

THOUSANDS WANT WORK

THE HARD TIMES IN THE STATES CLOSES MILLS.

Larsen Writes of 15000 People out of Work in Lowell Alone—How They Live and What They do to Pass the Time.

LOWELL, Aug. 29.—In this city over 20,000 people are operatives in the mills, and up to yesterday when one of the mills started up again, about 15,000 were out of employment.

The prospect is a little better now, but the business situation is not all that could be wished for by any means. Of the 20,000 mill operatives about 10,000 live a hand to mouth existence, and when the mills shut down they will be in a pretty bad fix. Hundreds of them live in corporation boarding houses, and life on the corporation is decidedly interesting. On the land owned by the mill corporations, long rows of monotonous brick houses were built with the mills, all owned by the company. There were boarding houses, to accommodate the employes in the mills, who must necessarily come from all parts of the country. In the early days of Lowell the operatives were chiefly the sons and daughters of New England farmers, and the corporation boarding houses were good places to live in.

The boarding house keepers pay a small rent but in return they have to board operatives, for a very small sum. A woman pays \$1.75 a week for board and room, and a man \$2.75. Then the boarding house keeper gets 30 cents extra from the mill company.

Now-a-days all kinds of people live on the corporation, all nationalities mixed up more or less, although there is all the difference in the world in the houses. Some are neat and clean and have an air of respectability about them, others are repulsive with dirty rooms, the wall paper torn and windows dirty, and screened by dirtier curtains; beds with an apology for a mattress, and pillows black as the floor, all of which is heated in winter by a little sheet iron stove. A good enough room, though, for the people who use it; for there are some horrible scenes enacted there. Most of the rooms have two beds, and I have seen the occupants of both, dead drunk surrounded by empty bottles, asleep with their boots on, men and women. Then in the same house one might find neat and well kept rooms and very respectable young men and women.

But around the corporation boarding houses, and there are over 70 of them in Lowell—the shabby ones are found in large numbers, and when the mills began to shut down a few weeks ago, the corporation boarding house keepers found themselves in an embarrassing position.

In boarding houses with 100 boarders, the number was cut down to 20 or 30, and hundreds were thrown upon the streets, yet the whereabouts of these people is a mystery. Around the corporation street all is quiet and no more people than usual seem to be on the streets; but out at Lakeview, a pleasure resort, about four miles from the city, crowds throng the grounds everyday, go sailing in the lake, dancing in the hall, wandering among the trees, seeing "Pinafore" at the summer theatre, bowling or on the flying horses. No signs of hard times there, but when the circus was in town this week, the bosses were besieged with applicants for work.

Saturday, a mill employing about 2,300 people, and which has been idle for four weeks posted a notice to the effect that work would not be resumed Monday as was expected, and that a week's notice would be given the operatives when the mill was ready to start. That announcement put a damper on the people, and the crowds at the pleasure resort was not so great the next day. The uncertainty still exists.

The river banks and the edges of the lakes hereabouts are all dotted with tents, bundles of people camping out during the enforced vacation, others go off in barges for the day, but on the beaches throughout the state, the crowds of former years are not to be seen.

Talking about pleasure resorts brings to mind the large number of people who wander around St. John on fine Sunday afternoons, with nothing to do, no where to go, and who finally walk "over the bridge," out to the cemetery, or some place, no matter where,—to kill time and get up a supply of "that tired feeling."

Lakeview, to which I referred a while ago, is a pretty spot on a lake about four miles from the city. Electrics run out there every seven minutes, the fare is ten cents each way, and the street railway owning the grounds, everything is to a large extent free. It is a place for the people and the people go there by the thousands every evening, Saturday afternoons, and Sundays. There is a free summer theatre, dance hall, mammoth restaurant, bowling alleys, boats and steam launches, the latter sailing to pretty groves with any number of swings, and picnic grounds on the other side of the lake. There are all the free sights of a pleasure resort, and the flying horses, the band concerts, everything to amuse the people.

The Gilbert Opera Company with Raymond Hitchcock, and little Bertolo the dancer, have been out there several weeks. St. John people will remember the Gilbert

company; also Hitchcock, who did not make a very great hit as a comedian in St. John. Bertolo was one of Rufus Somerby's attractions, but she has been dancing at the Palace theatre Boston, for nearly a year.

