

expression in 1381 under the leadership of Wat Tyler. After the 'rebels' had been thoroughly subdued by a process which necessitated, even in those times, an Act of Indemnity for the suppressors, it was found that they were still wicked enough to want enough to live on; so, in the twelfth year of Richard II., the legislature passed an act which was meant to keep them in check. The act recited that 'servants and labourers will not, nor by a long season would serve and labour without outrageous and excessive hire, and much more than hath been given to such servants and labourers in any time past, so that, for the said servants and labourers, the husbands and land-tenants cannot pay their rents, nor hardly live upon their lands.' It then went on to fix the wages of agricultural labourers more particularly than had yet been done. A bailiff for husbandry was to have 13s. 4d a year, and his clothing once by year at most; a master-hind, a carter, or a shepherd was to have 10s. a year; an oxherd, 6s. 8d.; a swineherd, 6s.; and a woman-labourer, 6s. a year. The former Statute of Labourers was confirmed, and the new act added these restrictions, that no labourer or servant should quit the place where he worked without having a passport declaring his history, and containing a permit for him to go. If he were found without such a document, he was to be put in the stocks. It was also provided, in the spirit of the worst predial slavery, that children who had served in husbandry till they were twelve years of age, should 'from thenceforth abide at the same labour, without being put to any trade or handicraft.'

Under these laws, agricultural labourers existed more or less miserably for a long term of years. Workmen in towns, artificers and their labourers, were still nominally subject to the statute of Edward III., though in practice the provisions of that law were modified by the exigencies of the demand for skilled labour and the comparatively small amount of the supply. Corporations and guilds, especially in chartered towns, had also their rules and bylaws, which tended to diminish as against 'trade and manufactures the severity of the statute, though in the main their efforts were directed rather to secure profit to the masters than fair remuneration to the men. Still, the members of guilds finding it to be their interest to employ the very best kind of labour, and finding also that this kind of labour was not to be had, or, at all events, to be exerted, without a proportionate wage, managed to attain their object without going directly counter to the law of the land. They made presents, they stipulated that certain perquisites should be given, they found some means or other of remedying, in their own interest, the injustice of the law. As against artificers generally, however, in common with agricultural labourers, the law of Edward III. was binding, and continued in force till the fifth year of Elizabeth. An act was certainly passed in the eleventh year of Henry VII., which fixed 'the yearly wages of servants in husbandry, and the several wages of artificers, day labourers, and shipwrights; and the several times limited for their work, meals, and sleep;' but it was repealed in the following year; and with the exception of a statute of Henry VIII., which aimed at fixing the price of all kinds of labour, and the hours at which an artificer or labourer should 'begin and end his work, and what time he shall have for his meals and sleep,' there was no legislation backed up by penalties, and systematically enforced, till the fifth year of Elizabeth. In that year, a law was passed which remained in force till the fifty-third year of the reign of George III. By it, all former statutes were repealed, and re-embodied in a most comprehensive way: and rules, with punishments for the infraction of them, were laid down, with the intention of including all labourers and craftsmen in their folds. It must also, in fairness, be said that care was taken to provide against the hire of those who might be employed being kept back through fraud, a provision which seems to argue that the dishonesty of masters had made it necessary. The act recites that the wages fixed by former statutes 'are too small and not answerable to this time, respecting the advancement of prices

of all things belonging to the said servants and labourers,' and goes on to enact that every year, at the first general sessions after Easter, the justices of the peace in the country, and the sheriff, mayor, or other authority in towns, shall meet, and 'calling unto them such discreet and grave persons of the said county, or of the said city or town corporate, as they shall think meet, and conferring together respecting the plenty or scarcity of the time, and other circumstances necessarily to be considered,' shall be at liberty to fix the wages for the current year, of all artificers and labourers whose wages had been fixed by previous statutes, and also of all such artificers, &c. as had not been rated, but the assembled magistrats might think ought to be so. The wages agreed upon were to be proclaimed, and everybody convicted of giving more was to be imprisoned for ten days, and fined five pounds; everybody convicted of receiving more was to be imprisoned for three weeks. It was also provided by this act that no artificer in a large number of trades which were specified, should be hired for a less period than a year; that a quarter's warning should be given on either side before an engagement could be terminated, and that the hours of work for labourers hired by the day or week were, between the middle of March and the middle of September, to be from 5 A. M. till between 7 and 8 P. M., two hours and a half being allowed for breakfast, dinner, and drinking. But the most objectionable restraint on individual liberty contained in this act was that which forbade an artificer to depart from the town or city where he worked without he was furnished with a testimonial under the seal of the town, and of two 'honest householders,' declaring the lawfulness of his departure. This testimonial had to be registered in the workman's parish, and was in the following form, prescribed by the act.—*Memorandum*.—That A. B., late servant to C. D. of E., husbandman, or tailor, &c. in the county of—, is licensed to depart from his said master, and is at his liberty to serve elsewhere, according to the statute in that case made and provided. In witness whereof, &c.

