THE AMERICAN WORKMAN.

BY THOMAS I. KIDD.

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In fifty years the working power, the exerted energy, of the nations of christendom has more than doubled. That of Europe has increased fourfold. That of the United States tenfold. All signs point toward the United States as the country which for the next half century must sustain and surpass this enormous increase of the world's productivity.

The last half century's great increase in the working energy of the world was due mainly to the development of steam. In the adoption of modern machinery this country surpassed the world in promptness and in the productive consequences. Its expansion in applied energy was greater than that of all Europe put together.

Students of industrial evolution attribute the waxing pre-eminence of the United States in all lines of productivity, first, to its freedom from overpopulation; second, its favorable system of government and society; third, the superiority of its workmen and its facilities—the latter including raw material, fuel, transportation, and mechanical appliances. Ten years ago, figuring on the accepted basis by which there should not be more than fifty people to every 100 productive acres, seven European countries were overpopulated—viz.: England, Scotland, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, and Switzerland.

The American workman himself may fairly be regarded as the principal factor in the surpassing excellence of his country's manual and manufacturing performances, since he is chiefly responsible for the existing industrial system, a powerful influence in the governmental attitude toward labor, the operator and in many cases the author of the best of

modern machinery, and, in the last analysis, the director and governor of that energy which makes things.

Fifty years ago the United States held lowest rank among the four great textile manufacturing nations. To-day it has almost equaled Great Britain and surpassed all the others. In the making of hardware this country has excelled, in the quantity and value of its output, all the other nations except England. It makes one third of the hardware used in the world, although it consumes not more than one seventh.

The superiority of the American workman to all others is not longer a doubtful proposition even in England, where both prejudice and rivalry help to put every claim of American pre-eminence in the category of brag. But when it is said that the American workman is the best the world has known, it should be understood that his unequaled excellence as a class is what is meant. There are individual mechanics and artisans in different countries of Europe who have not been surpassed in skill and ingenuity by the workmen of any country. Yet in summing up their productive abilities, who have not been surpassed in skill or influences for the betterment of their class, they are outnumbered and outweighed by their peers in the United States.

In cataloguing the points of excellence of the American workman over his English contemporary, the first should be, perhaps, the superior volume of his output, whether manual or mechanical. It has been estimated that, in purely manual efficiency, the American workingmen, as compared with the English, produce in the ratio of three to two as to quantity. In the United States the productive volume of man run machinery is almost two to one as compared with England, and from this probably accurate estimate it has been inferred that the American mechanic is twice as effective, with the same machine, as his British rival.

In order to be perfectly just, however, it must be stated that the English workingman is to a great extent handicapped by his own established and accepted system of labor regulations, and that his true ability, whether individually or collectively, can hardly be gauged by his performances. For almost half a century the workingmen of England have ac-

cepted and acted upon the theory that the less work they did the more work there would remain to do, so that in reckoning their efficiency by the results it should be borne in mind that most of them do as little work as may be compatible with holding their places in shop or factory.

The hostility which European workmen have inveterately and continuously shown to modern machinery is another potent cause of the disparity between the mechanical output of American factories and that of England especially. In one instance a manufacturer installed six machines to be attended by one man, but the English labor union compelled him to employ one man for each machine. In another case a machine capable of increasing the factory output 25 per cent was emplaced. But the union ruled that it should not be permitted to run more than 75 per cent of its capacity.

It would not be accurate, therefore, to finally measure the skill or intelligence of the foreigner by the quantity of his output, though the wisdom or folly of his labor system may be nearly appreciated by the fact that he earns less than his American rival in the same craft and that the factories of the United States successfully compete with his employer in the shadow of the English factory. The foreign workman in his home shop and factory has been an obstructionist rather than a promoter of the quantity phase of effectiveness. The result is that man for man the workers of the old countries have not produced on an average more than two thirds of the output of the Americans in the same lines, and about half as much as the operators of American machinery in similar industries.

Investigation has shown, however, that the questions of piecework, minimum labor rules, and hostility to machinery set aside, the English workman at home is not as effective as his brother in this country. The proportion of illiteracy among foreign workmen is 40 per cent greater than it is among the workmen of the United States, and, it is argued by many observers, that this alone is sufficient explanation of the superiority of our workmen. There is probably a better explanation to be found in the well known physical inferiority of the foreigners, especially the French and English toilers, and some recent British writers on this subject attrib-

ute all of the labor disadvantages of the craftsmen of his country to bodily, and not to mental depreciation.

It is a famous matter of history that England ceased to be an agricultural country with the repeal of the corn laws and essayed at once to be the manufacturing center of the world. Its factory towns became overcrowded and their populations in time not only city bred but inbred to a certain degree. In the United States, with all its growth of manufacture, there has been no sudden hegira from the farms to the cities and yet the ranks of the city workmen are recruited constantly and gradually from the yellow farm lands of the prairies. The new blood of the country boy, his ambition, his health, his muscular might, have kept alive and growing the basic vitality of American working enterprise and in no slight measure account for the admitted pre-eminence of our workingmen.

Members of the Mosely commission, twenty three representatives of English labor unions, who inspected the conditions and achievements of American workingmen in 1902, were almost unanimous in depreciating their own circumstances as compared with what they found here. But they were greatly at variance in accounting for the palpably surpassing qualities of the workers here not only as to skill and productivity in shop and factory but in their dress, bearing, relations to their employers, and in their home life. One of the commission admitted that he did not like the business or social conditions of American industrial life, and attributed the high quality of the workmen to the fine weather and bright skies, which he found so exhilarating after the dark, foggy atmosphere of England.

