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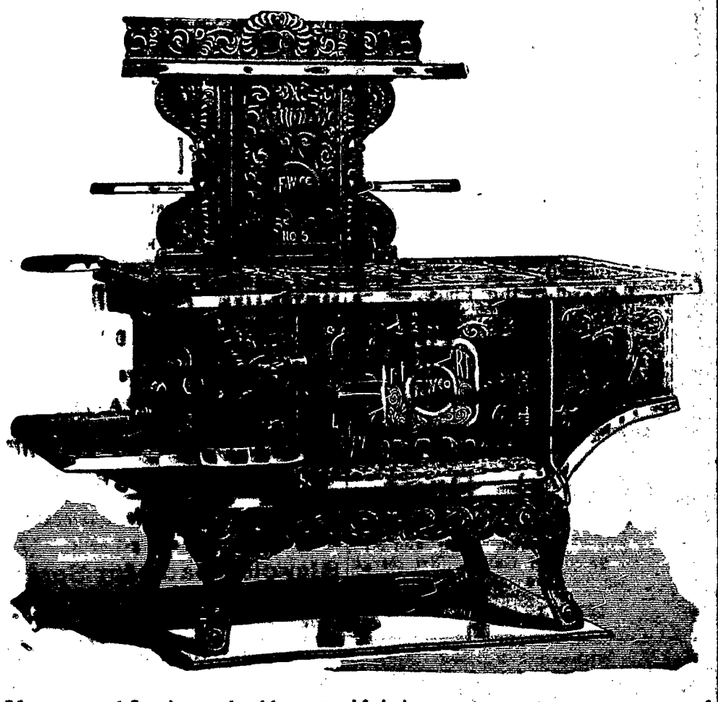

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AN OPTIMIST'S VIEW

AN ECONOMIST ON THE FUTURE OF OUR GREAT INDUSTRIES.

What Plenty of Wholesome Food and Good Wages Do For the American Mechanic—Tremendous Advance In Exports—Tendency of Iron Interests.

[From an address by A. E. Outerbridge, Jr., to students of the University of Pennsylvania.]

It is my conviction that many of our industries have now reached this period of adolescence, or even of full vigor, and are well armed and prepared to explore new lands and to conquer new territories.

Advance couriers have already been sent "to spy out the land," and, if I may venture to claim any degree of prescience of the future, resulting from careful study of past industrial conditions, I would say that, with the coming of the twentieth century, new and greatly enlarged fields of operation will be opened up by energetic pioneers of trade, who will not hesitate to hew out new pathways for themselves, even though many laggards may eventually follow after at their leisure and avail themselves of the advantages which have thus been gained by the pluck and toil of the pioneers.

The bureau of statistics in Washington shows that exports of American manufactures are increasing year by year, thus proving that we are now successfully competing in the markets of the world with the manufactured products of cheaper labor in foreign countries.

Although complete returns for the year 1896 are not yet available, it is safe to estimate, from the figures furnished in the past 11 months, that the total exports of manufactures for the year will equal if they do not exceed $250,000,000. This will be about $50,000,000 more than in 1895, which figures were, in turn, about $25,000,000 more than those of 1894.

Subtracting from the total those items which do not involve elaborate mechanical processes—such as petroleum, copper ingots, etc.—it appears that about 70 per cent of the value includes a great variety of manufactures in which skilled labor forms the largest element of cost.

These divisions include agricultural implements, sewing machines, typesetters and typewriters, watches and clocks, boots and shoes, locomotives and other machinery, machine tools and hardware, electrical supplies and scientific apparatus.

It has heretofore been maintained—and indeed is still contended—by many manufacturers, that the relatively high wages paid to skilled labor in America, as compared with wages in European countries, preclude the possibility of successful competition, but facts are more convincing than theories.

Within the past few years several large manufacturers, thinking to avail themselves of cheaper labor abroad, have established branches of their works in different parts of Europe. The same equipment of labor saving tools and, as far as possible, the same systems of management were employed.

The result in each case proved a surprise. American labor, though highly paid, is so much more efficient that it has been thus shown to be cheaper in the end than that of poorly paid operatives in Europe. Several specific instances of this kind might be given if space permitted. Exact imitations of American manufactured products, including machine tools, have been made in France, but they have cost more to produce there than the imported genuine articles cost.

It has been contended that freight rates on all heavy manufactured articles would surely always prove a prohibitive handicap. Facts again disprove theories. Two years ago an Alabama furnace sent an experimental shipment of 250 tons of pig iron to England. This was considered an "exceptional case," and was also pronounced a visionary project and derided as ridiculous in the extreme.

Within this brief period, says The Manufacturers' Record, the demonstration is complete.

