THE OMAHA SUNDAY BEE.

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Visits With London Tradesmen.

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LONDON, Nov. 20.—[New York Herald Cable.—Special Telegram to the BEE.]—The journeymen bricklayers of London complain bitterly about their position and prospects. The trade is stagnant, and for what work there is, crowds of country mechanics, driven by poverty from the provinces, compete desperately with the city workmen. London is already overbuilt, so that special building has almost ceased. The rather unusual number of large buildings now going up might serve to support in some comfort the regular city supply of bricklayers, but until a revival of the building trade in the provinces draws back into the country the bricklayers who have come to seek their fortunes in London, both workmen and masters agree there is little hope of bettering the precarious condition of the city tradesmen. The trouble is not so much bad pay or long hours, but rather lack of employment. All the London bricklayers are paid by the hour. The general rate is nine-pence (about 18 cents) an hour. In some cases the rate is 7½ to 8 pence, but this is only by the small builders. The working hours are, by the trade rule, fifty-two and a half a week in summer and forty-seven in winter. Some builders, however, work their men from fifty-five to sixty hours per week. Bricklayers, fully employed, work, therefore, nine and a half to ten and a half hours a day for $10 to $12 a week, with a half holiday on Saturday.

THEIR SOCIAL CONDITION.

I can best give an idea of the social condition of London bricklayers by describing the homes and lives of their families from among many I visited and talked with during the past week. S—B—, of Tower street, Lambeth district, is an excellent workman with considerable education, and who has been more than usually successful in obtaining work. He has no children at home to support and educate, and his wife is a neat and energetic woman. Tower street, by the way, is one of the many similar suburban streets which compose the resident quarters of the mechanic class, and is lined with low, three-story brick houses, two rooms deep. The street is muddy, narrow and crowded with ragged children. In each house live two to four families. In the third story of one of these houses I found Mrs. B. awaiting her husband's return from work. They live, cook, eat and sleep in a single very moderate-sized room. Nevertheless all was neat and cosy. A bright fire burned in a small open grate, over which all the family cooking is done. A small, round table, covered with oilcloth, stood near the fire, and photographs and cheap pictures were on the walls. Two cupboards held clothes and dishes, and other clothes were hung back of the door. A bed stood in one corner. About 6 o'clock B. returned. A tall, strong man, past middle age, sufficiently educated to be secretary and treasurer of the local branch of the Bricklayers' union. A bucket of water in the hall served as a lavatory to enable him to get off the dust of his day's work; then a pair of slippers and supper, during which I asked about his daily life.

A WORKMAN'S STORY.

He said: "I get up at half past 4 because I am forced to walk three and a half miles to work. Before starting I make a cup of tea for myself. After working from 6 to 8. I have half an hour, during which I get my breakfast at a coffee shop—tea 2 pence, bread I have carried with me, and perhaps bacon or eggs. At 12 I have an hour for dinner and get, usually, a good make-shift dinner for 7 pence at the coffee house—that is, meat, roast or broiled, with vegetables and bread. Supper is at 6, as you see—tea, bread, perhaps some relish. My wife lives much the same. She gets along very well except when ill. Then she must be alone, without attendance all day, while I work. She does no work beyond household matters. My son is a bricklayer. London architects object to apprentices, so he learned his trade in the country. I am much more fortunate than most bricklayers. I have inside work, which enables me to make full time and wages. I was out of work fifteen weeks last spring, but even this is doing better than most mechanics. A bricklayer is lucky if he obtains 160 days work annually.

NO SAVINGS MADE.

"No; I have made no savings during my life. You see, we live in one room, but I pay 3 shillings and 6 pence a week for it. I do not mean to starve myself in order that landlords may have luxuries."

"Yes," broke in his wife, "there is a family down stairs that have lived in this house thirty-six years. The man is now out of work. The landlord suddenly raised the rent by half a crown a week, so he forced the family to leave their old home."

"Yes," continued B., "I might perhaps save a little, not much though. It took me seven months to pay debts I incurred when last out of work. Then my mother-in-law and my own father are helpless and need all I can spare. My brother has just broken his leg. He helped me and I must help him. How can I save out of £2 a week. With pride I educated my boy at a private school, paying 6 pence a week. That's the only investment I ever made. I go to the theatre twice a month. All my other evenings I spend doing needle work. Trade is very bad—so bad that 170 members out of 183 in my branch of the bricklayers' union have forfeited their society insurance through inability to pay their dues."