He expressed the belief that the American workman does not labor so hard as his English cousin, finding the reason in the fact that here the whole tendency is to make machinery relieve the man of as much of the work burden as possible. The Mosely delegation was astonished at the equality existing in America between the employers and bosses and the men. They found that in most shops and factories there is a premium on mere ideas, whereas, in Europe, the workman who presumed to suggest or dictate a better plan to his superior

would be looked upon as impertinent and, probably, dismissed.

In the report that resulted from that investigation, it is stated that the workmen of the United States are infinitely better in their personal habits than those of England. For instance, it was estimated that English workmen consume four times as much intoxicating liquor per man as do the Americans. The average yearly expenditure of English working people for intoxicants amounts to two months' wages, and drunkenness, as a habit, is the rule rather than the exception. It was found that the British workman, as a rule, squanders one month's wages every year on horse racing, and that the American of the same calling wastes not more than ten days' wages in twelve months in a similar manner.

Here certainly is unbiased testimony to a lofty quality in the workman of the United States as compared with him of England, made by English investigators, which, while speaking loudly in favor of the virtue of the American craftsman, may help to account largely for that high degree of manual and mechanical expertness which places him at the head and front of the workmen of the world.

The self reliance, the ambition, the diligence, the pride with which the American attacks his daily task also struck these foreigners as extraordinary. Some of them were of the belief that this sense of equality with the best of their superiors was the reason for the wonderful efficiency of our workmen. For it is true that in Europe the man who works is looked upon as baser metal in the fabric of society. He is a servant, and he is expected to know and keep his place. He stands for what is left of the old feudal system, and his spirit is hampered with the fetters of caste.

"When you meet an American workman on his way to or from the shop you might take him for a business man," was the surprised comment of one of the Mosely commissioners. "They don't walk the streets here with dirty faces. They dress better than our fellows, and they have a show of pride and independence that one never sees in the workingmen of London, Liverpool, Birmingham, or Manchester."

The sanitary provisions of the big factories here, the familiarity existing between foremen and workmen, the monetary and moral encouragement of the man with an idea, the self assertiveness of the workers, the comfortable, sometimes elegant, manner in which they live at home, all impressed the English examiners, not as evidence of the admitted superiority of the workingmen of this country, but as reasons for it. Some of them, refusing to admit that the American is better paid because he accomplishes more, held that he does more and better work because his wages are higher.

In Lancashire a weaver who runs two looms is regarded as a fair performer. In New England the weaver who cannot run eight looms is looked upon as an apprentice, and paid accordingly. Some statistician having grouped twenty industries in which American workmen excel their European rivals, decided that the craftsmen of the United States produced, in quality and quantity together, 25 per cent more than the same number of workmen of other countries could do. Fifteen per cent of this excellence he attributed to the higher craftsmanship of the American and 10 per cent to his superior facilities.

There is no way of estimating the degree in which drink, gambling, and the discouraging element of caste may hinder or destroy the craftsmanship of a workman, but it is agreed by the best authorities on this subject that in this phase lies one of the nearest explanations of American supremacy in working potentiality. One writer discussing the question of environment and facilities, says: "the British employer has more to learn from America than the British workman."

In explanation of this assertion he cites the instance of the American electric factory at Manchester, which British contractors and architects said would require from three to four years to build. An American builder came along and, with English workmen to do the work at wages so high as to astonish them, and with treatment so generous as to inspire them, completed the entire structure in twelve months. It may be that American labor could have finished the same job in nine months, but the incident seems to point to the fact that the foreigner at home is, at least in some measure, the victim of the system under which he labors.

England did not awaken to the fact of the physical degeneration of her people until it was necessary to form armies for South Africa out of the millions of workmen in the shops and factories of the big cities. The majority of the new soldiers who went to the Boer war came from the huddled sections of the manufacturing districts, and they did not meet two out of four of the physical requirements formerly required of the imperial recruit. The most patriotic public men of England are now alive to this retrograde condition of the working class, and they have accounted for it adequately, if not satisfactorily.

That the foreigner is not intrinsically an inferior workman is almost evident from the fact that, once he takes his place beside an American fellow craftsman in an American shop or factory he rises in most cases to the same high level of skill and effectiveness as his native born comrade. The exceptions—the foreigners who never adapt or arouse themselves to the American pace and the American standard—are almost invariably old or middle aged men or persons of exceptional stupidity—an uncommon fault, by the way, in the workmen from England, Germany, France, or Scandinavia.

It must be that the pride an American has in his work prompts him to give it always a better finish, always an extra polish, for it is a notorious fact that many American made articles of intrinsically inferior quality are preferred even in rival manufacturing countries for no other cause than that the article from the hands of the workman of the United States had some style about it.

In the absolutely manual crafts there are many branches in which the Americans cannot or rather have not equaled the foreigners as to quality. But, except in what may be called the division of manual arts or artistic crafts in which of late years there has been a noticeable revival in America, the output of wholly manual work, whether in factory or shop, is but a small proportion of the manufacturing capacities of the United States. But if he falls behind in quality of his work in many of the handicrafts, the American continues to surpass all others in the quantity of work he does and can do.

