

LABOR AND WAGES.

AMERICAN.

Bricklayers won a strike at Passaic, N. J. Bootblacks have organized in Muskegon. The Seamen's unions of America are federating.

Pressfeeders' Union of St. Paul has 78 members.

Six new unions of iron moulders were chartered last month.

Chinese control almost the entire shoe business in California.

Electrical Workers' Union of St. Paul is in a flourishing condition.

Indiana Federation of Labor calls upon all union men to keep out of the militia.

Hackmen of Chicago have the word union painted on each side of the driver's seat.

One of the guards sent to Homestead has sued the Pinkertons for \$20,000 damages.

Saddle and Harnessmakers' Union of St. Paul are on the boom and intend to keep on booming.

The Sheet Iron and Cornice Workers' International Association shows a total membership of 24,851.

The Central Labor Union and Building Trades Council of San Francisco are about to consolidate.

The Trades Council of Muskegon, Mich., is now composed of delegates from 16 unions and all are flourishing.

The broom makers and bookbinders of St. Louis, Mo., have organized unions and attached themselves to the Trades and Labor Union of that city.

A. C. Kerr & Co., one of the typothetae concerns of Pittsburg that refused to grant the printers' nine hour demand, have gone out of business.

At St. Paul, Minn., a State organization of all unions connected with the printing industry has been formed. Printers, pressmen, stereotypers, bookbinders and press-feeders were represented.

San Francisco's Labor Day parade will have an allegorical car, on which each union will be represented by a little girl in costume including the nature of the employment of such union and carrying a shield bearing its name.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners at the recent annual convention in St. Louis declared that members of the union should not handle Carnegie nails or work upon buildings where any Carnegie product is used.

The North Eastern switchmen's strike, which has been on since the 14th instant, took a serious turn on Tuesday night shortly before midnight, and terminated in four employees and one striker being shot. The trouble started from the dismissal of a night yardmaster.

The strike in the iron industries at Catawauqua, Pa., is ended. It has lasted over a year. The Amalgamated Association and the manufacturers have made a settlement. It will be remembered that ex-Superintendent Roberts, of the Phoenix Horse Shoe Works, had just put in operation a plant there when the strike took place, which ruined him and the company.

The iron strike has broken out in a new quarter. After a week of activity the entire steel and iron plant of Shoemaker, Speer & Co., of Pittsburg, is again silent. Five departments are affected, the bar mills, the puddling furnaces, and two departments of the horseshoe factory. The trouble arose out of the fixing of a scale of wages in the Bessemer steel department. The men claim that they do not receive as much as is paid at the other mills, while the firm claims that the wages are correspondingly as large as those paid elsewhere. Four hundred men are affected by the strike.

The Philadelphia, Reading & New England railroad company officials do not seem to be much concerned over the question of protection to American labor. It seems that the old section hands along the road, at least in this state, are being replaced by Italians. In order that the boycotting business can't be practiced on them to effect, the company builds storehouses for its tools and themselves at stations along the route. These houses are provided with bunks on which the poor animals stretch their weary limbs at night. They generally cook in the open air. The company is merely adapting itself to the generally accepted law of individualism and competition, and none who favor this law by word, deed or omission have room to find a fault.

EUROPEAN.

The wharf porters employed at Genoa went on strike on Tuesday. They demand an increase in wages and abolition of hydraulic discharging cranes.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Premier of New Zealand holds that if workmen worked only seven hours a day, the general wage fund would be just as great. The shipowners have reduced the wages of the wharf laborers in Melbourne to the

rate of 25 cents per hour, similar to the rate existing in Sidney and Brisbane; they have also cut the overtime rate. They are taking advantage of the disorganized state of the labor unions and the plethora of idle men.

The Brewers' Association of Victoria has donated \$2,500 towards relieving the distress existing among the unemployed in Melbourne.

At a type setting contest recently held in Melbourne one compositor set 2,710 types in one hour. For this work he received \$26.25 and a silver stick.

Word comes from Sidney that frantic efforts are being made by a number of the labor members of the Legislative Assembly to raise a little money to relieve some of the distress among the many thousands who are slowly and surely being starved to death. This condition of affairs will continue as long as the monopolists are tolerated in our midst.

GREAT STRIKES.

Contests Between Capital and Labor.

A complete history of labor troubles would be a very big book, and to most people an extremely dull one. Yet there is no other subject better fitted for dramatic effects, and the only reason we do not see the strike often on the stage is that it is such a ticklish subject for the playwright to handle.

The strike is quite a modern affair. In the olden time the workmen were actually or virtually slaves. A strike was an insurrection, and insurrection meant death certainly and torture probably. Nevertheless, though they had no strikes, they got up some very respectable imitations, as for instance that of Spartacus.