THOUSANDS OF MEN UNEMPLOYED.

There are about 25,000 bricklayers in London, and I think it would be easy to find 10,000 unemployed. Hundreds apply for work where one or two are wanted."

Mrs. B., with evident pride, brought out her husband's needle work, and explained that he won many medals at the exhibitions, and at one he had sold a quilt for $30. His latest work is a quilt, with silk woven portraits of all the royal family, made in honor of Queen Victoria's jubilee.

OUT-DOOR INTERVIEWS.

Outside the Victoria coffee tavern, commonly called the "Vic" by the familiar residents, I found, in spite of the cold and wet evening, a group of gaunt, out-of-elbows men. There was a tremendous eagerness in the quick response made by half a dozen men to my inquiries for bricklayers. I selected a sober, intelligent mechanic, formerly treasurer of a branch of the Bricklayers' union, J—A—, of King street, Lambeth. He had had only thirteen weeks' work during the past year. Although still an active, hard worker, his age, sixty-three years, gives younger men a better chance than he of obtaining work. His home is a single small room on the ground floor. I found his wife sitting hungry and crying before a small fire. The only furniture was a narrow deal table and two broken chairs. A pile of old clothes refused by the pawnbroker lay on the floor and served for a bed. A mason's trowel and a writ of ejectment for nonpayment of rent completed the list of articles in the room. The fire was from a penny worth of coal given by a friend. The woman was of the New England type of angularity and neatness. The boards of the floor were scrubbed white, and a few cheap unsaleable pictures were pinned to the walls.

READY FOR THE WORKHOUSE.

He said: "I suppose we must go to-morrow to the workhouse where we shall be separated from each other. We had seven children, but six are dead. The other, a girl, is married outside of London, but is unable to help us. We never could save much. Rent, food, and clothes for the children took all we could earn when in work. I am able and anxious to work. My wife is the same."

"Yes," the wife broke in, "I worked last summer at Blackwell's pickle factory. I could earn twenty-five cents a day paring apples, but the season is over."

The husband remarked: "I can earn $10 a week bricklaying if someone would give me work. There are many mechanics as badly off as I am. It's hard enough merely to live; saving is impossible."

AN AVERAGE WORKMAN'S LOT.

I next saw G—P—, of Webber Wad, Southwark, who is a fair average specimen of the more fortunate London bricklayers. He rents a two story, six-room house for 12s 10d per week, and then sublets two furnished rooms for 7s. The parlor is rather shabbily furnished with a bureau, two tables, several pictures and even some stuffed birds. He is married and has six children. The eldest girl, twenty-two, is a confectioner's assistant. She works from 9 till 8, lives at home, and pays 7s a week board. The second girl is a bookfolder, and has eleven hours' work daily. She earns from 3s to 15s per week. A boy, eighteen, is a wiremaker's apprentice and earns 11s weekly. He is not a bricklayer's apprentice, because his father thinks his own trade is the worst in London. All the children were educated at the national schools. The hours, work and food are the same exactly as in the first case, except that by overwork he now earns £2 3s per week instead of the regular £1 18s. He has had only nine and a half month's work in the last twelve, but thinks himself lucky to get this much. He is a teetotaler, never goes to theaters, has no amusements except horse car rides to the parks on holidays; nevertheless, he has never saved anything, but, on the contrary, has been forced to spend all he earned and then not have enough. Once, before his marriage, he saved £18, but it was all spent in a family illness. He does not know a journeyman bricklayer in London, who, as such, ever saved $500.

THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED.

From this and many other cases I judge London bricklayers work rather short hours at fair pay, but that the uncertainty regarding work, and the long periods of idleness, effectually prevent saving. There seems to be little or no social life. The lack of money prevents amusement or excursions. Before marriage, sober young men are willing to forego all pleasure that they may save a few pounds for marriage. The utmost trifle hardly makes saving a possibility. No provision is made for old age, and the workhouse is regarded by many as the only refuge for the average journeyman if he lives longer than he can work. The workhouse is so hated, however, that bricklayers avoid the industrial dwellings because they look like workhouses.

THE UNION MEN.