Summing it all up in an introduction to the elaborate report of his commission, Mr. Mosely says for the benefit of the British employer:

"I can only say that if we are to hold our own in the commerce of the world, both masters and men must be up and doing. Old methods must be dropped, old machinery abandoned. Practical education of the masses must be instituted and carried out upon a logical basis, and with efficiency. The bulk of our workmen are already both sober and intelligent, but with many of them there is urgent need for them to become more sober, more rational, more ready to adopt new ideas in place of antiquated methods, and improved machinery whenever produced, and to get the best possible results from a day's work. Manufacturers for their part must be prepared to assure their men a piece price that will not be cut when the latter's earnings exceed what has hitherto been considered sufficient for them. Modern machinery must be introduced, co-operation of the workmen sought, and initiative encouraged in every possible way. Without such a modernized system we cannot hope to compete with countries like the United States, which has this advantage, and is moreover blessed with natural resources such as we do not possess. Britain has, however, in the past led the world, and might yet continue to do so. The material is here. It remains for masters and men mutually to decide whether and how far it shall be utilized in the future."

In the reports of the commissioners only a part of them have gone beyond the general field assigned to them. Here and there are pertinent suggestions and observations that are novel and unexpected. The individuality of the commissioner may be marked in most of these reports, but in only two of them are there any marked indications of the man being out of harmony with the general results of the investigation.

Commissioner Walls, speaking of the work of the blast furnace men and of the equipment provided by employing companies, has risen to enthusiasm on several points that strike him as in sharp contrast with British conditions. His tribute to the perfection of the machine in America is almost

unbounded. Speaking of a great plant, where every individual piece of the manufactured mechanism has a machine devoted to its production, he says:

"Many of these machines are obviously the product of a marvelous inventive genius, doing their work with more than human ingenuity, and only requiring to be fed through a tube with the brass or steel bar, from which the piece is made. Dayton is an enlarged edition of Bournville. In the rolling mills at South Chicago, Homestead, and Youngstown, the machinery is ahead of anything I have seen in similar works in this country. The American Locomotive company's works at Schenectady, which cover sixty two acres, have a mass of powerful as well as ingenious machines, each having its own special duty. They seem to cut up iron, steel, and brass as wood is cut by a cabinetmaker. We were informed that they could turn out six large locomotives a day, or thirty five a week. Over 10,000 hands are employed."

As to the work of the furnace man, he remarks how the use of machinery has lightened his work over that of the British workman, and says of this machinery: "It has been introduced evidently not so much with a view to dispensing with labor as making it lighter and expediting the work." And of this expeditiousness he says that the output of the American is more than double that of the British furnace.

Of the disposition of the British employer to resent suggestions from workmen, Mr. Walls says that foremen and managers in England almost universally reply to a suggestion with the question, Which of us is gaffer? or the assertion, You are not paid for thinking. "This kind of stupidity kept back progress in the manufacture of pig iron for years. The theoretical man, the manager, insisted on what was known as the open mouth and barring the furnace to make room. The practical workman advised a fast head and leave the furnace to do its own work. This suggestion was looked upon with suspicion because it meant less labor. It was only when it became known that on night shifts, in the absence of the managers, the keeper took his own road and made about 20 per cent more iron than on days, that this suicidal policy was abandoned."

Commissioner Maddison of the foundry men, looking over the Allis-Chalmers plant in Chicago, after saying that it was the best of the type he had seen in America, remarks: It was also provided with apparatus for cooling the shop in summer and heating in winter. Fancy any English firm being asked to make such provision for the comfort of its employees.

Of the strike which had just been settled at that plant, he says: "During the strike the usual free labor men, what the Americans term scabs, came on the scene. In point of ability they seem to be on a par with those sailing under the same flag in this country, as may be gathered from the foreman's statement, that he hoped never to pass through a similar ordeal. Indeed, he said he would not undergo such another experience for any money, it being no uncommon thing to run down forty tons of iron per day and obtain fifteen tons of castings, whereas with the union men the present percentage of bad work is only 2 per cent. Asked what had become of the scabs, he said they had gone to another shop belonging to the same firm in the town, run with non society men."

In the next paragraph Mr. Maddison makes an excellent reflection upon the type of British manufacturer who keeps to his close communion business affairs, resenting everything from the outside as an impertinence. He says:

"We next made application for admission to Crane's shop, but were denied. Owing to the manager or employer having visited England some time ago and being refused admission into one or more English plants, he had determined to reciprocate the treatment whenever opportunity offered itself. I was much disappointed, as I had a great desire to see through this firm's works, their class of work being pipes. I understand they employ a good number of females under rather unusual circumstances."

This remark and regret are especially significant when it is the burden of the whole report of the commission that the American shop everywhere was open to the members at all times.

As to the condition of labor in America, with reference to pay by the employers, he cites two instances in sharp contrast with those at home. The first was in a Cincinnati shop, where, with four pieces constituting the regular day's work of a man, the man who makes five pieces a day gets a day and a quarter credited to him on the pay roll. Of the other case, in Pittsburg, he writes: "I was shown a job by the young man who made it (an Englishman). Though allowed eight days for making it, he completed it in five, but not the slightest attempt was made on the part of the firm to participate in the three days made by extra effort, the man being paid the full eight days. When a bad casting occurred he was paid the five days he spent in making it, and then paid the full eight days for making it over again, thus simply losing the three days' extra effort."

Commissioner Cox of the Associated Iron and Steel workers has been inclined to knock some things that are not down on the lists of his research. For instance: "I had been led to expect one eternal, perpetual rush and bustle pervading every aspect of life, whether in the office, in the street, or in the dining room, quite bewildering to the average Englishman. I have walked the principal streets of the leading cities, I have visited all kinds of hotels and restaurants, I have seen a great deal of commercial life in the office, but have yet to see anything in the nature of rush or hustle which cannot be met with in any of the great industrial centers of England, though I often thought the American constable might advantageously take a few lessons from our metropolitan police in the regulation of city traffic."