With a motley army of gladiators and slaves he held the Romans at bay for two years, defeated four consular armies and only failed of final success because of the intractable nature of his troops. The French revolution first took active form in a strike. When the workmen in paper manufactories in Paris, struck, early in 1789, a wealthy capitalist told them they could live as well as they deserved on fifteen cents a day. Thereupon they mobbed his works and burned them, and the example was contagious.

Labor movements in England are usually dated from Wat Tyler's rebellion. The movements of Jack Straw, John Ball and Jack Cade are also counted "labor troubles." During all the ages of despotism it was the custom to send such agitators and conspirators as were not executed to labor in the mines, and fugitives often went there for concealment. They continued their planning and plotting underground, and the result was that the miners were first and most thoroughly organized of all laborers.

Thus did Gustavus Vasa organize the miners of Sweden who helped restore him to power. In England the miners of Cornwall were so early and so thoroughly organized that a Cornish mob was long a nation's terror. It is believed that some of these organizations centuries old continued with only a change of name till they became the Mollie Maguires of Pennsylvania. In 1850 the British parliament passed the famous "Statute of laborers"—the first of a long series of acts to prevent a rise in wages.

After the great plague, all old contracts being at an end and lands calling for cultivators, the wages of men rose 50 per cent, and those of women 100 per cent. in a few years. Then a long and in the end terrible struggle began. The first rage of laborers seems to have been directed against machinery, and the first sawmill set up in England was torn down by the whip sawyers. The movement against machines went to such lengths after the Napoleonic wars that it amounted to a rebellion, and 80,000 "Luddites" were in ranks at one time.

A half witted lad named Ludd, who had been teased by some boys, pursued them into a shop, where they took refuge behind a lace mill. In his rage he broke the machine to pieces, so the proprietor, in order to fill his contracts, had to reemploy the women who had been displaced by the new invention. Thereupon the other women of the lace district gathered in mobs and smashed the rest of the lace mills, the men followed it up on all machinery which had displaced their labor, and the once famous "Luddite war" was begun. One fact must be acknowledged—all the advance laborers have secured has been the result of their combining and resisting. It is humiliating, but it is a fact.

In 1834 the great strike of the London tailors occurred, but they were beaten. The next strike, in the Staffordshire potteries, was won by the men after a desperate struggle. The great Preston strike of 1853 attracted the attention of the world. Forty-nine cotton and other mills were closed, and before the strike ended 14,972 paupers were added to the list. The men were defeated.

During all these years parliament was investigating an legislating, and the beneficent "factory acts" and colliery laws were passed. Women and boys under fourteen were no longer

allowed to be put in the mines. Child labor was abolished in many trades and greatly limited in others. Wages rose slowly but steadily for twenty years, and the percentage of pauperism declined one-half.

Thomas Cooper, known as the "Last of the Chartists," died July last. In early life he was a prisoner in Stafford jail two years for advocating "The Charter," yet for the last twenty years of his life he had enjoyed far more privileges than he asked for at the start. At the time of the queen's jubilee it was estimated by the most conservative British statisticians that the common people were 30 per cent. better fed, 40 per cent. better clothed, 50 per cent. better housed, and 250 per cent. better educated than when Victoria was crowned.

Still there were strikes—of 40,000 colliers in 1867, of 60,000 Welsh laborers in 1873, of 50,000 Welsh miners in 1875, of 80,000 Lancashire spinners in 1876, of all the shipbuilders' workmen on the Clyde in 1877, and of 120,000 cotton spinners in 1878. In the spring of 1879 the famous strike of the Durham coal miners began, which was settled by arbitration. Without going into details of the hundreds of minor strikes it is sufficient to state the two important facts—the ratio of strikes in which the laborers succeeded has greatly increased while the hours of labor in the organized industries have been slightly diminished. Against this, as some workmen think, should be set the fact that by improved machinery the power of women to supplant men in manufacturing has enormously increased.

While the great Lancashire strike still lingered the attention of the world was suddenly called to the United States, where for about one month there raged the most extended and destructive labor war of this age. As the panic of 1873 caused all other panics to be forgotten or ignored, so the railroad riots of 1877 left all previous labor troubles in insignificance. For this cause doubtless the statement has crept into works meant to be historic that there were no strikes or labor troubles of consequence "before the war."

There were some even before the Revolution. After the Indians were finally subdued wages rose so rapidly that there was a loud call for legal interference. In New York they were 2½ times as high as in England, and in Massachusetts higher still. The shipbuilders of that colony formed the first trades union in America, and the colonial legislature promptly came down upon them with a statute regulating wages. It was forbidden in Newburyport to pay higher daily wages than to—carpenters, 6s. 4d. (\$1.28); calkers, 6s. (\$1.44); day laborers, 4s. (96 cents); masons, 6s. (\$1.44).

The laborers invented many ways to evade the law. Of course the trades unions were also political clubs, and there is a Boston tradition that the proposition to throw that famous tea overboard was first adopted at a meeting of ship carpenters.

