

THE TOILER

Official Organ of the Toronto District Labor Council. Published Weekly in the Interests of the Working Masses.

TORONTO, AUGUST 19, 1904

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INDUSTRIAL EUROPE SEEN THROUGH AMERICAN EYES

Lessons to be Learned from the Patient Toilers in the Black Forest of Baden, Germany.

By J. J. CLARKE, Proprietor of the Hotel Majestic.

Prichard, Baden, Aug. 12. I express a doubt in my last letter as to whether Germany was or was not an industrial nation, and quoted a couple of learned Freiburg professors, the word "industrial" having reference to manufacturing. Taking its exports of industrial products as a guide, particularly the export of steel, Germany looks to be an important factor in the trade of the world, and on the whole it is well to consider the nation in that light. But Germany's agricultural interests are also very large, and a visit to one section of the province of Baden, which is situated in the "Black Forest," shows what a strong grip the methods of mechanical Europe have on the people, especially since from any circumstances a community is withdrawn, and does not fully share in the advances of the industrial means of raising a livelihood. Prichard, Baden, is continually advising the people to get back to the land. He believes there is a real happiness and contentment to be obtained in cultivating the soil and living simple lives than in seeking amid the excitements and turmoils of the cities to pursue fame and fortune. However this may be, the peasants of the Black Forest are endeavoring in their own way to live simple lives, and are succeeding in getting out of life about as much happiness as falls to the lot of mankind.

What the Black Forest is. "Black Forest" has an ominous sound. It conjures up vast tracts of woods, with virgin soil and hills of swamp land. Disburse your mind of all this. The name has reference to the color of the foliage, it being generally of a dark hue. In fact, the Black Forest is one of the best kept agricultural districts in the world. But also its wooded sections are in greater proportion than in any other part of Germany. What makes the Black Forest of interest, industrially as well as in many other ways, is the fact that, besides being under strict government supervision in respect to its wealth of timber, its inhabitants have continued to exist after the manner of their forefathers for many generations, living well within themselves, following simple trades in connection with agriculture, and declining, as far as possible, to take "advantage" of the new methods civilization insists on elsewhere.

Not a tree can be cut in the Black Forest without permission of the Government, and when a section is depleted of timber, a commission decides what to do with the land, whether to replant it with trees or to give it up to agriculture. Thus the proportion between forest and land is maintained, whole sections being set out in trees as regularly planted as are hills of corn. Along the highways are publicly auctioned fruit trees. The crops are sold by auction at harvest time to the highest bidder. Nothing escapes the eyes of officials; nothing is permitted to go to waste. The faggots that, as limbs of trees, are tumbled into brush heaps in the United States and burned, are here assorted and tied into bundles and sold for fuel. The smallest twig has a value, the very leaves are collected and used for fertilizing purposes. So much for the natural products of the soil. The one thing is in both small and large holdings. The rich land-owners divide their possessions into small parcels and live off rents. But there are, I am told, a large number of small freeholds. However, I should judge that the land-ownership greatly preponderates in respect to the quantity of land held.

Primitive Ways of the People. The inhabitants of the Black Forest are of various origins, and as I tramped over the well-kept roads of a day or two ago, I was unable to tell the "color" from the "new" or one district from another, except by the styles of head-dresses worn by the women. Women cling to customs older than men, and today they take pride in showing their loyalty to their particular district by the way in which they dress. Hence the picturesque.

Though it was having time, the hum of no paper reached my ears, but I saw men with scythes, and some with sickles, cutting the grass, while in the villages, entering the "heating" of hammers on steel tubs of the "sharpening" process going on. This is done by sharpening the

cutting edge of the scythes, making it look something like a saw.

The scythe-maker desires to build a wagon to order. He goes to the forest, selects a tree, and gets a neighbor to help him cut it down. Of course he has taken only such a tree as the official decides is ripe to cut. Brought at last to his door, he commences the manipulation that results the log into boards, and axes and felles, and all the other parts that go to make a completed wagon. Every part of that vehicle, except the iron, will come out of that one tree. Day after day he toils, usually alone, keeping up his farm work meantime, until finally the wagon is completed—homest work, every bit of it, but, alas! costly, for matter how little the pay, as compared to the factory-made article. But he has had a joy in its production no money wage ever makes.

When a farmer kills his beef, he takes the hide to the local tanner, who will keep it for two years before he considers it fit for the shoemaker. But the time comes when the hide is leather, and the shoemaker is informed of the fact. Then come morning the shoemaker comes to the farmer's home with his kit of tools, and for the time being is one of the family. Every Kasper and every Johann is marched before him and measured, and the work of making shoes for the family begins. It may take a month more or less, but he sticks to his job until everyone is properly shod, when he is away to the next customer needing his services. It can be easily seen that the primitive shoemaker's prices are higher than those for shoes turned out at a city factory, but the satisfaction found in doing honest work to count for nothing.

Through the entire range of work in the Black Forest these primitive methods of manufacture prevail, though, as I said, reckless of expense, invade the precincts of the modern world. The local artisans are having a hard time holding their own. This is a rural community being united, in spite of its conservatism, with the outside world. Baden covers less than 7,000 square miles, of which 50 per cent. is mountainous.

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(By a Workingman.)

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ANOTHER SLOGAN. The products of the labor of the toilers for the capitalists, and as small a wage as possible for the toilers—Political economy.

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privilege and opportunity that is making the cash standard popular with the people.

IF. If the cash standard was not high enough for our country, church and school to be run on, it cannot be good enough for the workshop, factory store or farm.

MANHOOD. The toilers will never see industrial peace until manhood is made the standard in our industrial affairs instead of cash. When all men share in the products of their labor, men will be brother men and class distinctions will go on the scrap heap.

THE MINISTERS. If the ministers that talk so much about the gospel of Christ would place as much emphasis on "Love thy neighbor as thyself," as Christ did, there would be something doing in our churches.

THE TOILERS' GOSPEL. The toilers' gospel is co-operative labor, to own their own tools, health or products, and brotherhood of man; in other words, the products of the labor of the toiler for the toiler. This is Christ's golden rule in action.

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