At Albany, N. Y., he made a mental note of something which seems to have impressed him at many turns. He was in the statehouse. "I had been admiring one of the assembly rooms of the state buildings, and especially what I conceived to be a magnificent oak carved ceiling. I remarked to one of the attendants my admiration of it. 'Yes sir,' he replied, 'but that is not oak carved, it is a papier maché ceiling.' On recounting this to a prominent American and an extensive traveler, he remarked, 'I know of no country

where it may be more forcibly or accurately said, "All is not gold that glitters," ' and so I subsequently realized."

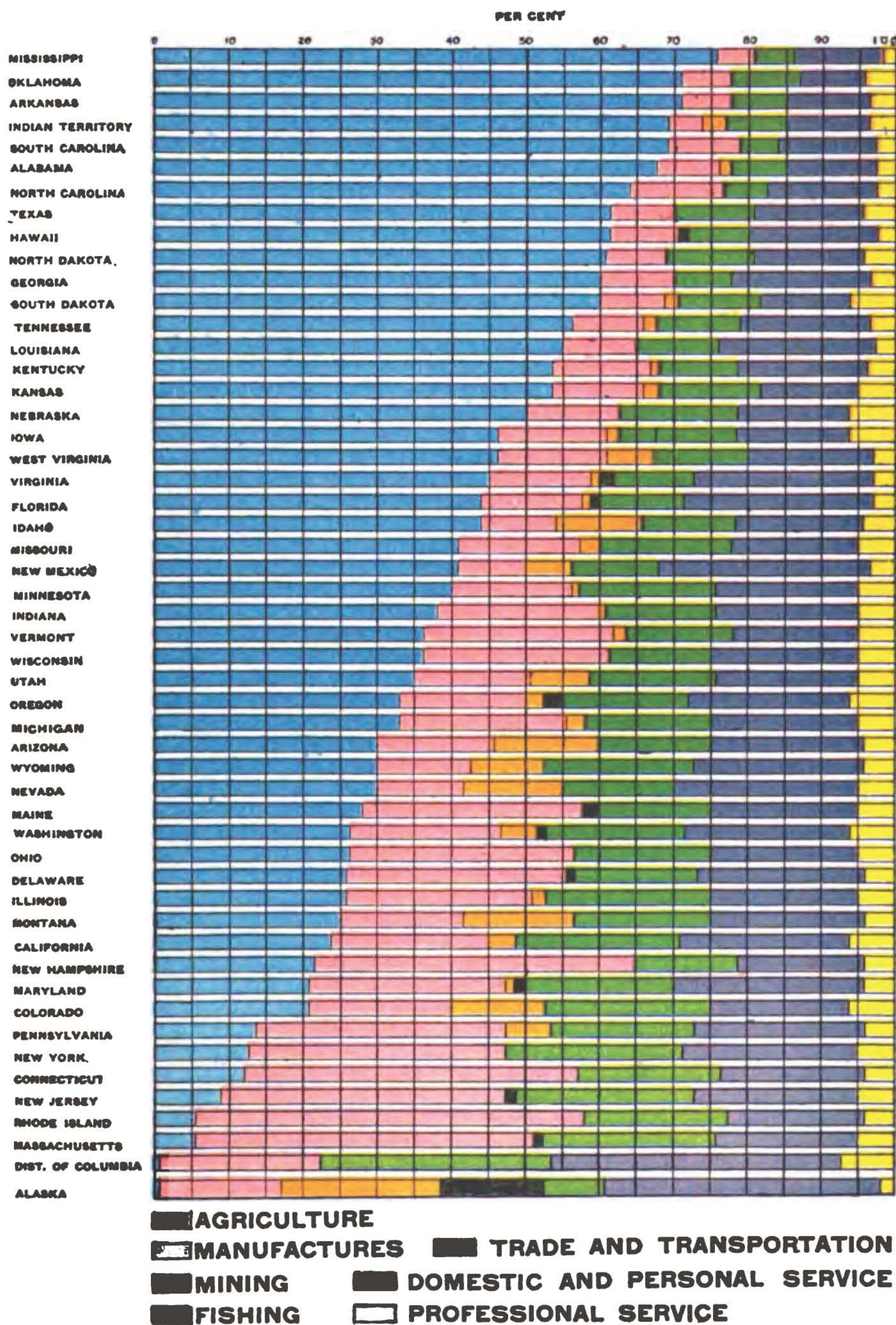
In the gigantic corporations in America, however, Mr. Cox sees something infinitely better than he had seen in Great Britain. Referring to 1899, when American output winded the British manufacturer, he says: "The pity is that several of them ever recovered. The British iron trade and the workmen engaged in it would be infinitely better off if an earthquake could swallow up many of the obsolete works of manufacturers who bleed their works to death in times of good trade and grind their workmen in periods of adversity. Large trusts have their inherent defects, but I am convinced from my investigations that the workman has less to fear in the long run from the operations of concentrated capital than he has from the impecunious employer with his frantic efforts to dip into the wages of his already underpaid workmen."