In 1803 the first recorded strike in the United States occurred—that of the sailors in New York city. The organizer was promptly sent to jail, and the men begged pardon and returned to their ships. In 1829 a laborers' party elected one Ebenezer Ford to the New York legislature. A motion to expel him as an "agrarian" was brought forward, but defeated. In 1836 there was a strike of tailors, whereupon twenty-one of them were arrested and fined \$100 each. Then the long agitation for the ten hour day began, and on the 10th of April, 1840, it was established in the navy yards by proclamation of President Van Buren.

In 1847 strikes first began to be recognized as fixed facts. There were many that year and the strikers were not often prosecuted. The ten hour day had become quite general by 1860. After the war the great labor agitation began on a systematic plan, and the panic of 1873 soon showed how thoroughly labor was organized. In a few weeks after Jay Cooke's failure every rolling mill from Pittsburg to Cairo was idle, and in the Mahoning valley the situation was much like that of civil war. In 1874 strikes were the rule and continuous labor the exception in large sections of the country.

There was a slow improvement in the labor situation till in 1877 the Baltimore and Ohio railroad ordered a 10 per cent. reduction of wages to take effect on July 16. That was the signal for an explosion. As one man the railroad men revolted, and like a prairie fire the line of conflict ran over the country. In one week every cit between the Hudson and Mississippi was in commotion. In another many of them were sprinkled with blood and a few seared by fire. There was hard fighting at Baltimore, Pittsburg, Cleveland and Chicago.

For ten days many cities and towns were completely isolated so far as trade was concerned. The workmen virtually took possession of the railroads in many places. An investigating committee reported the total losses at about 400 lives and \$100,000,000. All previous strikes were ignored, nor has there since been any year to at all compare with 1877. The strikes of this year are but small affairs in comparison. Workingmen have learned how to secure their rights peacefully. And

let us hope that capitalists have also learned their lesson of humanity and moderation.

The Evolution of Brass.

Brass has a respectable claim on antiquity. It was used in the temple of Solomon, was known in old Rome and in the middle ages, was associated with palace gates and monumental tablets, as it is to-day with buttons and pins. It has figured in architecture and statuary and varied its uses from representing the person of a monarch to the dignity of a door knob. It is found in spoons and kettles, has honored the humble thimble and embellished the deadly cannon. In popular use and general service it has had a royal and ancient lineage, while its hard and unchanging complexion has furnished a metallic comparison for such human countenances as are more significant of brass than of modesty. As an American industry it owes its inception to an accidental shortage of supplies. When King George made his historic blunder and sent his fleet to blockade American ports, there was a consequent dearth of imported brass and official buttons. The latter was for a time substituted by bone, but the metallic article in spite of patriotism drove the other out of fashion. Israel Coe, of Waterbury, Conn., made a canvass of the local housewives and solicited worn out copper kettles and saucepans. These were cut up by slow and laborious efforts, melted with other alloys in an iron furnace and casted into rude molds. These uneven slabs of brass were passed through rolls until reduced to the desired thinness, the annealing being done in an open fire of chestnut wood in the mill yard. Success attended these crude and original efforts and led to the establishment of a rolling mill at Waterbury, where the surprising output was made of 80,000 tons of brass in one year. To-day they make annual totals of millions. The manufacture of brass kettles was a logical sequence, and the brass industry started in the Nantucket Valley perpetuates as it preceded American enterprise in this direction.

It has deployed on every available line of service and kept in touch with the demand and the fastidiousness of taste. It represents an industry with many ramifications, and has kept up a level step with progress in improvement and manipulations. Its inception and development is, however, an added example of the persistent and energetic qualities so largely characteristic of American metallurgical progress.—Age of Steel.

Got All He Had.

A good story is told of Rufus Choate, the eminent American lawyer. By the way, a good many good stories are told about him, but this is a new one.

One morning when he entered his office, his clerk rose and said: "Mr. Choate, a gentleman has just left here who wants you to undertake a case for him."

"Ah! and did you collect the regular retaining fee?"

"I only collected twenty-five guineas, sir. The regular fee was fifty guineas, and Mr. Choate said: 'But that was unprofessional; yes, very unprofessional.'"

"But, sir, said the clerk, apologetically, and anxious to exonerate himself from the charge, I got all he had."

"Ah! said Mr. Choate, with a different expression, that was professional; yes, quite professional."

"She—I should think that man would have a fearful load on his conscience. He—He would if it weren't for one thing. She—What's that? He—He hasn't the conscience."

"I am sure George is fond of me. He said he loved the ground I walked on. No doubt he meant it, returned her experienced confidante. You know, dear, you own that ground."

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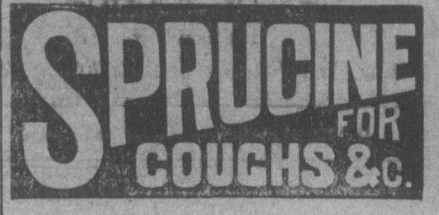
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