Of 25,000 bricklayers in London 24,000 belong to the Operative Bricklayer's society, formed to control wages and insure its members against illness, lack of work and pauper burial. The society has its lodge on Southwark bridge road, and has $15,000 invested. It grants 12s per week for sick benefit, $15 for burial benefit, and 1s per day to members seeking work. The superannuated benefit varies from 4s to 8s per week. Another trade society has at present only eighteen members. The bricklayers also belong to such benefit societies as the Odd Fellows, etc.; but, as a rule, make no provision for the future beyond membership in some Christmas club, which distributes all its funds in time for the holiday dinner.

NO RECENT STRIKES.

There has been no general strikes since 1870, but the employes confess that the advance of wages from 7 pence to 9 pence, weekly payments, short hours etc., are due in a great measure to these strikes in the past. Strikes seem to have temporarily depressed the building trade, but have made no lasting feud between master and men. In fact, most of the men told me frankly that they thought the masters were making little money, and did not blame them for the hard times.

The Workmen of Paris.

[Copyright 1886 by James Gordon Bennett.]

PARIS, Nov. 20.—[New York Herald Cable—Special to the BEE.]—For the past week I have been living with the bricklayers and working masons of Paris—been with them at their work, at their lodgings, eaten with them, drank with them, and attended their meetings, obliged for this purpose to wear a blouse and become to all outward appearance a workmen out of work. The Parisian masons look like walking meal bags in their white blouse and trousers. They are so saturated with the dust of the limestone with which they work that white clouds emenate from them in suffocating puffs at the slightest provocation. In Paris hardly any houses are built of brick, and the total number of bricklayers is less than 400. But the class that correspond with the bricklayers of New York and London are the masons, and to them I have devoted my researches. There are in round numbers to-day in Paris 40,000 working masons. Of these, at least 15,000 come from Limage and the province of Haute Vienna, and 8,000 are Italians, mostly from Piedmont. Among the Parisian working masons I have found many half-educated, highly intelligent men, such as Mm. Bontet, Cancalon, Roob, Chancelet, Santreau, Port, Hault, Obey and Blanchet. They live in clean, comfortable lodgings, near the Hotel de Ville. They are ideal Parisian artisans, but the majority of masons are far below all other workingmen in Paris for industry and morality. The police statistics show that of every 5,000 arrests made in Paris, on an average, 100 are masons.

INTERVIEWING A WORKER.

The following interview with M. Bontet, who lives at No. 13 rue Obligado gives the best insight into the life and social condition of the masons that possibly can be obtained. M. Bontet's facts and figures I have verified by interviews with upwards of fifty masons and members of the municipal councils of Paris, including Citoyen, Joffrin and Dr. Brousse, and also by researches at the Masons' Syndicate of Paris. M. B. is a slight built, lithe, but muscular man, about thirty-two years of age, with a bright, fresh countenance, intelligent dark eyes. He is handsome and eloquent, and was recently elected by the working masons a member of the Masons' Syndicate. He enjoys great influence with his colleagues. I asked him:

"What is a mason's pay for a day's work?"

M. Bontet—The average is 8 franes for the very best workmen, and 5f. for assistant and green hands. But, as the length of a day's work often varies, the pay is usually based on so much per hour. The average work day is ten hours in summer and nine hours in winter, but some bosses may make men work twelve hours a day. The pay per hour for the best workmen is from 60 to 75 centimes; for raw hands and assistants, 40 to 45 centimes usually. The Italians are willing to work twelve hours a day. Masons get up at 4 o'clock in summer and at half-past 5 in winter. They usually go to bed about 9 or 10.

Correspondent—How often does pay day come?

M. Bontet—The first Saturday of each month for the best workmen, but small sums are given on account every Wednesday and Saturday. The masons' assistants—garcon macons—are always paid every day.

Correspondent—What is about the average number of days' work in the year?

M. Bontet—There is no work for masons during the three winter months. The most industrious workmen cannot get more than 250 day's work in the year. At present there is a severe crisis, and over one-third of the masons of Paris are without any work at all.

Correspondent—What aid or co-operative societies are there among masons?