Mr. Cox is an enthusiast over the machinery equipment of the American iron and steel mills. There is no doubt that the leading mills of American manufacture are far ahead of our own best mills in their arrangement and outputs. I have seen nothing like it in this country—either in the matter of output or labor saving appliances. To the average British iron and steel workers the output of these mills will be incredible. Take the Illinois plate mill of South Chicago, where they have rolled 318 tons of finished plates in twelve hours. The fortnight previous to my visit they had rolled in their one mill 6,060 tons, quite a large percentage of which were down to 3-16 inch thick, and the number of men round the rolls were—one roller, three hookers, one screwer, and one tableman.

Commissioner Barnes, reporting for the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, touches upon the personal side of manufacturing life in the United States. Of Chicago he says in point:

"The Armour school of technology first engaged attention. This school is part of an immense institute, which has been added to from time to time till now there are many activities of a social and educational character. In the school of

PROPORTION OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN EACH CLASS OF OCCUPATIONS



technology, which is devoted to engineering in all its branches, there are 1,000 students, and these all pay fees ranging from $90 to $120 a year from the day students to $10 per term of ten weeks from the evening students. Notwithstanding fees, the place is not self supporting, and is assisted by the Armour firm to the extent of $80,000 yearly. The engineering classes are fairly well equipped, and I was told that they are successful in training men for office work or superintendence of engineering enterprises. The institute does not, however, contribute much to the education of workmen, excepting to help the more aspiring out of the ranks, and I was told that this had resulted in quite a number of cases of workmen who had attended.

"I also visited while in Chicago another technical school in a poorer district. This is run entirely free as regards technical instruction, but it combines a social club element, for which charge is made. I was not favorably impressed with it, and it seemed to me that all the instruction given there could be given far better in the workshop.

"Car fares throughout America are 5 cents for any distance in city limits. Chicago has a good, although ugly, means of transit, and the result is the spreading out of the place, and probably the keeping down of rents to a point smaller than would otherwise be the case. Coal is $7.50 per ton."

For the shipbuilders and the boiler makers, Commissioner Cummings finds that the American menace to shipbuilding in Great Britain is not nearly as great as he had anticipated. As for the lake yards, he says: "Few pure bred Americans are to be found in the lake shipyards, less than one dozen being employed in Lorain, O., the yard which has put into the water these last two years more tonnage than any other yard in the states, the reason given being that the fairly well educated American workman does not care for the dirty, laborious work of the shipyard."

He is the one observer of the whole commission who has seen the American workman as a confirmed gambler, and more than any other he sees the shortening of the life of the worker in this country.

"Gambling and pleasure seeking appear to be characteristic of the American's life; these, taken in conjunction with his ordinary restless spirit, seem to shorten life, make men prematurely old, and increase insanity. Climatic conditions may be to some extent the cause of the generally unhealthy look of the American people, but the opinion generally expressed to enjoy life while it lasts has also some effect. There is, however, less regard for human life in America than in our own country. Life altogether is held cheaper, and that may be inherited from earlier times when firearms were used on the slightest provocation. Altogether I am of the opinion that a halting time will have to take place in the states. The rush for enjoyment, the disregard of human life, the corruption of local politics, and other immoralities, and the almost continental Sunday, added to which is the disinclination to walk or make any exertion after business hours if it can be avoided, all tend toward the moral and physical deterioration of the people, and must be arrested if disaster is to be avoided."

As to the work of the shipwright in the United States, the opinion of Commissioner Wilkie is that the American workman has little advantage in any way over the British worker. He writes:

"The three outstanding features of American industry appeal to me to be its tendency towards greater centralization, as is evinced by the huge trusts and corporations which are everywhere springing up; the specialization of industry and the subdivision of labor, which are carried on to a much greater extent and with a minuteness which has not yet been reached here, and labor saving machinery, which, so far as the factories are concerned, may be said to be in much greater use than in this country. On the other hand, while there are some workshops which have excellent sanitary arrangements and are clean and well lighted, there are others, as in this country, which are just as insanitary, dirty, and congested. There does not appear to me to be the same regard paid to life and limb of the workmen in America as in this country, which may be attributable, perhaps, to the absence of those factory laws we have here. Generally speaking, therefore, I

do not think, as far as the shipbuilding trade is concerned, except in a few instances, the American shipyards are better equipped than those of this country. To speak generally of what I saw on the tour, machinery is in more general use than with us; but, on the other hand, the hours of labor are longer in the week, while the character of the work, its finish, its stability, its permanence, and its durability, is no better than is done in this country. The wages per hour are higher, even having regard to the longer hours worked, and as to the cost of living, generally speaking, I do not think there is much advantage on the side of the United States; and in the shipbuilding industry at least I am satisfied that we can hold our own for years to come."

Commissioner Holmshaw, in his report upon the cutlery business of the country, steps aside for more generally interesting observations. He finds improvement over the cutlery conditions of Sheffield, and then of the American people he adds:

"There is no mistaking native Americans, and as one observes their independent bearing, their shrewd 'cuteness and general air of alertness, one begins to feel prepared for interesting developments in every phase of their national life. Perhaps their most striking characteristic is their intense devotion to everything American—a not unnatural devotion, though perhaps at times emphasized in aggressive character. The finest in the world is a phrase frequently on their lips, but one soon feels so strongly the wonderful fascination of a country which has such superb natural advantages that one can hear the harmless boasting with equanimity. Another characteristic one cannot help noticing is the prevalent desire for making money. Even the children are inspired by it, and perhaps one result of this national ambition strikes us at first as novel, but on second thoughts it is natural enough. This is the absence of any false pride, which, speaking broadly, results in the unconscious recognition of the dignity of labor. Whatever a man can honestly earn money by, no matter what his social position, he counts it no disgrace to do.

