

from all appearances there is still a good opportunity for a further decrease. In years to come, these children will take the place of the older mill workers, of whom I am one, and around me now I see the causes of ignorance among the mill operatives of the future.

Two-thirds of the help are either French-Canadian or Polish. The most of the French-Canadians can make themselves understood to English-speaking people; I speak guardedly now, as I do not wish to insult the English language, and so refrain from the direct statement that they can speak English. Very few of the Poles can talk any English at all. The overseer of the card room is a young man who is holding down his first position as foreman. He has the usual amount of theoretical knowledge, and the years to come will improve him and also, let us hope, some of his theories. Of the second hand, I will say that he is the poorest fixer that I ever saw, and I have seen some poor ones in my time, too. The help appear very kind and obliging to one another.

After I had worked about three months in this mill, a man asked me if I was an old maid or a married woman. I enjoyed the laugh, which was certainly at my expense, as much as the rest, but I thought if there is any truth in the reincarnation of the spirit, Li Hung Chang must have evaded the Chinese exclusion act by appearing in the person of this Yankee.

The pay in this room averages \$6.50, perhaps \$7 per week. It is supposed to be reckoned by the piece. No list is shown, as is the custom in most mills where there is piece work. The hanks are taken down once a week and you get your pay once a week. I soon found out that we were not supposed to know enough to watch the clock ourselves.

Most of the great flock of children I have mentioned, work in the spinning room. I wonder if the foreman of that room has a diploma from the kindergarten. Some of the little tots were quite proud of the fact that they could run three or four sides, although one little girl told me that somebody, motioning to a little boy standing near, was running six sides. I asked how old he was. She replied "fifteen."

Upon my expressing some doubt, she said, "Well he ain't fifteen yet, but he soon will be. He is going after it."

In my opinion it will be two or three years before he gets it.

I was naturally interested in knowing the different overseers by sight, and so asked a little boy what kind of a looking man the boss weaver was. He replied, "Short, fat man; big chaw terbacker in his mouth."

This was brief, concise and accurate, for I had no difficulty in recognizing the man from the boy's description.

In the weave room a list of the cuts taken off by the weavers is shown. Some said that they can earn \$8 to \$9 per week; others cannot earn more than \$6 or \$7.

When I first arrived, I asked about the board at the corporation boarding house, and found that one wishing the privilege of a room alone must pay extra. Two tables were set, which again called for an extra to sit at the best table. The tenement houses are let at various prices, the amount being deducted each week. At the company's store, operatives can get trusted, but as one week's pay is held back, it can be seen that the debts contracted are fully secured, if indeed it may not be said that they are paid in advance. Go to an operative, and ask him about these mills, and the chances are, he will tell you that they are "on the bum," and yet there are many men and women who have been working here for years. One woman informed me that she had been here for twenty years. Still there are a great many changes

among the help and foremen, one room having had nine bosses inside of eighteen years.

Factory life, however, has its bright side if there is a good head to the department. I do not care how strict a boss is, if he is only a gentleman. Some, I am sorry to say, are not. Among the bright spots in the dreary monotony and grind of mill work are the little vacations, a new book, a chance to hear good music. These are small things, but are treasured by many of us.

The work is purely mechanical, and the tendency is for the hands to get into a rut in harmony with the steady, monotonous grind of the machinery. Still nature will out, and at the noon hour is often heard someone entertaining a group with a description of some place, a story or play, and not infrequently with a song. The voices are perhaps untrained, but the audience is not critical and the enjoyment of the music is equal to, if not exceeded by, that obtained listening to some noted prima donna at a cost of \$5 per ticket. —Speeder Tender in Textile World.

ELECTRIC DRYING OF TEXTILES.

Ordinary methods of drying by the direct use of the heat produced by the combustion of coal have many drawbacks. Among them are irregularities of temperature, and the possibility of burning the fabrics, the production of smoke and dust, and last, but not least, undue expense. The Chamber of Commerce at Lyons has tried with conspicuous success the use of electrical stoves for drying textiles, and has thereby got perfect safety and quicker drying at a cost considerably less than that incurred under the older systems.

Each stove consists of a cylinder of sheet iron, in the midst of which the fabric to be dried is suspended. This cylinder is surrounded by another, and the annular space between them contains the heating arrangement. This consists of tubes of copper, round each of which is wound a nickel steel wire, covered with asbestos, and carrying a current of sufficient strength to develop the necessary heat. The temperature in the interior cylinder is usually kept at about 120° C. To economize electricity as far as possible, two precautions have been taken. One is to prevent radiation from the stoves by suitable cleaning, and the other is to utilize the hot, moist air from the stoves for other heating purposes. For small installations the cost is somewhat greater than the older methods, but on a large scale, and especially if water power is available for generating the electricity, a considerable saving is effected.

SCOURING WOOL.

The evils which follow from an improper scouring of wool will harass the dyer for a long time; in fact, he will never feel safe from it until the goods are made up into clothing. As white, his wool will look dull and dingy, without that elasticity so characteristic of clean wool. If it is colored, trouble comes again in getting the shades right, having the wool made to look even, and the colors obtained as fast against soap as they should be. Then, as soon as the wool goes to the burr picker it fills up the burr cylinders and covers the screen with dirt, which ought to have been removed in the scouring. This goes on through the works, gumming-up the cards, causing trouble in the spinning, working bad in the loom, and last, but not least, in the mill, making it hard work for the finisher to get his cloth sweet and clean without dulling or destroying the colors in the goods. Even here the trouble has not ended, for after the goods have been sent to the merchant they may