M. Bontet—There is the Union Syndicate, directed by working masons, who are elected by their fellow workmen. The Union Syndicate is a sort of masons' parliament, where all complaints are verified, all proposals considered and discussed, and by which salaries are kept up as far as possible so as to enable the masons to live like human beings—where, in short, everything touching their welfare is studied and discussed. There is also a masons' savings bank which also insures masons against accidents. This is supported by the retention of one son a day from all masons in active work. This institution provided half pay for six months to masons out of work, and pays to a mason who loses a leg or an arm a round sum of 600f, and pays 1,000f to the widow or heirs in case of a fatal accident happening in the performance of daily work. There is also an institution for mutual aid known as the Union des Macons, but unfortunately, more bosses than workmen belong to this, and it is a failure as far as any good to the workmen is concerned.

Correspondent—How much can an industrious, skilled mason manage to put aside from his earnings?

M. Bontet—A mason, not encumbered with a wife and family, can, with the strictest economy, put aside 80f per month. But about half the masons have wives, and sometimes they permit themselves the luxury of one or even two children. In such cases not only are there no savings, but it is barely possible to make both ends meet. Take, for instance, a first-class mason with a wife and child. He cannot live on less than 6f a day—that is to say 2,190f for 365 days. But striking out the winter and the holidays, he cannot work over 250 days, which at 8f per day would be 2,000f. Thus under the most favorable conditions the budget of this household balances with a deficit of 190f.

Correspondent—When they have the savings, what do they do with them?

Mr. Bontet—Send them to their families or put them in the Caisse d' Epargne.

Correspondent—In what part of Paris do the masons generally live?

Mr. Bontet—In the fourth, fifth and seventeenth arrondissements—that is to say, in the heart of the city, near the Hotel d' Ville and at Batignolles, to the north of the parc Monceau, where so much building has been going on during the past ten years. They usually live in unfurnished lodgings composed of a single room, in which the mason, his wife and children, and often their relations, sleep together pell mell. The rent of such a room is from 180f to 200f per year. The furniture consists of one or two beds, a table and a few chairs. The unmarried masons, or those whose families live in the country, live in garnis—furnished lodging houses—where they get a bowl of soup in the morning. They sleep two in a bed and often there are five or six beds in the same room. For the bed and soup they pay 9f per month. They buy their own bread and salad, for which they pay 2 sous a day. They eat dinner at noon at some marchard de vin, near the building upon which they happen to be working. They eat boiled beef and vegetables, with plenty of garlic and a pint of sour red wine. This dinner costs about 1½f.

Correspondent—How do the wives of masons live?

M. Bontet.—They work also at whatever trade they have learned, except where there are many children, in which case they cook and take care of the household. Many of them sew the leather bands that go inside of hats; others make bags for lime or potatoes, and the most industrious of the wives earn 10 to 20 sous a day.

Correspondent—Are strikes frequent?

Mr. Bontet—No; principally because we have workmen of so many different nationalities, who clique together and prevent any solidity. Italians and Binoussins come here, and when they have scraped together 250f they go home again. If a strike of the masons should take place it would be very serious, as it would throw out of work the carpenters, painters, plumbers, glaziers, plasterers, paper hangers, and numerous other classes of workmen whose work cannot begin until the mason work is finished. The last important strike of the masons occurred in 1848, when Martin Nadaud, then a mason, but now a deputy, persuaded all the masons to knock off work and go out to the forest of Fontainebleau to live. They had a grand picnic for a week, but when the food gave out they all walked back to Paris and went to work again.

Correspondent—What is the present condition of the trade?

M. Bontet—Very bad. There has been far too much building going on during the last ten years. This attracted from Italy and the provinces more masons than were needed, and the price of food and living in Paris grows dearer and dearer every year. A slaughtered ox in 1847 cost 290f. To-day it costs 450f. Other things have risen in proportion, but the most mischevious thing in the trade is a class of middle men, who have sprung up everywhere and prey upon the workmen like parasites. They are known as tacherons or taskmasters. They are mere adventurers, in general without a sou. These vultures go to large contractors and offer them so many hands at a certain rate per day. They then rake together from all corners of Paris gangs of men whom they make work like slaves. The tacherons secure a percentage of the wages for supplying the workmen with work and get a commission from the contractors for finding the workmen. They sometimes run off with all the wages. They are a perfect curse to everybody they come in contact with.

Correspondent—How do the masses amuse themselves?

Mr. Bontet—They pass every Saturday Sunday and often Monday in drinking shops, eating cherries and prunes soaked in bad brandy. A small minority amuse themselves with politics and socialism.

Correspondent—What is their religion?

Mr. Bontet—A few are Catholics, but the most of them have no religion.

AT THE LODGINGS.

