

INDUSTRIAL EUROPE AS SEEN THROUGH AMERICAN EYES.

By Judson Grenell. (Copyright, 1904, by Judson Grenell.)

Among the incidents of a story of English life which I read many years ago, the one that most impressed me was the fact that agricultural laborers wore iron collars, on which were impressed characters indicating to whom the serf belonged.

In my journeyings through England and Scotland, and on the continent, the past four months, I have never failed to find plenty of men and women wearing just as distinctive, rigid and unbreakable collars as did the old-time workers in England. There is this difference, however: The iron collar of long ago was placed around the neck of the serf by the master, whose smiths welded on the ring; whereas the tollers of to-day put on their own badges of servitude, and are proud of them. To tear off these modern labels of ownership, would be like inviting the end of the world, is the opinion of the great majority of European wealth producers, who, living often in city slums or country hovels, can conceive of no other systems of industry or government than those allowing a few self-chosen favorites the privilege of living in palaces without work.

ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENCES.

There is no other way for accounting for the physical differences between the masses and the classes. The environments of the masses have tended to produce mentally and physically stunted aggregations of servile common people; the environments of the classes have tended to produce arrogant men and women of mental and physical superiority. And in each case the average European citizen concedes that the inferiority of the masses and the superiority of the classes are of divine origin, and therefore not to be questioned. Thus does superstition hold as in a vise the doctrines of the wage-earning classes of Europe.

There are no economic reasons why old world wage workers cannot hold their own with wage workers of America, excepting the fact that they carry greater artificial burdens, and thus are not permitted to reap a full reward for their exertion, as do their brothers on the other side of the Atlantic. Certainly England's artisans have the skill and experience to enable them successfully to compete with all the rest of the world in turning out manufactured wares, but the landholders of that damp country, controlling legislation, have shifted pretty much all fiscal bur-

dens, national and local, on the shoulders of enterprise and industry, and have made it almost impossible for any considerable number of the common people to escape from their own class.

The point I wish to emphasize is this: While the common people of England have made great strides in acquiring, by constitutional means, some of their industrial rights, not much more can be obtained by peaceful and "legal" methods, because injustice has been so buttressed by law that there are no legal ways to dump the classes off the wealth producers' backs. This criticism applies still more forcibly to conditions on the continent. Think of the working people of such a great city as is Paris allowing their officials to charge a local tariff on the very food they need, in order that taxes may be reduced on the property of the rich; and, of permitting a monopoly of her street car and omnibus services. Think of the people of France and Germany submitting to the enormous taxes that are needed to support great standing armies and useless navies for the glory of—what? Of whom?

AMERICA'S SUPERIORITY.

The United States is a better country for wage workers than the British Isles or Europe, because of the great quantities of cheap, fertile land easy of access; a dry atmosphere which induces mental activity; good educational facilities for the common people; comparatively low taxes, part of which is borne by the landlords; freedom from governmental espionage over the everyday affairs of life, and absolutely internal free trade between 80,000,000 inhabitants distributed over a wide area and having every variety of soil and climate. Republic or monarchy, with such superior advantages the working people of the United States cannot help being more prosperous than are those on the continent of Europe who enjoy in very restricted ways only a few of these privileges.

North America is a better continent to live on for workmen and women than any island or mainland on this side of the Atlantic because it is not so closely wedded to inequitable social customs and laws, antiquated business methods and superstitious reverence for religious authority. Freedom to act comes from freedom to think, and the mind cannot be free if placed at the impressionable age under the supervision of those who decline to admit or preach the declaration that all human beings are created free and equal before the law. The doctrine of God-appointed superior and inferior

classes is a fundamental part of the religion of European countries, and none believe this more sincerely than do most of the working people. Acknowledging themselves inferior by divine will, it is no wonder they consent to continued injustice by "divinely" ordered rulers and lawmakers.

It is said, and truly, that no people can be politically free if industrially enslaved. It is my opinion that no people can be either politically or industrially free that are religiously enslaved. And this slavery exists in Mohammedan Turkey, in Protestant England, and as well in Catholic Italy. Whether the religious leader in Great Britain is a Church of England man or member of some dissenting denomination, he is equally conservative in respecting "authority," and he advises submission to wrongs in this world, holding out the hope of its all being righted in the next. There are exceptions to this rule, just as there were exceptions in the United States in slavery days among the clergy who were staunch defenders of, or at least apologists for, the "institution;" but the exceptions were few then and are few to-day. The upholder of any status quo founded on injustice does not possess the spirit that makes for industrial freedom.

COMPARING WAGES.

A day's service brings much greater reward to the worker in America than to the worker in Europe. Otherwise nearly a million people would not yearly flee the old world for America's shores in the happy and certain expectation of bettering their condition. In figures a dollar a day man in the United States receives not over 50 cents a day in Europe; yet the purchasing power of the 50 cents earned in Europe is, in some directions, as great as the dollar earned in America. For instance, rents; again, keeping warm is cheaper. Clothing costs very much less, also linen, which, being more durable than cotton cloth, is really in the long run cheaper. Transportation is less, and also the cost of amusements. Bread, milk and vegetables are about the same, but meat is dearer in Europe. Still, this latter item does not count for much, as Europe's wage workers do without it most of the time.

In a rough way, it may be said that \$10 in Europe goes as far as \$15 in the United States. It may also be said that the range of those things we call necessities in the United States is narrower in Europe. Therefore \$10 a week to the Englishman, Frenchman, Swiss or German seems, to them as good pay as does

\$18 a week to the artisan in the United States. On the whole work is steadier in Europe than in the United States. But it is impossible to make comparisons that are absolutely correct, for wages vary between London and Manchester and English provincial towns just as they do between New York and Boston and some New Hampshire hamlet.