Dated—the day, month, year, and place, &c. of the making thereof.

By this same statute, the apprenticeship system which had been moulded in various trade corporations, was made part of the law of the land, and all persons were forbidden to engage in any trade at that time established, unless they had served to it a seven years' apprenticeship.

Various laws were enacted subsequently to regulate the prices of labour in particular trades; thus, by a statute passed in the seventh year of George I., on the occasion of an endeavour among the London tailors to get more wages, it was ordered that journeymen tailors in London and Westminster, and within the bills of mortality, should, between the 25th March and the 24th June, work from 6 A. M. to 8 P. M., an hour being allowed for dinner, for two shillings a day, and during the rest of the year they were to take 1s. 8d. Any master giving more was to be fined five pounds, and any workman receiving more was to be imprisoned for two months. By an act of the eighth of George III., the hours were changed to between 6 A. M. and 7 P. M., with an hour for dinner, for a wage of 2s. 7½d. a day; and masters giving more than this sum were to be imprisoned, without the option of paying a fine. This law continued in force, though it was necessarily often evaded, till 1825, when it was repealed.

Special statutes of a like nature were at different times passed to bind special trades, but the law of general application was that established by Elizabeth, which ordered the annual assessment of wages by those who were interested in keeping them down. It was not till the 16th April 1813, that by 53 Geo. III. c. 40, this illiberal and unfair system was abolished, while at the same time were repealed many statutes that had been made in restraint of those trades which not having been in existence in the fifth year of Elizabeth, were taken not to be included in the statute made in that year. Since 1813, the policy which could fix arbitrarily the price of wages or of merchandise has been for ever buried,

and though, as in the case of the tailors' act above quoted, certain special trade statutes were not repealed till twelve years later, workmen of all kinds have been practically left free to take their labour to the best possible market. They have also been able, since 1825, to a very great extent, to make their own market. Before that time, and while Elizabeth's law was in operation, it was forbidden to workmen, under heavy penalties, to combine for the purpose of raising wages, or 'obtaining a remission of the hours of labour.'

The first statute against combinations was the 13 Geo. I. c. 34. It recites that weavers and other persons engaged in the manufacture of wool 'have lately formed themselves into unlawful clubs and societies, and have presumed, contrary to law, to enter into combinations, and to make by-laws or orders by which they pretend to regulate the trade and the prices of their goods, and to advance their wages unreasonably, and many other things to the like purpose.' It forbids all such combinations in future among workers in wool, including clothiers, under a penalty of three months' hard labour; and any workman assaulting or threatening to injure his master for not complying with club by-laws, was to be transported for seven years. On the other hand, masters were ordered, under a penalty of ten pounds, to pay their workmen in money, and not at all in kind, so that the men were protected against a nefarious system of truck, by which they were at once cheated and rendered more dependent on their employers than if paid wholly in cash. Other like statutes were passed against combinations of workmen in other trades,—not a word was said against combinations of masters—so that, what with laws arbitrarily fixing the rate of wages, and laws forbidding recourse to the only means by which reasonable wages could be procured, the English workman was held in a state of most perfect thralldom.

The 53 Geo. III. c. 40, abolished fixed prices and fixed hours, the 6 Geo. IV. c. 129, repealed all the statutes against combination, leaving the workman free to get the best price he could for his labour, and, as far as he could, to regulate the market for it. In the first year of William IV., the last oppressive regulation affecting the freedom of the workman was abolished; the 'truck system,' by which masters made their men take part of their wages in kind, in goods supplied by the master's factors, in clothing or anything else, was prohibited by an act of parliament which ordered wages of all sorts and descriptions whatever to be paid in money only. The only restraint upon workmen in respect of their work now existing is that salutary one which forbids them to deprive their fellows of that liberty which they themselves enjoy. Under pain of imprisonment with hard labour, it is forbidden to intimidate any one into joining a union or society, or from taking or giving work, or by any means other than persuasion to interfere with the discretion of a man as to where he will work, or the sum for which he will labour.

A CRITICAL POSITION.

AN ADVENTURE AT SEA.

ON our homeward voyage from the East in the good ship *Shepherd Mary*, we had, for some time, had such unfavourable winds that there seemed little prospect of our making even a decent passage of it. When in India we had boasted much of the splendid sailing qualities of our vessel, and had set our hearts upon making a glorious run, for many and heavy bets had been made on us. She was indeed a noble vessel, but at times we were becalmed for days together, so that she really had not a fair chance; at other times we would have gales right in our teeth, and after beating about for many days we found that but little progress had been made. The Cape of Good Hope was reached at last, and when about a hundred miles to the southward we got a fair wind and plenty of it.

The weather for some days previously had been very unsettled, the wind flying about 'to