Dr. Mary Walker, who has been wearing trousers, a plug hat, and prince Albert coat for about 30 years, was also out there for a time, lecturing on the Almy murder trial. Mary is a freak from away back, but she makes as much money out of one suit of men's clothing, as Socvil, Fraser & Co. do with 100 suits.

St. John has prettier lakes and country places than any found this way, yet every city up here of any consequence has a pleasure resort on the line of the electric, and all make money. The Highland park project, which was killed by the fire of 1877, should prove a bonanza with electric cars running to it. R. G. LARSEN.

A LONDONER IN CHICAGO.

Describing a City of Fifth and Wicksteed. How Visitors are Entertained.

The first half of the six months during which the World's Fair is to run has now elapsed, and already the handwriting on the wall begins to foreshadow the ruin and desolation and besmirching of fair names that will follow it. The boom is burst and already the promoters are turning to rend one another. Who were these promoters? Not the well-known men who have permitted themselves to be used as figural heads. These are not the men who have seized upon the spoils; for that there has been plunder is admitted on nearly every hand. A day cannot be far distant when an indignant people will ask for an accounting, when the dirtiest of linen will be washed in public and when the scandals of the great Columbian Exposition of 1893 will cause honest and patriotic Americans to thrill with shame and indignation, as did France when the iniquities and corruption of Panama were revealed to the civilized world. So Chicago is concerned with the White City has proved a white elephant, and the citizens who looked to become suddenly rich are beginning to search for victims in their disappointment. Workingmen are specially disappointed, and are not backward in saying so. The Fair has done them no good, and they say they never intended to do so. It was intended to inflame Chicago capital and to pander to the ambition and vanity of a few rich people hungering for social distinction. The cost of living has gone up, wages are stationary, and work is scarcer than usual. The expected multitudes who were to flock to Chicago and pay toll from their pockets have not materialized, and a large proportion of those who have come are beats and loafers that have gone to swell that large section of the population who live upon their wits.

I heard the position from the point of view of the workingman put very vividly on the occasion of the departure of the Duke of Vergara from Chicago. Two horney-handed sons of toil, both evidently native-born Americans, were watching the Duke, as with silk hat in hand he lounged gracefully in his carriage. "I fear the Duke's touched by the kindness of the American people," said one of the men, alluding to something that had appeared by way of a valetidicty address in a morning paper. "Strikes me," answered his mate, "the American people have been touched by the Duke; and he's not the only one that's touching them at the present time over this d—d Exposition—imposition I call it."

The retail stores profess not to be doing average good business for the season of the year, large failures have taken place, and more are daily looked for. The great boom of 1893 that was to make Chicago the queen city of the west is dead, and now there is envy and hatred and weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and much abuse of foreign and Eastern intrigue and jealousy that never existed except in the heated imaginations of the Chicago people. English and New York journalists have been freely accused of belittling Chicago and the World's Fair from unworthy and corrupt motives, and honest criticism has been resented as malicious. Till I lived in Chicago it was always a mystery to me why the builders of the Tower of Babel were so severely dealt with. If the Tower of Babel people were like the people connected with the Jackson Park administration, the causes for the righteous wrath of Jehovah are no longer far to seek. It is a matter of great regret that most of the foreign journalists and many of the recent visitors have not been in America before the great World's Fair visit, and leave the country after a brief sojourn, thinking that they have seen something truly representative of the United States. As a man who loves this great republic, and who knows something from personal experience of most States in the Union, I hate to see my countrymen so return to their homes under the impression that in seeing Chicago they have seen America at her best. When one thinks of the beautiful cities, the quiet, comfortable villages and happy country homes that are scattered broadcast from Maine to the Pacific coast, it is exasperating, even to me, an alien, to think that this great seething cauldron of sin should be looked upon as representative of them all.