MORE MACHINERY IN THE UNITED STATES.

One must be exceedingly cautious in making comparisons between the use of machinery in the United States and in Europe. I have seen factories over here that are equipped with about everything on the market. Perhaps it is true, now, that there are more kinds of special machines in the United States than in Europe, but if European manufacturers continue to invest in machinery during the next decade as they have recently, an equilibrium is bound to be established. Though British conservatism in the counting-room, as well as in the works, has made the introduction of new machines slow, competition is compelling their use, so that no country can for any great length of time claim a monopoly in this respect.

The average English artisan is not now striking against machinery. That period is past. He may quietly damn it as bringing another factor into the problem of daily toil, but he learns to use it. After he finds that it really increases the amount of work to be done—as it almost invariably does—he comes to like it, for he sees that it can be made a friend. Here, as in the United States, the astute labor leader seeks to obtain for the members of his organization some of the benefits following in the immediate wake of the machine. He does this by demanding a reduction in the hours of labor, with probably a half-penny or so increase in the pay per hour. For the sake of peace the employer generally concedes this; it is seldom a free-will offering. "Labor saving" machines have never yet of themselves reduced the hours of labor of a single wage-worker, but the well organized and well officered trade union has, by taking advantage of just such opportunities as the introduction of machinery affords.

COMPETITION WITH THE UNITED STATES.

The manufacturers of the United States are not going to send the manufacturers of Europe to the demnition bow-wows—at least, not this year. There will always be some things that can be done better in Europe than in America. We shall dominate those lines of manufacture where our raw material is best adapted to particular uses.

I doubt if the manufacture of the best grades of woolen fabrics can be wrested from England, or of silk from France. Perhaps atmospheric conditions have much to do with this. There are lines of steel production that it will be next to impossible to shake out of England's grip. Our tariff can be placed high enough to keep some things out of the United States, compelling the American people to put up with inferior articles at monopoly prices, but this is a different proposition to winning markets by merit. The United States contain not over a twentieth of the inhabitants of the world, and while this twentieth is a pretty big tail for the world's industrial dog, yet it isn't going to wag the dog.

The peculiarities of each nation extend to almost everything the people consume. Home production, with an intimate knowledge of the demands of trade, will always be able to command, at remunerative figures, the major part of the home market. Just to show something cheaper or even better will not open new avenues for trade. The desires of the people must be changed before the cheaper and better article will be preferred. Price is not everything.

The "dumping" process cannot for any length of time control any market. When the "dumping" consists of raw material such as steel and iron, it gives manufacturers using steel and iron advantages over competitors paying the higher prices. When Germany gave a bounty to her beet sugar manufacturers they "dumped" their surplus stock on England at less than cost. This gave the pastry manufacturers of England an immense advantage in controlling the pastry market on the continent.

AN OPTIMISTIC VIEW.

One needs a wide horizon and an optimistic temperament to have much hope of the common people ever being able to change present inequitable conditions in the social and economic world. Yet when one's perspective is correct it is not difficult to see the progress that has been made in the past. Thus one can confidently predict more in the future. Europe is not so densely crowded that it cannot support its teeming peoples. There are here millions of acres of land put to such comparatively unproductive uses as game preserves and palace parks; and no country is making the very best use of all the land given over to agriculture. Not until these defects are remedied can it be said that population presses upon subsistence.

In the fullness of time—which doesn't mean this year or this decade, if it does even this century—industrial freedom will be attained. The slums

of the cities will disappear with the abolishing of monopolies, and especially the monopoly of the soil, for then opportunities for employment will equal the desires of the people for work, and the wages of the laborer will be the full fruit of his toil. Then both production and consumption will be immeasurably increased, and also human happiness.

This time is coming. It is not an idle dream. Kings and potentates may tremble, and holders of special privileges may worry over the outcome, but the common people will lose nothing but their superstition-made collars, the badges of their present servitude.

THE BEAST AND HIS BURDEN.

Fresh from his valet, breathing forth perfume,

Swathed in the softest product of the loom,
Full-fed and arrogant, the beggar rode
And cursed the laboring beast which he bestrode.

A pleasant beggar he, who asked mere mites,

Such as Possession of the Public Rights,
Franchises, Rights of Way, and title deeds

To profit by our children's children's needs.

Another leaped upon the laboring beast
Which faltered as he felt the load increased.
The beggar burned with wrath, but found relief

To see it was his trusted friend, the thief,
A man to scale a Congress, tie the hands
And gag the tongues, while forcing his demands

For booty and for bounty. Yet so wise
A cracksman he, he puts it in the guise
Of benefit to others, so that we
Snatch off our hats to him and bow the knee.

But now the beast, by some strange impulse fired,

Cried out: "Get off my back, for I am tired.

I want to roll upon the earth. I need
To rest a little and I want more feed."
"Beast!" cries the beggar, striking with his goad,

"We only ride to keep you in the road.
Did we not ride and feed you, you would wander
And starve to death out in the grasses yonder."

"Ass!" cried the thief, "are you too blind to see,

'Tis not your vulgar strength which carries me,

But I support you by this tight-drawn rein?
And I am almost weary of the strain,
So if you hint again you want to stop,
I swear I'll loose the rein and let you drop."
The laboring beast cried out in great alarm
And prayed the thief to keep a steady arm.
And still he keeps his patient, weary stride,
And still the thief and beggar calmly ride.
—Edmund Vance Cooke.

In one of our large city libraries, with a well equipped juvenile department, a little girl recently asked for "a good book," and, when offered one