

FOR A SHORTER WORKDAY

Long Hours Largely Responsible for Much of the Enforced Idleness Now Prevailing.

Of all the industrial problems which challenge the attention and thought of the world, none are worthy of more universal study or likely to be attended by graver consequences than the question of securing a limitation of the hours of labor. The strenuous opposition with which every movement in this direction has been met in the past must be regarded as conclusive evidence that the representatives of capital in most industries regard a curtailment of the hours with the greatest apprehension and alarm, and as something altogether inimical to their business interests. They ignore altogether or fail to profit by the experience of those lines of business or mechanical pursuits where the eight-hour workday has been successfully established, and where its permanent continuance is favored by interested capital and labor alike. The conviction shared by the class of employers and capitalists referred to as to the danger attending the adoption of this measure must be genuine and deep-rooted, or those who hold to the belief would not be so altogether above argument and beyond conviction. Few of them will listen to the most reasonable proposition or see any virtue in the practical demonstrations that may be laid before them. Their aims and objects are directed to the accumulation of every obtainable scrap of evidence likely to discourage the friends and promoters of the movement. In spite of all this there are unmistakable signs that the opposition is wanting in that solidity of front formerly observable. This is evidenced by the fact that here and there in their ranks are to be found men who doubt the correctness of their position on this question, some of them even going so far as to acknowledge that they are now convinced that the adoption of the measure can be brought about without causing any serious disturbances. This is one of the results of agitation.

The determination to gain a shorter workday is regarded of the first importance by most trades. This imparts an earnestness to their efforts that cannot fail of ultimate success, at the same time serving as an incentive to men of less determined purpose. The agitation kept afoot in this way will be attended by the best results is certain. Evidences multiply that a more liberal spirit and a better informed policy will be manifested by employers in dealing with this matter in the future. The chief reasons for a reduction of the hours of labor rest upon the overcrowded condition of the labor market and the introduction of labor-saving machinery.—Hollisters' Eight Hour Herald.

MONEY OR A LIVING.

"To make money is one thing; to make a living is a better," says Edward Everett Hale at the close of his paper in The Cosmopolitan entitled "Making a Living." It is a sort of sketch story, and is a charming bit of what one might call realistic fiction. For fiction it is in one sense, and realism it certainly is in another.

Mr. Hale supposes the case of a couple that had to show for seventeen years of married life six children and an income from their savings of \$400 a year. The older children were fifteen and thirteen, with their clothes becoming more expensive and their appetites at the maximum. The father earned \$1,000 a year as a bookkeeper, the mother economized a little more every year, with the result that both lost their vim and elasticity of spirits, both were growing year by year more anxious and careworn, so that the cheerful air each invariably wore in the other's presence became more and more "manufactured sunshine."

At last, at the end of the seven-

teenth year, the two heads held a family council and decided at one stroke to win or lose all. He would resign his bookkeeper's place, they would rent one of the little abandoned farms in New England and see if they could make the children count in the struggle for a living, and do better for the children at the same time. How they came out we are to be told in the future. Dr. Hale says the plan they chose is not what some foolish people suppose it to be—a panacea. Of all the masses of struggling humanity that are driven to the wall in cities, it is his opinion that going to the country and farming would be advantageous to about two in a hundred. That is probably a very fair average. The first thing generally that city people who go on a farm to better themselves and country people who go to the city for a like purpose do is to break themselves financially. They may or may not succeed finally, according as they have perseverance and capacity for learning new things.

But one argument Dr. Hale brings forward for sending his fictitious family into the country to make a living is that some of the very states which are supposed to contain the largest number of abandoned farms are the ones increasing most rapidly in population, and that this increase is in the agricultural districts. Dr. Hale tells the truth, too, only he does not mention that the reason of it is that general farming has been largely abandoned, and fruit, dairy and vegetable farming has taken its place. By means of these a living, and a very happy one, can be made in New England.—Fort Wayne Labor Herald.

LABOR AND CAPITAL IN SCANDINAVIA.

