibility for the workman to recover his strength. He only gets in this manner 3 1/2 hours sleep, and that only on the supposition that the lodging is close at hand. His rest for half an hour is also liable to be disturbed for the purpose of attending to the machinery; the short time he can then devote to sleep is undoubtedly a very severe tax on his recuperative powers.

Still harder are the conditions of labor in dye works. The day shift begins at 4 o'clock and lasts until 12 o'clock (that is eight hours without any interval for rest), and continues from 1.45 p. m. to 8 p. m., in all 14 1/2 hours, with but 1 3/4 during the day for food and repose.

The night shifts begin at 8 o'clock in the evening and work until 4 o'clock in the morning; then comes an interval of eight hours of cessation of work, after which labor is continued from 12 o'clock to 1.45, and from 4 o'clock till 7 o'clock—in all 12 3/4 hours.

There is little importation of foreign labor, the low rate of wages and standard of conduct preventing any foreigners coming to Russia. Some places employ a few foreign workmen as foremen and specialists from England, Germany and France, but owing to the great cost and expense their services are dispensed with as soon as they have effected the purpose for which they came. Whereas a Russian receives 84 roubles for a certain class of work, the German requires 228r. Truck payment of any kind is strictly forbidden by the law. In rare cases a bonus is added to the wages for special merit.

If a stoppage occurs through fire, floods, etc., or any other similar calamity, the law compels the workman to remain at the factory for a period of three days, during which he is not entitled to receive any wages from his employer, and it is only on the termination of these three days that the contract is considered to be annulled, and he is allowed to demand the wages which are due to him up to the time when work ceased. Any stoppage occurring through his fault or neglect is punished by the infliction of a fine.

The Inspector agrees that wages are extremely low, too low to allow of any savings being made. The wage statistics given relate to the cotton trade only. The Inspector finds

that while English workers are employed 10 hours and the Russian 12, the English spinner gets 70 roubles a month, and the Russian 19 1/2 or £7 as compared with £1 10s. 6d. This calculation is based upon the calculation of the rouble as worth 2s. If, however, the par value of the rouble be taken as 38d., the English spinner still has a decided advantage, as he earns 43r. 75c. to the Russians 19 1/2.

Steam as an Agent in Causing the Spread of Diphtheria.

In a discussion on diphtheria published in the British Medical Journal for September 19, 1891, Dr. Russell cited several instances in which steam had seemed to be an active factor in the propagation of the disease. Hot water and steam from a brewery were introduced into some old cesspools and evidently wakened into activity germs which, if undisturbed, would have remained dormant. An epidemic of diphtheria soon developed in the vicinity, and was not checked until the steam was turned into other channels, when it quickly ceased. If, as we now believe, the bacillus of diphtheria develops with special rapidity in the presence of warmth and moisture and absence of light, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the introduction of hot water or steam into cesspools or sewers may be a most dangerous procedure. The maintaining of a considerable degree of heat in sewers can certainly not be wise from a hygienic point of view. Yet this condition prevails largely in New York, where sewers and water pipes are in places kept at a continuous high temperature by the close proximity of the pipes of the steam heating companies. No more favorable medium for the culture of micro-organisms could be found than warm sewage. Given an imperfect trap and a vulnerable mucous membrane, and an attack of diphtheria is almost assured.

Soda Manufacture in Denmark.

The erection of several soda manufactories has been decided upon in the Danish provinces, says Industries. The contemplated manufacture is that of crystallized and American soda. It is not many years ago that there was only one soda manufactory in Denmark, and at that time a considerable amount of English crystallized soda was imported into Denmark. A change then took place in the soda manufacture; two factories were erected in Copenhagen, one in Elsinore and one in Odense. The import of English soda gradually ceased, and at the same time the home production has grown so as to be undoubtedly sufficient for the home consumption, the two largest factories producing 20,000,000 pounds annually. In addition to this a Holstein manufactory keeps down the prices by a threatening competition. Should the three contemplated new manufactories become a reality, there will be some difficulty in disposing of the surplus. In Sweden some manufactories have of late years been erected at Malmo and Helsingborg, and the German manufacturers are protected by tariff; so the two nearest markets are virtually closed.

A Simple Relief For Lung Trouble.

It has long been known that pine needle pillows would alleviate persons afflicted with lung troubles, and a Florida editor relates an incident in support of the fact, as follows: During a visit to the home of a most estimable lady living on Indian river, this editor was told of a discovery that had been made which may prove a boon to sufferers from lung or bronchial troubles. This lady having heard that there was peculiar virtue in a pillow made from pile straw, and having none of that material at hand, made one from soft pine shavings, and had the pleasure of noting immediate benefit. Soon all the members of the household had pine shaving pillows, and it was noticed that all coughs, asthmatic or bronchial troubles abated at once after sleeping a few nights on these pillows. An invalid suffering from lung trouble derived much benefit from sleeping upon a mattress made from pine shavings. The material is cheap, and the Christian at Work says it makes a very pleasant and comfortable mattress, the odor permeating the entire room and absorbing or dispelling all unpleasant odors.