"From that experimental 250 ton shipment this business has increased until now there is an actual scarcity of steamer room to handle the business offered. Orders are being booked every week for large shipments to England and to continental countries. It is difficult to rightly measure the influence of this trade upon the world's commercial interests."

From a recent statement by an officer of a leading furnace company the foreign orders booked by that company alone amounted to about 40,000 tons and inquiries under consideration between 30,000 and 40,000 tons. One of these, the same day on which this information was given, covering 5,000 tons, materialized into an order.

Pig iron has already been shipped to Liverpool, Manchester, Rotterdam, Vienna, Genoa, Triest, Yokohama and elsewhere abroad. These are facts not yet generally known.

Mr. John Fritz, in reviewing the history of the manufacture of pig iron during the past 50 years at a recent meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers said that prior to 1840, when anthracite fuel was introduced in blast furnaces, the metal was nearly all made with charcoal, a good sized furnace of that day producing 15 to 20 tons of pig iron a week. In a lecture on pig iron which I delivered before the Franklin institute in 1888 I called attention to the fact that blast furnaces were then producing 1,000 tons of pig iron per week and a still larger output might be expected in the future.

The Carnegie company is now building an extensive new plant at Duquesne, Pa., and furnace No. 1 is already in operation. During a single month (November, 1896) this furnace produced a daily average of 572 tons of standard bessemer pig iron, something hitherto unprecedented, and at the same time lowered the record with respect to proportion of fuel and cost per ton; 1,600 pounds of coke sufficed to smelt a ton of iron.

This company now controls ore beds of enormous extent on the famous Mesaba range in Minnesota, from which it obtains its low phosphorous iron ore at phenomenally low prices. It has taken from one mine alone—the Oliver—during the past year more than 900,000 tons, at a cost of less than 20 cents per ton, all charges included. The mining (so called) consists in scooping out the hillside with steam shovels and depositing the ore directly on the cars.

An idea of the capacity of this labor saving machinery may be gained from the recent statement of Professor Winchell that, in spite of certain unavoidable delays, "an output of 808,292 tons was made during the year with three shovels, one of which was idle about half the time."

The estimate of 20 cents per ton here given as cost of mining appears to be excessive, as Professor Winchell, who has itemized the factors going to make up the cost, states that the stripping charge per ton of ore, uncovered, does not usually exceed 6 or 7 cents per ton, and the cost of shoveling the ore out of its natural bed after stripping does not exceed 10 cents, and with a very large output may be less than half this amount.

Crude pig iron stands near the bottom of the list of articles involving a high degree of skilled labor. American watches, on the other hand, head the list. Yet they are exported in constantly increasing quantities to all parts of the world.

Very recently the American consul at Bradford, England, reported as follows:

"One Bradford firm of jewelers alone has a stock of 20,000 Waltham watches. In addition, it has watches of the Elgin and other makes and sells large numbers." American files, made by machinery, according to the testimony of Consul Meeker, compete with English handmade files. He mentions one order, recently sent to this country, for 1,000 dozen, whereas an order for 200 dozen English files would be considered ordinarily as a large one.

"Go into any cutlery or hardware shop in Bradford," said Mr. Meeker, "and ask for shears, and you will be handed a pair bearing the Newark or Trenton (N. J.) imprint. They are considered superior in every way, and one of the strange things about it is that they must be purchased through Sheffield, which is supposed to be the rival of American cutlery manufacturers. These shears, a dealer said to me, are superior to all others, because they are 'sweet cutters.' The shears used by tailors and cutters are almost entirely of American make.

"Turbine water wheels and printing presses of American manufacture are also sold in Bradford."

The export of machine made boots and shoes is rapidly growing and has indeed, already assumed large proportions.

Within a few years past great improvements have been made in the shoe-making machinery and in the product, accompanied by an equally noticeable reduction in cost.

Few persons are aware of the present extent of this business, which has grown up from very small beginnings. Statistics show that in the census year of 1890 no less than 179,500,000 pairs of boots and shoes were made in factories in this country by 194,000 operatives, an average of nearly 1,000 pairs per annum for each employee, and an average of nearly three pairs of shoes for every inhabitant.

A single factory employing 258 hands—chiefly girls—turned out 2,100 pairs of women's shoes a day.

The best qualities of machine made shoes are now fully equal to the best handmade shoes, and are produced at one-third the cost. This accounts for their favorable reception in a number of new markets, in spite of former prejudices and of occasional misrepresentations of rivals, who naturally fear loss of business.

Seven thousand tons of steel rails, besides enormous quantities of other railroad material, are now being made in Pittsburg for Japan, and large orders have, it is said, been booked for China.

A complete locomotive manufacturing plant was recently shipped from Philadelphia to Russia, and railroad machinery is now on its way from this port to Australia.

