

HOW SHOES ARE MADE IN AMERICA.

BY E. SWAYSLAND.

It must always be taken into account that a large part of the population of America is cosmopolitan, without any tie to any particular place; here to-day, gone to-morrow; the new blood, that is at once the strength and the weakness of the nation, the hope of some politicians, the despair of the labor leaders, and one of the most potent forces that go toward making that intense vigor and energy that are so characteristic of the country.

The American workman appears distinctly in advance of his English brother in some things, and in few things is it more striking than in subdivision of labor. He does not care how a trade is subdivided, so long as the wages of the different portions of the processes are so arranged that he can earn a fair wage when engaged upon any one of them. The men and women in most towns are working for a better living than they have experienced elsewhere; those who are native are pushed along in the current, and, consequently, the standard being high, and the desire, as a rule, to be at the top, nearly all are working at their greatest pace. Some do work far too hard—much harder than I should like to see among my fellow-workers—but they are working by their own will, for their own desires, and no man would think of criticising them for going for all they are worth.

The relations between employer and workman are purely commercial. Every man is openly striving for his own hand. He does not waste time in playing at philanthropy in business; it does not pay, and he is in business to make money. The workpeople also go for themselves; the more work the more money, and such a ridiculous custom as Saint Monday is practically unknown. If a man does stop away he usually finds that he must continue away; his place is filled; there is no room for loafers.

All classes of business people work hard—much harder, I think, than similar people in England. It is quite common for the employer to start earlier than the operatives, and he usually rushes around all the time. Every device for saving time is in common use. The telephone is in every office, and it is quite common for business arrangements of great importance to be made through "the tube." The American appears to think that if an arrangement is worth making at all, the quicker the better. He is hustling along all the time, and, as a rule, those with the greatest amount of "snap" are the most successful. This energy, accompanied with enterprise, is a great factor to the success of Americans. They will entertain, at once, anything that appears to have money in it; no introduction is required. The thing is, will it pay? If so, start at once; and once satisfied that a speculation is sound, the American backs it up well. His enterprise and staunch support are typical of the nation. The social life of the people is, I think, higher and fuller than in England. All classes appear to have an amount of comfort and pleasure greater than is common here, and this is particularly noticeable among the working people. They dress well. The shoe worker, with dirty apron and face to match, is never seen on the street in any shoe centre in America; he would be "sent to Coventry" at once. He lives well; the simple food of the English worker, although, I believe, quite as wholesome, is not sufficient. He must have a choice of viands for every meal, and he expects three square meat meals a day—and gets them, too. As a set-off to this, there is a considerable loss of time during the year, the actual working periods making up about nine months' per year, so that provision has to be made for this short time. Again, the cost of living is higher than here, and so with loss of time, higher standard of living, and higher cost, a higher wage is indispensable, and this higher wage is secured, not by restrictions on the methods of manufacture, but by the careful simplification of the processes. In every detail, no matter how minute, the quickest and best method is adopted. If the adoption of a machine displaces a hand worker, he makes haste to get on the machine, and, as a rule, earns in a few days more wages than he did by the hand process.

The adoption of new types of machines does cause some friction, the men appearing to fear that any deduction, owing to special rapidity of some one machine, may lead to the lowering of a wage all round, through the lowest price

being used as a standard. Whether they are justified remains to be proved.

As regards the capacity of workers on machines and the question of the just output, it has been going through a similar course of development to that experienced here. I find that in one case the output per day for the same wage, and same machine, has increased nearly sixty per cent. In this connection it must be mentioned that the financial arrangements of some machinery producers differ in some matters in America from that prevailing here, and consequently there are in some cases proportionately many more machines of a given type in use than is usual in England, admitting of systems of working which cannot so easily be arranged here. Whether the same rate of working, or even anything very near, can be obtained on ordinary English work is very doubtful. The whole class of work in America is very much lighter in every way than has been so far in general use here. In nearly all the factories I visited, the work was very smart, light and flexible, the materials for the tops, as a rule, very soft and easily worked. Where a heavier class was produced, and the product was nearer our ordinary standard, I found the cost of labor nearly equal to that in England, but the worker secured more money per week as a rule.

In addition to the extra care bestowed on some preliminary processes, so to speak, the standard of work is somewhat lower in some cases than in England, and to remedy this the subsequent processes are greatly elaborated. It may safely be asserted that in some cases the English manufacturer has scarcely attempted some processes that are most thoroughly performed in America. As regards the general arrangement and appearance of the factories, I think the most salient point was, again, the rapidity in which work could be produced. In proportion to our factories, I should say that the Americans produce at least twice as many from a factory of a given size than is usual in England.—*The London Boot and Shoe Trades Journal.*

FROM THE NAVAL DEPARTMENT.