Action of Oils on Metals.

Experiments have recently been made to determine what fixed oils are best adapted for mixing the mineral oils for lubricating purposes. The results showed that mineral lubricating oil has, on the whole, the least action on all the metals, sperm oil the most. For lubricating journals of heavy machinery, either rape or sperm oil is said to be the best to use in mixture with mineral oil, as they have the least effect on brass and iron, which two metals generally constitute the bearing surfaces of an engine. Tallow oil should be used as little as possible, as it has a considerable effect on iron.

Manchester Chamber of Commerce has declared in favor of bi-metallism.

THE SOCIALIST CATECHISM.

THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM.

Q. What is wealth?
A. Everything that supplies the wants of man, and ministers in any way to his comfort and enjoyment.

Q. Whence is wealth derived?
A. From labor usefully employed upon natural objects.

Q. Give instances of labor usefully employed?
A. Ploughing, sowing, spinning, weaving, &c., &c.

Q. Give instances of useless employment of labor?
A. Digging a pit for the purpose of filling it up again; making a road that leads nowhere; supporting people in absolute idleness by presenting them with food and clothing for doing nothing, &c., &c.

Q. What do we mean when we say that an article has value?
A. That it is useful or agreeable to human beings.

Q. When is an article said to have an "exchange value" in addition to its usefulness or "use value"?
A. When it embodies a certain amount of generally useful labor.

Q. Are the two sorts of value ever identical?
A. They cannot be compared at all.

Q. Explain by an instance what you mean by this?
A. The hunger of a starving man who enters a baker's shop does not affect the exchange-value of a loaf, which is measured by the amount of labor which has been expended in making and baking it.

Q. What is its use-value to him?
A. Its use-value is infinitely great, as it is a question of life and death with him to obtain it.

Q. What is its use-value to another man?
A. Its use value is nothing at all to a turtle-fed alderman, sick already with excessive eating; but its exchange-value remains the same in all cases.

Q. Is there no exception to this rule?
A. If the baker has a monopoly of baking, and no other loaves are anywhere obtainable, he can charge a much higher price than the amount of his expended labor entitles him to demand.

Q. Is this often done?
A. Every monopolist does it, as a matter of course.

Q. Who are the chief monopolists?
A. There are two great classes. The landlords monopolize the land, and the capitalists the machinery.

Q. What is capital?
A. Capital is the result of past labor devoted to present production—machinery and factories, for example.

Q. How does the landlord secure his profit?
A. By extorting from the laborer a share of all that he produces, under threat of excluding him from the land.

Q. How does the capitalist act?
A. He extorts from those laborers who are excluded from the land a share of all that they produce, under threat of withholding from them the implements of production, and thus refusing to let them work at all.

Q. On what terms does the capitalist allow laborers to work?
A. The capitalist agrees to return to them as wages about a quarter of what they have produced by their work, keeping the remaining three-quarters for himself and his class.

Q. What is this system called?
A. The capitalist system.

Q. What is it that regulates the amount returned to the laborer?
A. The amount that is necessary to keep him and his family alive.

Q. Why does the capitalist care to keep him alive?
A. Because capital without labor is helpless.

Q. How is this amount settled?
A. By competition among the laborers, and the higgling of the labor market.

Q. Is it invariable?
A. It varies with all the variations of trade and locality, and the different degrees of skill of the different laborers, but it constantly tends to a bare subsistence for the laborers.

Q. By what name is this law known?
A. The iron law of wages.

Q. How can it be proved?
A. By reckoning up the amount of food and clothing consumed by those who produce them.

Q. Is there any independent testimony to its truth?
A. The witness of all doctors who have studied the subject.

Q. What evidence do they give upon it?
A. They declare that diseases arising from insufficient nourishment are constantly present throughout the laboring classes, and that "the poor are permanently afflicted with one disease—starvation."

Q. What remedy for this do Socialists propose?
A. Simply that the laboring classes should become their own employers.

Q. What effect would this have?
A. The classes who live in idleness on the fruits of the labor of other people would be improved off the face of the earth, every one being obliged to take his share of honest work.

Q. On what compulsion?
A. The alternative of starvation would stare them in the face, as soon as the laborers ceased to supply them gratis with food, clothing, shelter and luxuries.

Q. Are not the "upper classes" useful as organizers of labor?
A. Those who organize labor are always worthy of their hire, though the hire may be fixed too high at present; but it is only the absolutely idle, and those whose work, however hard it may be, consists in perfecting and organizing the arrangements for plundering the laborers of their reward, who are simply the enemies of the workers.

Q. Are shareholders in companies, for instance, useful in organizing labor?
A. As a rule they employ others to organize labor, and the work done by the company would go on just as well if the shareholders disappeared.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Robert Ingersoll Brown—I've gwine to prove to yo' de fallacy ob yo' remarks. Yo' done say dat de Lawd made every animal an' insect for some use. Now, yo' jess tell me what use am de polecat, sah? Brother Briggs—De polecat, sah, has his strong points, sah.

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