"Americans have seen clearly enough that the greatest force to enable them to win their way in the world's markets is education, and they have made wonderful strides of late

years to improve this. So far as I could judge, there is little difference in the elementary school life of America and England, save that the former has no religious difficulty to contend with. There is, in fact, no religious education in America, as we understand the term, yet secular education there produces results that outwardly, at any rate, bear comparison with our own. There is a remarkable absence of bad language in the streets; this was particularly noticeable in the Saturday night crowds.

"It struck me that there was an apparent desire on the part of many parents to allow their children to continue at school after the ordinary leaving age, and all who are acquainted with working class homes will know and appreciate the self sacrifice of parents who allow their children to enter on a four years' course in a commercial school after leaving the ordinary elementary school. In one such school at Philadelphia, out of 177 boys, 55 were the sons of workingmen. Technical schools constitute one of the great features of American higher education. Mechanic arts are a form of technical school. These are splendidly equipped, the tools and appliances being of the best and all free. Equal opportunities here are indeed possible. In one fine school at Boston the principal pointed out to me in haphazard fashion a lad who was the son of the richest railway director in the state; on one side of him was the son of a large builder, and on the other a lad who sold newspapers in the street at night."

Commissioner Jones for the Midland Counties' trades federation, makes pleased comment upon most things seen in the shops and works of the United States, and incidentally treats his readers to a pretty little account of a strike upon which he blundered one day.

November 1, I went to Messrs. Plumbs', at Newtown, and was met by men on strike and taken to their room. The men explained that an order came for 200 pairs of tongs, special. These had been made day work, but the employers wanted them made piecework, offering a price based upon what had been made day work. A man made some for half a day and complained he could not get a living at the price. He had another try for half a day with the same result, would

not make any more at the price, and was discharged. Messrs. Plumb sent for another man and asked him to make them day work. He happened to be an officer of the society. He declined to make them, got discharged, when the other men left; more than 150 of them out. I told the men who I was, and showed them my card, saying I would see them again. They showed me the work. They said they had good funds; had been out five weeks; result, only small part of work on. Mr. Plumb, jr., asked me to stay to lunch. I thanked him, but went to a saloon. It was 12 o'clock dinner time, when Mr. Plumb, jr., came in and invited me into the back room where lunch was; had some with him. When we came out the men who had brought me stood outside. He said these were some of the men on strike; he showed me a handbill they had printed, asking men to keep away from the works, and admitted they had been partly successful; men could not get lodgings, so he had taken houses for them, but they would not stay.

Commissioner Ashton, for the cotton spinners, saw few advantages possessed by either the operating plants or the operators in American mills. However, he admitted one pleasing feature about the system of working the American cotton mills, and that is the superintendents believe in using a good class of cotton, and by this means they are enabled to run their machinery at quick speeds and get out excellent results. They also act on the principle of having their material well carded and cleaned, and they provide the requisite machines for securing such a result, and by adopting this policy they produce good yarns and avoid making a deal of waste. One of the leading mill superintendents in New Bedford informed me that they made a practice of using three grades better cotton than was used in Lancashire for the spinning of the same counts of yarn, and this statement was confirmed by an experienced cotton buyer and seller, with whom I had a long conversation about the American cotton industry generally.

Concluding his report, he says: "On questions relating to the American trade and commerce, I was surprised at the manner in which the press was used to boom information

which was of a favorable character to American manufacturers and their work people. The journalists make a practice of writing in an optimistic spirit about everything which is American, and thereby give encouragement to employers and work people in their efforts to take the lead in the industrial race for supremacy. As a rule the opposite course is taken by commercial and other writers in this country, and this tends to damp the ardor of all concerned in labor and commerce. I consider it would be better for employers and work people in England if the policy of the American press was adopted in this country in the way before referred to."

Commissioner Wilkinson, representing the weavers, found no great advantages possessed by the American. He found even shocking conditions in the south, where children 6 years old were at work in the factories. In no mill anywhere in this country did he find negroes working inside mills, the reason being that as a race they objected to the inside work.

"The keen appreciation which Americans have for up to date machinery and the readiness with which they adopt labor saving machinery of any kind is remarkable. But whatever part machinery has played in the American cotton trade, there is no doubt whatever that the great increase of recent years, especially in fancy cloths, must be attributed to the American protective tariff."

Writing of the condition of the tailor in America, the report of Commissioner Flynn has in point:

"So far as American employers are concerned, and so far as we could see, the best kind of relationship exists between them and the people they employ. Whether in day wage firms or firms using exclusively the piecework system, every inducement was held out to the employees to combine their interests with those employing them. On both sides there was an unmistakable heartiness and good fellowship which can only arise when the output, wages, and general working conditions are satisfactory."

American employers believe that machines rather than men or women ought to be driven, and the clever workman who by invention or suggestion enables his employer to carry out this ideal is encouraged in a manner delightfully real and

sincere. Let us illustrate. One firm gives a dollar for every suggestion made by an employee and accepted by the firm. This firm, it may be added, provides a gymnasium for its employees, men and women, and for the latter it also provides a music room and general lounge. Another, abolishing the money prize, gives a week's or a fortnight's holiday at the firm's expense. Another system of encouragement is that of firms which allow a workman who has an idea that will improve the system or method of production a week or a month to work the idea out, pay him his usual wages, and, if need be, tell off a man or gang of men to work under him. Another feature of factory and workshop life in America is the regardless of expense manner in which air, light, all sanitary, bath, and lavatory arrangements are carried out. Better than our best London hotels provide, was the remark of delegates competent to judge. While all were not up to this high standard, it is undoubtedly true that a toil begrimed workingman making his way homewards is a rara avis in America.

