

222. The importations of meat from Canada, including animals, amounted in same period to \$10,185,000.

As the Northwest becomes more settled Canada will increase her supplies of food for the old land until all the bread and beef needed there can be had from this country.

THE EVOLUTION OF LABOUR.

THE HISTORY OF LABOUR OF DEEP INTEREST; LIGHT ON PRESENT DAY ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THROWN BY OLD TIME RECORDS; IN ENGLAND THERE HAS BEEN AN EVOLUTION OF LABOUR FROM SERFDOM TO INDEPENDANCE; SELF-RESPECT HAS DEVELOPED THRIFT; LABOUR NOW SPECIALIZED; EDUCATION WILL RAISE LABOUR TO A HIGHER PLANE AND SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS.

The celebration of Labour Day is a revival of a custom in vogue in ancient times when all classes of manual labour was done by slaves. From this degrading condition the working, the artisan class, have been raised by influences emanating from the divine "Carpenter's Son" whose example and teaching gave dignity to all forms of honest labour.

Throughout pagan times those who earned their living by the use of tools were slaves. They had a limited range of social freedom, as domestic animals have, but they were bondsmen whose bodies were the absolute property of an owner. He was spoken of in the neuter gender as we do a chair, or table.

The debasing effects of ancient slavery was displayed by its fetters being borne by classes of officials who in later days occupy a good social position. Even education, literary talent, business qualifications, did not redeem men who held responsible positions from bondage. Cicero's secretary was a slave, so also was his reader, on whose death he wrote, "I grieve more than I ought for a mere slave."

In England a system of serfdom existed up to some 5 to 6 centuries ago, but, that English serfs were not slaves, they let some kings and nobles know by sharp lessons.

There are large quantities of documents extant, which were written in early days, such as, artisan's bills for work, builder's accounts, bailiff's accounts, from which the most intimate knowledge of wages rates, rents, and all labour conditions are gleaned, but there is not a single trace of any documentary evidence of an English labourer having been personally sold by one owner to another as a slave. A common belief that "serfs" in the old land were slaves is utterly erroneous.

It is most deplorable that history has busied itself so much with "skimming the froth of foreign policy, with wars, royal marriages and successions and the

personal character of puppets who have strutted on the stage of public life," when an incomparably more interesting, truthful, and instructive narrative might have been given by depicting the conditions of life that prevailed amongst the people generally and humbler classes in particular.

What industries were pursued, what wages were paid, what dwellings were occupied, what were the social and economic conditions of the professional, mercantile and labouring classes, what changes occurred in their personal and political relations and how they contributed to the building up of the nation, these questions surely are of deeper interest than the narrative of dynastic arrangements, the intrigues of parties, or the story of foreign quarrels and petty wars which make up the bulk of most histories.

The history of the English labouring classes of various grades, from those engaged in farm work to the highly skilled artisan is a fascinating as well as most instructive narrative. Some phases of it are most discreditable, some most honourable, but all thrilling with human interest, all instinct with economic, political and social lessons which must be studied by any one who desires to master the greatest problem of this age, the relations of capital and labour.

One of the most striking differences between the conditions of labour to-day and those earlier times is the divorce of labour from the soil, another is, the absolute independence of labour from any State or municipal authority as regards the terms of service, a third is, the freedom of labour to organize unions for the regulation of wages, a fourth is the sharing by labour in electoral franchises, political and municipal, a fifth is, the ambition of labour to enjoy a larger share in the products of industry, and a sixth is, a most honourable determination to avoid all obligations of an eleemosynary nature, which is the inspiration of industrial insurance.

The greatest revolutions are the silent, the bloodless ones. In earlier days, say the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries in England, every labourer, including artisans like carpenters, masons, iron-workers, weavers, clothing makers, saddlers, cart builders, painters, etc., had an obligatory connection with the lords of the soil. Their wages were fixed by magistrates and civic corporations. They were bound to render services, which, though in some senses economically helpful and physically beneficial, such as giving aid in farm work, were socially degrading as they were a compulsory recognition of aristocratic supremacy. The labourer to-day is personally as independent, as free from any over-lord as the greatest nobleman.

In some features the life of labour is not as elevated as in the earlier days. Artisans and their families in days of yore were generally manufac-