A multitude of similar illustrations could be given, but these will serve as straws to show the direction in which the "trade winds" are now blowing, and it only remains for American enterprise to take advantage of the opportunities which favorable circumstances offer to enter upon a new era of industrial prosperity.

The secret of success in these tentative experiments is to be found in the wonderful advances which have been made in labor saving machinery, supervised by intelligent highly paid operatives, whereby the productive capacity of each employee is enormously increased and the cost per unit of product correspondingly reduced.

The possibilities of reduction in cost of manufacture of any given articles are not always appreciated first by those who are most familiar with the routine methods. New departures are apt to emanate from those who approach the problem from a new standpoint, unbiased by old traditions.

To Move Michigan's Capital.

At a meeting of 40 citizens at Governor Pingree's residence the other night a plan was originated toward the removal of the Michigan state capital from Lansing to Detroit, the expense of grounds and buildings to be borne by the city, provided the legislature will submit the question of removal to the people and the people vote in favor of the change. The idea is to make a state park [illegible] and erect the capital thereon.

CARNIVAL IN PARIS.

Fun Galore For the Parisians—Queer Tricks and Transformations.

The Parisians are making gigantic preparations for their coming carnival. It is expected that it will be even a grander affair than the one of last year. The programme, or at least the greater portion of it, is already known. At the head of the procession Prince Carnival will come, not, as was expected at first, with an escort of bicyclists, but in an automobile omnibus, which he himself will drive. In the interior of this enormous carriage, horses and automedon on the retired list will think about it delight. The chariot of the fat ox will be preceded by a rustic chariot with Druids and Gauls, and followed by the cars of the different branches of Parisian alimentation. The charcuterie car will carry enormous pigs, gathered around a fire and putting pasteboard cooks upon spits. Then Mother Michel will appear, chasing her cat on the roofs.

The chariot for painting will be an immense palette, the colors of which will all be pretty girls dressed in all the shades of the rainbow. The music chariot will be a clown five meters high, playing a harp, and in the box of the instrument there will be 28 musicians.

Last year the people were delighted at the spectacle of the animated roses, but this year the chrysanthemums will be still more beautiful. At first nothing will be seen but about 50 young girls seated on the steps and sheltered under beautiful umbrellas. At a given signal the umbrellas will turn around and conceal completely their owners. The car at the same moment will be transformed into an immense basket of chrysanthemums of brilliant colors. This leading feature in the procession will have a companion in the form of a car representing a portion of the Boulevard, with booths, chestnut trees, bicyclists and gazers. In one angle, standing upon a little tower, astronomers will scan the horizon with evident anxiety. A cyclone will come quite suddenly. The astronomers will raise their hands in terror; the booths will all tumble down; the trees, made of rubber, will bend and from a trap a policeman, club in hand, will jump up and run after the cyclone.

After these cars the chariot of the city of Paris will come and also what is called the parisian chariot. For this the organizers asked the military authorities to lend them some soldiers, but the request was not granted. Therefore there will be 272 men, 44 women, 36 children and 200 musicians in the chariot. Just as in last year's carnival, second what was called the charcuterie alimentation, potatoes, poultry, lobsters, codfish, eels, etc., will dance gayly. The procession will begin on Sunday at 11 o'clock and [illegible] on Monday and Shrove Tuesday. The Palais de l'Industrie has been placed at the disposal of the organizers of the carnival.—New York Sun.

McKINLEY A FARMER.

President Elect Owns a Farm of 100 Acres and Sells Apples.

President Elect McKinley has just shipped a carload of apples from his Columbiana county farm to Columbus and disposed of them for 5 cents a bushel. Few people, even in Canton, know that Mr. McKinley owns a farm. So far as can be learned, he has never referred to it in his speeches.

When the Wilson bill went into effect, and he was forced to sell his large flock of sheep because there was no money in their fleeces, Mr. McKinley told the manager of his farm that he believed prices would be better under the next administration.

Mr. McKinley's farm consists of 100 acres. It is located near the junction of Carroll, Stark and Columbiana counties, about three miles from the little town of Minerva, 20 miles from Canton. He was prosecuting attorney of Stark county when he acquired the farm. Jack Adams, who manages the farm and divides the proceeds with the owner, has lived in the picturesque old farmhouse for the last 17 years. The house has been built for 60 years.

The president elect's former neighbors all mine their coal in their back door yards, and undoubtedly it would not be necessary to dig very deep to reach the bed on his own farm.—New York World.

At the present time London has over 6,000 solicitors.

In Lapland dress fashions have not changed for 1,000 years.

In Japan the number of earthquakes average about 500 a year.

The Tower of London is said to be the oldest building in Europe.

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