Commissioner Hornridge of the British National union of boot and shoe operatives, wrote:

"At Lynn, with one firm I visited, two things struck me as being out of the ordinary: (1) The apparent happiness and contentedness of the people, the familiarity existing between them and their employer, and (2) the fact that quite 40 per cent of them were people ranging from 30 to 63 and 64 years of age. One female, who had worked for the firm twenty nine years, was apparently as happy as could be, and when I congratulated the employer upon the fact that his elderly workers had not been cast into the streets he asked, 'Why should they?' and went on to say that he himself was getting gray and aged, and would not care to be pole axed or starved, and that as long as his workpeople did their work he would rather have around him elderly people on whom he could rely than young ones on whom such reliance could not be placed.

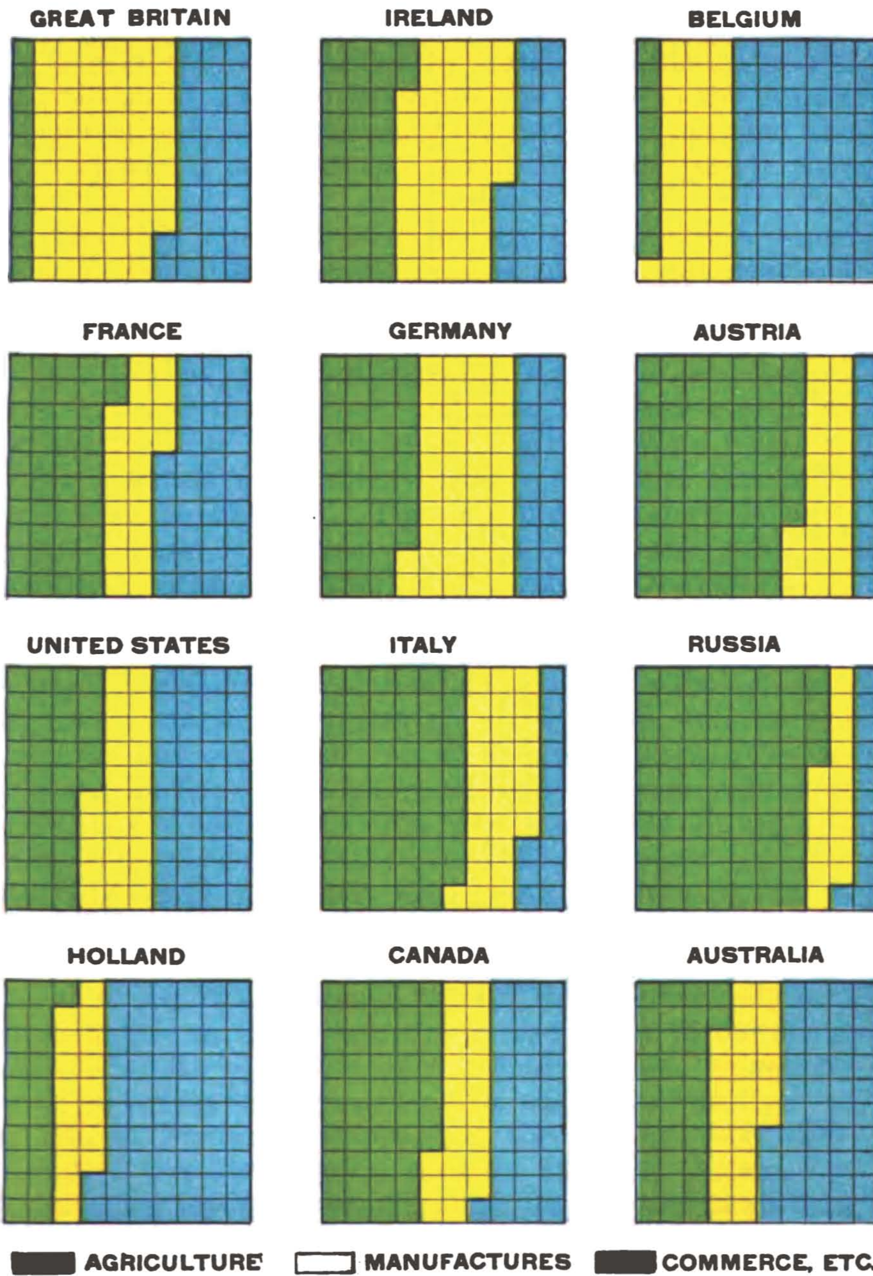
"I took the liberty of asking the lady above referred to what her age might be, as I saw that she was nearly keeping pace in her work of machining uppers with a woman of 28 or

29 years of age who was sitting alongside her. I was astounded on being informed that she was 63 years old."

Commissioner Lapping for the leather workers makes a point of addressing the tanners of his own country in a concluding paragraph in which there is much meaning:

"In conclusion, I must again state that I am of the opinion that we cannot compete with any certainty of success with the states for the markets of the world, as with their great natural advantages they can undersell us, but in these days of chemically tanned goods and the use of extracts, I do not see why we cannot successfully compete with them for the trade of our own country. In my humble opinion the fault does not lie with the British workman in the leather industry, but with the employer. He sticks too much to the old ideas. He does not keep pace with the times. He produces a good article, but that is not all that is required. Let him remodel and refit his factory on an up to date plan, get more in touch with his employees, provide them with a shop that has a degree of comfort about it, and give them a wage that will enable them to live at a higher standard than at present, even if he asks them to do more work for the same; then the time may come when we shall get nearer holding our own with our cousins over the seas. If some of the employers of this country would pay a visit to some of the up to date factories of the states, I feel sure they would learn something that would compensate them for the expense incurred."