A page of the Herald would be too small to contain even a summarized description of the masons' lodgings that I visited during the past week in rue de l'Hotel de Ville, rue Figuire, empase Guepin, rue Prevot, rue de Fourcey, rue Charlmagne, rue de Jong and Batignolles. I will give merely a description of the lodgings No. 23 rue Figuire, near the hotel de Ville. It was 8 o'clock in the evening. In the front room a great fat woman with ophthalmic eyes, was dealing out wine, bad brandy and vermouth to a very thirsty and very noisy crowd of masons returned from work, and just paid off. Every drink cost 3 sous. Passing through this room I entered a poorly lighted back room, with a stone floor and wooden tables and rickety chairs filled with masons eating remnants of a "pot feu"—cabbages, potatoes, onions, garlic—also salad and cheese, and drinking pints of red wine. After eating they pulled a bundle of Carporal tobacco out of their pockets to roll cigarettes. I offered some of them a handful of very fine Russian cigarettes that a friend had just sent from St. Peterburg. They smoked them, but shook their heads and said they liked the Carporal better. I then went up a break-neck staircase—the house was at least three hundred years old—and looked at the bedrooms. The first one I entered was about four paces square, with a stone floor, and was eight feet high. There were plenty of cockroaches in the corner and there was scarcely space to walk about, as the room contained five iron beds, almost touching each other. My companion, whose name was Poirier, a young "garcon macon," said:

"That's my bed; the half of it nearest the wall is my part. The tall man with the beard has the other half."

I asked: "Are all the beds occupied?"

He replied: "Yes—two sleeping in each bed."

The beds had straw mattresses and brown woolen blankets and straw pillows. There were shelves all round the walls for tools and clothing. In a corner was one small table and on it a basin, about the size of a large finger bowl, a stone basin of water and some pieces of yellow soap, some about the size of a whist counter, some dirty towels beside it, and a broken looking glass was nailed to the wall. These must serve for the morning wash of ten men. On the table also stood an empty brandy bottle with half of a tallow candle stuck in the neck. The only means for ventilation was one small window, opening on the alley way, reeking indescribable smells. I entered another small room, which served as lodgings for a mason, his wife and four children, aged sixteen, fifteen, twelve and eight, the two younger being girls. This room had only three beds. Returning to the eating room I found the men sucking away at cherries soaked in brandy and smoking cigarettes. Three or four were playing dominoes, and one old man in a corner was reading the Petit Journal. I treated my companion, Poirier, to a glass of cognac. It tasted like alcohol and water, with a slight tinge of tobacco juice to give the right color.

Looking around the house, I espied Mme Jane Hading in a delicious toilet of Danish red cloth, the rage here, open vest and cream waist-coat, a bonnet of cloth to match, pinked out at the edges and borders with astrakhan.

DOWN ON THE BOSSES.

I asked a good natured looking mason in a white blouse and red turkish fez: "How do you get on with the bosses?"

He shrugged his shoulders, gave a huge puff of tobacco smoke, and said:

"They are all cowardly scoundrels. They steal right and left. They are a race of devourers of the world. They are a debauched lace des manguers de la monde; tous monsters. They are canaille."

HATE THE ITALIANS.

On my way home I met in the rue Charlemagne a gang of Italian masons. Bear in mind, the Italian workmen are almost as much hated by the Parisian workmen as the Chinese in California and for the same reason. They live cheap, work twelve or any number of hours a day, and make competition ruinous, and when they get about 250 francs they go home again. This gang of Italians were half drunk and very boisterous. They were shouting and singing a song which began, "Santa Maria, Santa Maria." I asked a young Parisian mason who was leaning against a lamp post, laughing at them: "What are those Italians going to do?"

He replied: "They go about singing and howling at night. They are going to eat an olive and a piece of maccaroni, and take the bread right out of our mouths. If we interfere with them they stab you in the stomach with knives."

I did not question the Italians, but pursued my researches elsewhere.

Labor's Condition in Berlin.

[Copyright 1886 by James Gordon Bennett.]

