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Iron Clogs of Lancashire

HERE is something remarkable, says the Christian Science Monitor, in the Lancashire clog when it has the streets to itself, and this was evidenced in no small degree only lately before hours of labor were shortened, say about 5.45 a.m. There is nothing more indicative of the solid character of the Lancashire people than the sturdiness and the self-denial of the clattering crowd who earn their breakfast before they eat it.

In all the Lancashire manufacturing towns, one sound more than any other betokens the opening of a working day. From five o'clock onward, as the men and women turn out for the mills, the pavements ring with a sharp metallic clatter. It is the clang of many ironshod clogs. And in the evening, when the mills are "loosing," the streets again resound to the music of what Webster describes as an "overshoe with a thick sole of leather or wood for wet weather." "Into Lunnun aw'll walk wi' mi clogs on mi feet," says some boaster in a ballad.

None but a Lancashire man would have so spoken, for the clog is a peculiar institution of the mill folk. Yorkshire, it is true, has borrowed the idea from her neighbor, but still the clog is endeared by an intimate association with all that marks the Lancashire breed. To a lover of old things it is sad to be told that the clog is dying out. There are those who say that before many years it will be as obsolete as the crinoline, though there have been threats of a return of the latter in a mixture of feminine foibles and fancies.

Happily these are croakers' prophecies. Many generations to come will doubtless hear, as we do now, the familiar noise awakening a thousand homely thoughts and memories.

And yet in many parts of Lancashire the clog is losing ground before its victorious enemy, the boot. Time was when clogs were generally worn; boots were an expensive luxury, only to be indulged in, if at all, on the Sabbath. Nowadays, boots have become cheaper in comparison with clogs, and the honest clog suffers from modern competition. Another potent factor is the superior respectability of the boot, which confers an elegance on its wearer unknown to the demonstrative clog.

But the old cloggers do not despair for they say that the clog is peculiarly suited to the conditions of mill life. It will stand the wear and tear of flagged floors, and it is not ruined by heat and grease as is the delicate boot. People wear it because their fathers did before them, which is, perhaps, the most hopeful consideration. It is believed that the clog was first introduced into Lancashire when the Flemish weavers came to Bolton in the year 1337, thus establishing the clog as well as the cotton trade of Lancashire.

Like his brother, the shoemaker, the clogger figures in literature as a ripe philosopher and critic of his kind. He is Lancashire in essence. He is wise and he gives generously of his wisdom to all comers. His little shop is hung with rows of finished clogs which make the customer bow his head. Behind the counter—if he is in good business—there will be three or four journeymen busy cutting and stitching the uppers. More often the clogger is master and workman in one.

The place is like the old-fashioned cobbler's shop, which existed before the boot came into being. The clogger of to-day works with the same tools as did the earliest cloggers. His is one of the gradually diminishing number of hand industries. Machinery has been tried for shaping the wooden soles, but it cannot supplant the delicate skill of the craftsman.

There is more variation in the shape of clogs than is generally imagined. Customers are measured for them, as they are for boots, and needles of form are carefully followed in carving the sole. There are the garden clog, the Wellington clog, the dancing clog, the laundry clog, imitation Dutch sabots, the Blucher clog, the washing clog, and many others. The finished soles pass into the shop, where the top leather is firmly fastened and the iron rim nailed on.

In working-class Lancashire almost every one stamps cheerfully about in clogs. There are clogs in the shop windows with a tiny rim of iron, hardly bigger than a doll's shoes. It would seem that the wearers love the sound of the clanking iron, for if the iron comes off the heel they run to the clogger's without delay. These mill girls enjoy "the clackety clack of their heels," as one clogger put it.

The biggest expression of the clogger's art is the "Sunday clog." This piece of decoration often bears an elaborate pattern on the front. Sometimes there is a streak of red paint along the sole to give it a dashing appearance, and as a finishing touch there may be three small pearl buttons stitched in a rakish row on the side.

Hellgoland as Bird Sanctuary. It is practically agreed that the island of Hellgoland, late German naval base in the North Sea, has but two possible uses: the one it served as a "Wendish" or a "Saxony" for the millions of migrating birds that have long utilized it as a temporary resting place. Since it will never be permitted to return to its former state there seems to be little in the way of making it a bird refuge. A Division Board is in charge.

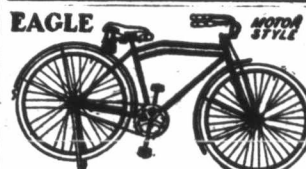
THE SEA MUSSEL INDUSTRY

A novel industry which promises rapid expansion and great popularity is no less than the development of a substitute for the succulent but somewhat costly oyster. This is the sea mussel found in vast quantities along the low tide mark of the Atlantic coast, chiefly in New Brunswick. The Dominion Government, with the co-operation of scientists, has conducted experiments to this end in Western University laboratories and it is now claimed that mussels can be produced commercially and sold profitably at 15 cents per quart, as compared with the \$1.00 per quart around which oyster prices hover.

The mussel is by no means a new article of diet to the people of Canada, and besides being used extensively in coast towns has found its way to the tables of inland cities in Central Canada. Its delicacy of flavor and high food value have been much advertised since the establishment of government investigation and experiment, and deserve to be much better known. There is yet much to be done in the line of research to ascertain conditions under which production would be most rapid and profitable, and to this end the Council of Industrial and Scientific Research is devoting its efforts.

A survey of the mussel beds of the St. Croix River, which constitutes the boundary between New Brunswick and Maine, has occupied the attention of a scientist of the council for three years now, and it is expected that this summer will see the satisfactory conclusion of the research. It is believed that the beds of mussels are practically unlimited, and the work occupying those engaged is merely the best conditions of development. It has also been determined that mussels become sweeter and more palatable the farther north they are found, and in this regard Canada has a distinct advantage over the mussel beds to the south of the Dominion. Those of the Hudson's Bay make particularly excellent eating.

The sea mussel cannot be produced in fresh waters so that there is no possibility of developing an industry in the Great Lakes. It is believed that there are possibilities, however, for the development of fresh-water clams there and the Dominion Government at the instigation of the Ontario Fishermen's Association is conducting a series of experiments which will probably result in interesting developments.



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