"Much as I admire our fellow craftsmen in America," writes Commissioner Taylor of the bricklayers, "I should be sorry indeed to see American methods of building construction (especially as far as brickwork is concerned) adopted in this country, because if they were the workman would be subjected to more risks to life and limb, with little, if any, chance of compensation. Technical knowledge, training, and skill would be at a discount. All that natural pride the real craftsman takes in the strength, durability, and finish of his handicraft would be extinguished and destroyed; all the years of struggle and work we have had to raise the standard of workmanship to its present high standard would have been in vain, and all would be sacrificed in the interests


OCCUPATIONS
PERCENTAGE IN EACH CLASS
GREAT BRITAIN
IRELAND
BELGIUM
FRANCE
GERMANY
AUSTRIA
UNITED STATES
ITALY
RUSSIA
HOLLAND
CANADA
AUSTRALIA
AGRICULTURE
MANUFACTURES
COMMERCE, ETC.

of present day utility. At the same time I am of opinion that the employers in this country would do well to follow the example set them by the employers in the United States, by keeping in closer touch with those in their employ and meeting them on terms of equality, by forming conciliation boards or branches of the civic federation, by adopting the system of apprenticeship and the eight hour day, and last, but not least, by paying the same rate of wages that are paid in New York."

Slatternly, hurried work in the United States seems to have struck Commissioner Deller, of the plasterers, and he adds to this general arraignment of conditions:

"Speaking generally of the work and workmen in the trade, I can only say that the work is far and away behind that executed in England, and the hampered conditions are anything but pleasant to work under. Were I an employer I should make them better, feeling sure that more work would be the result. The scaffolding was the most crude I ever saw or could have imagined. Poles and ropes are entirely ignored, and the uprights are quartering (called scantling in some parts). If these were not long enough, another piece was put on the end, and the two were merely fastened together by a piece of slab nailed on the one side. On some of those I ventured upon the boards were up and down, so that one had to use much care in walking to prevent a stumble. I was informed by some when remarking upon these defects that few accidents occurred; others said there were plenty, but the press did not report them, so that only those intimately acquainted with the victim, or dependent upon him for subsistence, were aware of the fact. I am inclined to believe the latter in preference to the former. Suffice to say it would be a case of extreme necessity that would induce me to intrust my life upon some of the flimsy scaffolds I saw—uprights as previously shown, stayed by strips no stronger in appearance than a fair slate lath."

W. C. Stedman, representing the parliamentary committee of the trades union congress of Great Britain, has submitted a report covering general observations in all lines of work.

He finds the system of education in the United States better than that of Great Britain. He did not see the American working at a harder drive than does the average Englishman. A factory at Niagara he is prepared to accept as the finest industrial building in the world. He found a store in Chicago which he would urge London merchants to see.

"I thought now was my opportunity to ask a man who had worked on both sides of the Atlantic, whether the men worked harder in America than in the old country. His answer was emphatic: 'The machinery does the work here; I never worked so hard in all my life as I did in London. Practically all was hand labor, and what was done by machinery was most imperfectly done. That was not always the fault of the machinist, but was due to old and not up to date machinery. Whenever we hear of a new machine coming out, and we find it is better than what we have got, we chuck the old out and put up the new one at once. Here is a mortise machine, the best I could get at the time. Now there is a new one, invented and patented by a Mr. Black of Milwaukee; I ordered one at once, but I cannot get it, such is the rush of orders. That is how we get along so fast with the work here; in the old country they just drag along with the old machinery, and only when it is worn out, and not till then, will they think of replacing it.' The men in this shop were working as comfortably as ever I saw men in all my experience, for all the hard work was done for them."

Admitting that the machine in the United States is marvelous in its adaptability to the furniture trades, Commissioner Ham takes a rap at the American product:

"There is no question that if a large hotel required 200 bedroom suits, machine made, and, of course, all of the same pattern, probably we would be beaten by the Yankees; but if, on the other hand, a mansion required to be furnished where a different style and design was desired for each apartment, then I am certain the work could be produced better and cheaper here than in America. In the states, as far as furnishing is concerned, everything is sacrificed to turning out large quantities; there is no chance for indulgence in individual tastes for a distinctive style, as in England."

But after all there is no comparison between the two countries, he admits. America has natural advantages we have not here. Take her lakes for instance, more like inland seas, and rivers, then compare them with our Thames, Tyne, and Clyde. One can only have admiration for the old country that has been able (and still capable) to do so much out of so little. In New York harbor they have 40 feet of water at low tide, so that the largest ship afloat can always get to its berth without having to wait for the tide.

"The English worker has nothing to learn from America, but the employers have a lot. I do not assume for one moment we are the best, but this I do say, we cannot be beaten in the world for good, solid, well finished work that will stand the test of years to come. Let our employers realize that labor is as much a partner in the business as his capital, and that the success or failure of that business depends upon both; he has the best material to work upon. Treated properly he need have no fear of American competition, or that of any other country in the world, for high wages pay both the employer and the employed. In America they know this, and act up to it; hence the secret of their success."

Whether or no the English workman has nothing to learn from us, there can be no question of the fact that the American workman's high wages are a cause of his efficiency as well as an effect.