BERLIN, Nov. 20.—[New York Herald Cable—Special to the BEE.]—"Above all, don't be seen with socialists," was the advice given me on my arrival, "or you will have an ugly time of it." Cheered by this prospect, I began my investigations of the condition of labor in Berlin. The majority of Berlin workmen are open socialists, but only a small section are organized socialists, while a smaller but interesting faction, though they aim at social reforms, are distinctly anti-socialists. Germany to-day has 11,000,000 workingmen, women and children struggling or longing to improve their not over-blissful condition. Of this enormous mass hardly 200,000 are organized. Barely half of these are, or were, affiliated with socialist societies. Bismarck takes a lively interest in German workmen, but rules them with a rod of iron. The only labor organizations not regarded as nuisances are the Rosenthaler Labor unions, started in 1868 by two earnest reformers, Dr. Max Hirsch and Herr Duncker, and known as Hirsch-Dunckers, or the Deutsch Gewerkvereine. Their objects are strictly economical. Their programme excludes religion and politics. They aim at a friendly conciliation of the interests of labor and capital, and now, after eighteen years' existence, muster over 55,000 members. Herr Duncker, who was formerly editor of the Volks Zeitung, retired from the active control of the Gowerkvereine, but Dr. Hirsch still guides the movement. Nobody in Berlin probably knows more of the labor question, or the difficulties which beset the independent reformers. The other night I accompanied Dr. Hirsch and Herr Polke, his alter ego, to a meeting of the seventeen associations forming the Verbande der Gowerkvereine, or Amalgamated German trades union.

AT A UNION MEETING.

About 9 o'clock we were ushered into a long, dark bier halle on the first floor of a house on the Alte Jacob strasse. The room was simply furnished with a few deal chairs, benches and tables, at which about twenty delegates were seated smoking pipes and drinking large glasses of Weiss beer of spaten bran. All the delegates seemed intelligent and thoughtful men. They all wore broad cloth, but all were bona fide workmen. Herr Polke explained to me that the delegates were elected by their respective constituencies for an indefinite time. Some have acted for ten or twelve years. Each represents a group of about 3,000 amalgamated workmen. Meetings are held every fortnight. The proceedings on the night I made my visit were uninteresting, but I was struck by the sobriety, moderation and fluency of the speakers. Among the silent members were Hans Sachs, the pack shoemaker. The lion's share of the talking was done by Dr. Hirsch, Herr Polke and Herr Mauch, the secretary of the important machine builders' union, which musters 17,000 members.

LABOR LEADER'S TALK.

After the meeting I interviewed Herr Mauch at a neighboring beer house. "The labor movement in Germany," said he, "is still in its infancy. Only about five thousand Berlin workmen belong to our verbande. As for me, though secretary of our largest gewerkverein, compared to a man in a similar position in England, why, I am nobody," and with a sigh Herr Mauch called for noch ein glass.

Next day I interviewed Herr Polke at the office of Der Gewerkverein, the organ of the German trades union, in regard to the purpose and methods of the Hirsch and Duncker movement. "What is your chief object?" said I.

"We wish to conciliate the rival interest of the employed and the employers," said Herr Polke.

"Do you advocate the participation of workmen in the profits?"

"No; that is not yet considered in Germany."

"Do you approve of strikes?"

"No; on principle, we are dead against strikes. We think, as the statutes of our association express it, that wages should be sufficient to maintain workmen and their familier decently and assure them against the misfortune attendant on inability to work. But we start with the idea that strikes bring no lasting benefit and serve to embitter the relations of the men with the masters."

"How do you hope to effect your object then, which, presumably, is the improvement of the position of the workingmen?"

"We work on friendly lines," taking the English trades unions as our models. We have found unprejudiced geeiniqungs aemeter, representing both men and the masters, whose mission it is to prevent strikes. Through them the men and masters fix the wages for a certain time at a certain rate, varying with circumstances. While the agreement lasts the masters have no need to fear strikes, while the workmen have no fear of reductions of wages. If either party wishes a modification of the covenant it must apply to the geeiniqungs aemeter, who discuss the matter. Thus the men and masters are drawn together and ill feeling greatly lessened."

"Have you no strikes?"