We are in receipt of the following from one of the Old Salts in the Military and Naval Department of the Mutual Life:

TO THE EDITOR OF *The Weekly Statement*:

DEAR SIR,—It has often been a question in my mind as to whether one realized more enjoyment from the conversation of a person possessed of a keen sense of humor than from that of one utterly devoid of any such sense. Having had a wide experience with both, I am yet unable to decide. It is rare, indeed, when one has the felicity of meeting both classes, *a la mème fois*. It happened, however, to me on the occasion of the story I am about to relate.

We were at anchor in the inner harbor of Curacao, several years ago, and there was a Dutch man-of-war lying in the outer harbor. The day after our arrival a party of officers from the latter came on board to pay us the customary visit of ceremony. The party consisted of the first lieutenant, a jolly, fat little Netherlander, the doctor and the paymaster. We received them and escorted them below to the wardroom, where we entertained them to the best of our ability. The conversation turned on the relative merits of examination for promotion in our respective services, both mental and physical. I saw the little fat Dutchman's eyes twinkle and knew something was coming. As soon as he got an opening he said, "Vonce vas a officer in our navee. He was order to take his ship to zee Black Sea, und he found himself in zee Red Sea. Zey haf ze conseil-de-guerre, vat you call ze court-martial, but zey do nossin wiz him. Zey find he vas color blind." Among the party was a visitor from the shore. He never cracked a smile. Finally, after we had all ceased laughing, he said, "I say, I never knew that the color of the waters in those seas was so pronounced."

I was telling this story the other day to an agent of an opposition company. He, too, never smiled, but said, "Well, you know, our company doesn't allow the policy-holders to go to the Red Sea."

To this I replied that our company not only allows our policy-holders to go to the Red Sea, but a good many, for the pecuniary profit of their families, have already gone to the DEAD SEA. YVAN.

[That the waters of the Black and Red Seas are pronounced in color and derive their titles therefrom, may add a fresh point to the fun in the above story.—*Ed. Review.*]

FINANCIAL AFFAIRS IN WALL STREET.

The weekly circular of Henry Clews & Co. says, under date 28th September: "Wall street affairs present no new aspects of striking importance. The gold exports have ceased, excepting that over \$2,000,000 was sent out in connection with Austrian 'conversion' requirements, and outside of ordinary exchange operations. It is very generally taken for granted that, for the next three or four months, the supply of produce bills will take care of our accruing foreign indebtedness; and, judging from normal experience, it would not be surprising if there should be imports of gold during that interval. This change in the position of our foreign exchanges has not produced any very marked effect upon securities, perhaps mainly because the improvement in the situation was anticipated.

"The course of the local money market is watched with more than usual interest. Currency still continues to flow to the West and South in large volume, and it looks as if the bank reserves may be considerably further reduced before the movement culminates. The chief interest in this tendency centres in the fact that a rise of one or two points in the rate for loans would, in the present sluggish state of the European money markets, be calculated to cause foreign balances to rest here instead of being sent home, the effect of which would be to depress the rate of exchange and thereby promote importations of gold, so greatly needed under the existing conditions.

"The situation in stocks is calculated to create an active and fluctuating trading market, rather than to develop any large outside movement for the present. The position of railroad shares favors strength in those properties. The grain roads show a steady gain in earnings, and the good condition of the large crop of corn is especially favorable to the future of companies dependent on that cereal. The coal companies are benefited by the upward tendency in prices and by the favorable prospects of an early settlement of their differences. The settlements of railroad companies in process of reconstruction are still subject to delays and obstructions, which hold in check speculative operations in their securities. Taking the situation as a whole, while it presents no special inducements calculated to draw in the general public, it is nevertheless sound and steadily improving, and purchases on declines for a brief turn are likely to yield fair profits."

PRODUCTION OF CALIFORNIA WINES.

California vintage has begun, and trustworthy estimates as to the production are now available. In every district the outlook is more favorable than last year. The production of dry wine in the State will be about 20 to 25 per cent. greater than last year, and will be from 12,000,000 to 13,000,000 gallons. About 4,500,000 gallons of sweet wine will be produced, making a total wine production in California this year of about 17,000,000 gallons. This is far short of the consumption, and much less than the production of 1893, so winemakers look for good prices and prosperous times. The average price for dry wine grapes will be about \$15 a ton.

TRAINS ARE TOO HEAVY.

During the last twenty years the improvements in railroads have been remarkable, but they must be more remarkable in the next twenty. When we see crashing past us that enormous mass of iron and wood called the vestibule train, we are prone to wonder at the wide difference between the construction of this train and that of a bicycle. A twenty-one and one-half pound safety will carry a 150-pound man at nearly the same rate of speed as the train, but for every 150-pound man the vestibule train must carry a dead weight of between 3,000 and 4,000 pounds. Now, as the bicycle is a practical machine, the train must be unnecessarily heavy; and if there is such a discrepancy in one important point, may not an equal discrepancy exist in other important points?—*Engineering Magazine.*