The Norberg iron miners, who to the number of about a thousand have been on strike for about eight months against contracts that did not allow them to organize, had to surrender about a fortnight ago. Over \$10,000 were sent to them from all parts of the country and from Swedes working in the United States. A number of the latter living in Chicago sent \$150 to the Swedish Secretary of State, E. G. Bostrom, asking him to hand the money over to the striking miners. But this noble gentleman, a mine owner himself, and member of the protectionist party that came into power through election frauds, returned the money. Just at that moment those funds might have turned the strike into a victory for the miners. His statement was that he would have nothing to do with the matter—except, I may add, to send police and troops against the men.

The Norberg strike, the biggest of its kind so far in Sweden, is the first sign of life among that extensive class of workers that is toiling twelve and fourteen hours a day for 35 cents. The capitalist papers are jubilant that the trouble is over, but indeed this is only the beginning of the thing, not its end.

The Socialist proposition, to convoke a people's parliament for the purpose of obtaining universal suffrage, has been adopted by the radical wing of the capitalist party too; most people are tired of the present reactionary protectionist government. The proposition will be submitted to a referendum vote of the people—20,000 will be requisite for its adoption.—"Argus" in The People.

AN EIGHT-HOUR TRIAL IN ENGLAND.

The working of the eight hour system in the great chemical works of Brunner, Mond & Co., at Norwich, England, offers on the whole a striking object lesson in the economic effects of an eight hour day. When Mr. Brunner initiated the change the mass of his employees were working on an average fourteen hours a day. Mr. Brunner placed the entire works on three shifts of eight hours apiece, leaving the

wages of the laborers at the old figures, but reducing those of the more skilled workers from 1s 6d to 2s a week. The results of the experiments are now fairly complete. They are: First, a slight increase in the number of those employed; to-day the proportion is as nine to eight; second, the rise of the wages to the old level, the temporary reduction having been abolished; third, a great improvement in the health of the men, the call on the sick fund having been greatly diminished. To these results a fourth must obviously be added, viz., an increase in the profits of Brunner, Mond & Co., otherwise the reversion to the old rate of wages would never have been attempted. We see that a reduction of the hours of labor is, in itself, powerless to weaken the system of capitalist exploitation. But it will help to build up a healthier generation of workers who will eventually rebel against it.

LET US PULL TOGETHER.

Robert Johnson, director of the Colonial College, England, in the United Service Magazine thus sets forward the future of our race:

"Looking forward but a few short years, is not the following a forecast? Can we not see the great English family occupying the whole of North America, Australia, New Zealand, a great part of South Africa and many other parts of the world as well? In America, Canada and the United States, hand joined in hand, command alike the Atlantic and the Pacific. The United States of Australia and New Zealand, and the United States of South Africa command the Indian and the Southern seas, while all are united in firm and indissoluble alliance with the mother land from which they sprang, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and England. Thus strong in the north and in the south, in the east and in the west, this confederation of a race which has ever been in the van of political, social and religious freedom, may work out a glorious mission and keep the peace of the world."

It is a glorious prospect! Are not the men who constantly endeavor to magnify the differences between the several sections of the English-speaking people, and to keep them as wide apart as possible, the enemies of the race?

CLUMSY DODGING.

Perhaps the silliest "argument" of the advocates of monopoly tariff taxation is the final one that there is something peculiar about the United States that makes protection necessary here. From every other rampart the defenders of unjust and unwise laws can be driven. When it is shown that tariff taxes do not increase wages, they retort that laws cannot be supposed to regulate a matter that is wholly controlled by supply and demand. When it is shown that tariffs increase prices, they declare that prices are higher because wages are higher. When confronted again by proof that wages are not higher, they assert that tariffs make prices lower. When it is demonstrated that wages have increased in England under free trade, the answer is that that is due to the peculiar situation of England—a situation that demands free trade just as the American situation demands protection.

Of course, all this is the dodging of clumsy defenders of a wicked system which admits of no rational excuse or palliation. Tariffs are taxes. The taxation of everybody for the benefit of somebody is a moral wrong, and being such, it is just as reprehensible in the United States as it is in England; it is as wicked in Germany as it is in Italy. There is nothing in the situation of the United States or in the character and occupation of their people that makes a thing that is vicious in itself more praiseworthy here than it is elsewhere on this planet.—The American Farmer.



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