IMPERIALISM AND LABOR.

The effect upon wages of annexing new countries overcrowning with the cheapest kind of labor is evident enough to anyone who will consider the question dispassionately, but perhaps a brief account of what I have seen with my own eyes in Egypt may serve to illustrate it. We hear a great deal of the political offends conferred by the British government upon the Egyptians, but little or nothing is said of the industrial results of expansion, and yet these results are the most important.

Some years ago while I was living in Egypt I visited one of the cotton mills at Mansourah, the commercial center of the cotton region. These mills are owned by English, French and German capitalists and operated by native labor. In the main room of the factory the air is so thick with cotton dust that I found it difficult to breathe. A row of Arab girls of 12 or 13 years of age were standing there before a series of tubs manipulating the raw cotton.

"What are the hours of labor of these girls?" I asked the European foreman, who was acting as my guide.

"From four o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night, with an intermission for dinner," he answered.

"And what is the pay?"

"Twelve and a half cents a day." I could hardly believe this, and the next day I met the English manager of one of these mills I cross-questioned him on the subject.

"Is it true," I asked, "that you work your girls from four until six for 12½ cents a day?"

"Yes," he said, rather reluctantly.

"I didn't quite like it when I first went to Mansourah, but the girls don't seem to mind it."

"Don't mind 14 hours work a day?" I cried.

"Oh, that is not all," he replied.

"When we are very busy they stay overtime from six till ten o'clock in the evening and we pay them an extra piastre (2½ or five cents) and sometimes young mothers come with their babes at the breast and put them down on the floor in the corner and go to work with the rest."

And all this, mind you, in an atmosphere which you can almost cut with a knife, so thick is it with cotton.

One thing has saved Egypt, and that is the absence of coal. It costs too much to bring it there for it to pay to introduce factories on a large scale. But there is plenty of coal