"Very few. Of 263 strikes recorded within the last five years and over, gewerkverein only took part in three. The chief of these was the great Waldenburger strike. It occurred in 1869, and arose from the mine owners of Waldenburg in Schlesein disputing the undoubted legal right established by paragraph 152 of the reichswerle ardnung of workmen to unite for the improvement of the conditions of labor. It lasted six weeks. Public opinion and the opinion of many members of the reichstag was in our favor. We sacrificed 120,000 marks in supporting the strike. But among the mine owners was Prince Von Pless, the millionaire. He could afford to wait, and in the end the longest purse won. The workmen were beaten, but strangely enough, in this case the strike rather improved the relations of the men and masters. Since then our vereine have had few strikes. Those organized by the machine builders and porcelain makers gave no particular results. In 1877 there was another great strike of socialist and non-socialist workmen, which was finally ended through Dr. Hirsch by means of a geeinigungsaml. So, you see, we are not mere theorists. Often, too, rather than risk a struggle with a powerful verein, the masters voluntarily grant the desired rise of wages. Moreover, to show you how moderate we are, several immensely wealthy manufacturers and capitalists are honorary members of our societies. Among them are Herr Wiedermann, of Apolda, near Weimar, and Herr Pauksch, the great Landsberg iron master."

"Evidently your system is very different from that of the socialists or social democrats?"

"Entirely. We are like fire and water. Here, you see," said Herr Polke, showing me the latest number of the socialistic Berliner Volksblatt, "here is an article attacking our idea of beeinigungsamter."

"What organizations have the social democratic workmen?"

"They founded what were called the fachvereine, most of which have lately been dissolved owing to their political tendencies. A few, however, managed to survive. The motto of the fachvereine was: "War to the knife; death to capital; no compromise." It is needless to say that no masters were members. In the most recent strikes, promoted by the socialist organizations or agglomerations of non-organized socialists here, there were some advantages gained for the workmen, but in the great majority of cases the masters conquered."

"Besides the gewerkverine and fachverein, what other labor organizations are there in Germany?"

"There are various others. The chief are the religious gesellen, most of which were founded by the Catholics in obedience to priestly usurpation."

"How are they regarded by the government?"

"With small favor. Its idea is state socialism. Ours is independent reform. But it does not interfere with us."

"Do you find it possible to conduct a movement through such a small number of delegates as I saw at yesterday's meeting?"

"The fewer the better. All had more formerly, but found it caused delay and confusion."

"What funds have you?"

"Since 1869 the subscriptions of members of our vereine to our sick and burial assurances and other funds have amounted to 9,000,000 marks, or about $2,000,000, of which 7,700,000 marks have been disbursed. Thus we have at our disposal 1,300,000 marks."

AMONG THE BUILDING TRADES.

Leaving their palki I started on a tour of inquiry in the outlying workmen's quarters. I visited a number of working bricklayers in the northern and eastern Vorsstaedte. The building trade is the reverse of flourishing at present. Of the 16,000 bricklayers in Berlin 4,000 are out of work. The discontent, though smothered, is general. The bricklayers are looking forward with dread to the forthcoming winter. I need not repeat all the stories told me. It will suffice to single out the following typical cases:

I first called on Moritz Preuss, an intelligent man, at No. 51 Anklangs strasse, in Rosenthaler verstadt. Passing through the court yard of a lofty, barrack-like building, I knocked at a door on the fourth floor and was shown into a neat, airy apartment, about twelve feet by nine, doing duty as a bedroom and parlor. The furniture consisted of a wooden bedstead, a wardrobe, a table, a few chairs, a perambulator, serving at night as a child's cot, a high, white, glazed stove, sadly suggestive of the tombs of Pere la Chaise, half a dozen prints and chromos, and a fresh water aquarium. Herr Preuss had just supped and was in his shirt sleeves. In the kitchen adjoining I got a glimpse of a rosy cheeked woman busy at the wash tub. Herr Preuss is aged thirty-two, is married and has two very young children. He rises in summer at half past 4 and in winter at 6. Once he leaves the house he seldom returns until the evening. He retires at 10. He rents two rooms, for which he pays 180 marks, about $44, yearly. He estimates his average annual earnings at 1100 marks, about $265, half of which he spends. He is paid 42½ pfennigs, about 10 cents, per hour. In summer he works ten hours per day and in winter eight or nine. He does not work on Sundays. He calculates that he has on an average 250 working days a year. The clothes for his family cost over 100 marks, about $24; taxes 30 marks, about $7. His wife is too busy to do anything but cook and nurse the children. As a rule he spends his evenings at home. Now and then friends drop in and take a hand in at schatskof, the popular Berlin card game, er sechsundzehzig, and on Sundays gather naturlichetwas kneipen. As to the wages he is only half content. He thinks he is hardly treated by the masters, who cut down wages on the slightest provocation. He belongs to the Bricklayers' Gwerkverin and subscribes to its relief fund. He is not a socialist. Herr Preuss is a favorable specimen of the bricklayer.