Chicago is a freak, an excrescence on the fair face of this great country. Many of those connected with the World's Fair in prominent positions and thus coming in contact with foreign visitors of distinction are in no sense of the term representative Americans; and while the legitimate and patriotic promoters may emerge ruined from the enterprise, these place hunters will drop off gorgeously with plunder. In the hands of these men that the entertainment of foreign visitors has principally rested; and, while money has been expended like water for this purpose, it has not always been spent in showing things that are pure and of good repute or for the honor of America. It is notorious that, as the highest form of entertainment, distinguished visitors have been taken to dens of inamy of the vilest description, where it has been pointed out to them with pride that nowhere else in the world can loathsome forms of vice be found in such devious perfection as in Chicago. A visitor who has not been the rounds of these abominable dens, white or black, is told that he has not seen "our city." For philanthropists, salvationists, and such good

people to visit these places is one thing; it is quite another for parties of well-dressed, well-wined men to issue from clubs and hotels under the cover of dark and seek them under official guidance. It is the last houses of Chicago, the gambling dens, and the saloons of the south side, that have grown rich in the last three months.

A distinguished writer said to me recently, on leaving to return to his wife and family in London: "I have been here six weeks. I have been asked to entertainments till I am sick of them, but no man has asked me to break bread in his family circle. Does such a thing exist in Chicago?" If it does, it is not much on evidence. The evils attending boarding house life in America for young folk have long had the attention of thoughtful people. But the evils attending "rooming" are infinitely worse in a city like Chicago. Young people engage a place to sleep in, and for the rest, day in, day out, all the world is before them. Is it any wonder that moral restraint is often thrown to the winds, and that young men and women, earning their living independently, live the life of the London quarter of Paris? From all over the country couples have come to Chicago united in what has been jestingly termed "World's Fair marriage"—that is, a contract of matrimony without ceremony limited to the term of the World's Fair, or a shorter specified period in which to visit it. It does not require even a Chicago divorce court to bring about the annulment of wedlock, and it is almost astonishing that the complaisant bureaucracy at Jackson Park have not established a department for World's Fair marriages with some near relative of a prominent official in charge and a liberal commission on all business transacted. Judging by the advertisements (some of them on the lowest description) that daily fill the columns of some of the papers, such a bureau would supply a much felt want—and "everything goes in Chicago." Nearly everything, from a man's strength and intelligence to a woman's respect and honor.

A well known European author remarked: "The best class of Chicago people are hospitable barbarians, the lower class are thugs." This was said by a keen and practical observer of men and manners who had no motive or desire to speak unkindly, but only to chronicle facts as he found them. The characteristic feature of the wealthy class is their lack of social knowledge, combined with extraordinary pretension. An illustration of this is to be found in the circumstance that at a breakfast given to royalty one gentleman very near the top of the social tree appeared in regular evening dress. Finding himself somewhat conspicuous, he buttoned his coat and turned up the collar, securing it with a pin, thereby making himself look supremely ridiculous. At a reception given to the Spanish Infanta at a private house on the shore of Lake Michigan the arrangements were ludicrous. A raised pen, carefully set off, with one solitary gold chair in it, had been erected at one end of the room, and into this the Princess was solemnly conducted. After sitting for a few minutes to be inspected, like some new type of hog, the little Spanish lady made a clean bolt of it out of her pen and fled to the conservatory, whence a sort of procession could be seen to induce her to emerge. The true story of this reception, which is very amusing, remains to be written, and the heart burnings resulting from it will remain for many a day. Life in Chicago is composed of working hours and sleeping hours. Food is gulped down at intervals in the working hours, and yet the amount of work performed is wholly incommensurate with the length of the hours. Chicagoans take pride in declaring themselves "hustlers." They don't do more work than people who work seven or eight hours a day, and have a Sunday half holiday.

Chicago men will seize you by the arm and hurry you along the street in the direction in which do not want to go. He will then waste about an hour telling you how busy he is and what a lot of money he is making; thereafter he will try to sell you something you don't want, and falling in this way, he will not only waste your time, but he considers the last part "good bye." Chicago hustlers don't work as a rule; they talk about it, and wait for people from the East and elsewhere to come and do it for them. John Ruskin in his "Fors Clavigera," somewhere away back in 1870, wrote that he would like to destroy the new town of Edinburgh, the houses of Parliament in England, the city of New York, and sundry other places that offended his too sensitive soul. Lord help Chicago if it can keep its name, I am much in the same mind as the Boston lady taken sick at a hotel, who declared that if she attempted to make a final resting place for her in Chicago her bones would start of their own accord and travel East.—[N. Y. Sun.

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