ANOTHER SPECIMEN BRICKLAYER.

Herman Mueller lives on the fourth floor of a house in Brennen strasse. The apartment consists of a rather large room, lighted by two windows, furnished with two comfortable beds, two chairs and cheap engravings and a small kitchen. Mueller is married but has no children. He rises at 5 in the summer and 6 in the winter. He usually goes to bed at 10. These hours apply to almost all bricklayers here, and it is useless to repeat the details. He sometimes dines at home at midday, but generally has his bread, ham and beer brought to him by his wife. The wife does a little sewing. Herr Mueller works ten hours a day in the summer and eight in the winter. He has been pretty steadily employed by the same masters for the last ten years. On the average he works 260 days a year and now earns 47½ pfennigs (about 11 cents.) per hour. He spends altogether 1,300 marks (about $12 per annum.) Clothes cost 150 marks, rent 230, and food 15 per week. He saves nothing. When he has any spare cash he buys a coat or a piece of furniture. Occasionally he goes to the theatre with his wife, or to a dance on Sundays. He is quite satisfied with his master and has plenty of work. He subscribes to relief funds, but belongs to no verein.

A LESS ROSY LOT.

The lot of August Steigelitz, who lives at No 18 Rosenthaler strasse, half a mile nearer the center of the city, is less rosy. He inhabits the floor of an old, miserable house. His apartment is reached by a low, dilapidated staircase, and consists of what might be described as three dirty whitewashed stairs under the roof. Access is secured through the kitchen, a dingy hole, crowded with pans, kettles, and lumber. The chief room is only seven feet high and eight feet square. The whole stage is dark, dirty and unwholesome. Here Herr Steigelitz lodges with his wife, his old mother and two daughters. When I called the family were eating their evening meal of bread, vegetables and coffee. Herr Steigelitz is forty-six, but looks sixty. His wife earns 100 marks per year by washing. The daughters were educated free at the gedewinschule. He is now working nine hours per day, but expects to be soon reduced to eight. Sometimes he is without work for two or three months together. His rent costs 150 marks, about $37.50. He earns 1,100 marks, (about $265) a year, but spends nearly all of it. His present master pays 47½ pfennigs (about 11 cents) per hour. He is too tired at night for amusement, but on Sundays he visits friends or goes to the Handwerverein. He pays 6⅔ pfennigs (about 16 cents) weekly for relief and burial funds. Like almost all the Berlin bricklayers he has been unable to insure his life, and belongs to no political organization.

DISSATISFIED WITH HIS LIFE.

Earnest T., of Brennens trasse, rents three pleasant, lofty rooms in a court. The best room has two windows and is furnished with a cheap mahogany bedstead, a wardrobe, a sofa, several chairs, a table and the inevitable stove mausoleum and aquarium. A bedroom, with one window, is let to a lodger. The kitchen is very small. Herr T. is married and has two babies who sleep in the same room as their parents. The mother does not earn any money. Herr T. has had steady work at eight to nine hours a day for the same master since January. He is dissatisfied with his position and complained bitterly of the master's close-fistedness. He is earning 45 pfennigs (about 10 cents) per hour. Bricklayers rarely get more than 50 pfennigs per hour here. He fears that frost will soon stop work altogether. His rent costs 240 marks. He could not say what his gross earnings were, as he keeps no account, possibly 1,200 marks per year. He spends every trifle. He calculates that the food of the family costs 15 marks per week. Then there is Hahns. What's Hahns? Oh, a little kneipe or bier hall round the corner. He cannot afford to go to theatres. On Sunday he amuses himself by chopping wood or takes his family out for a walk.

COMPLAINS OF RENTS.

Rudolf Liebrecht lives on the ground floor of a big bleak house at No 4 Fuersteinber strasse, in the northern district. He is married and has one baby. His home is a neat and decent two-windowed stube and kitchen. The former contains two mahogany beds, gingham curtains, a wardrobe, sofa and mirror. The chief luxury is a large Viennese clock. He earns 45 pfennigs (about 10 cents) per hour. He works about 300 days a year at an average of nine hours. His wife stays at home to nurse the baby. Liebrecht saves nothing of the 900 marks he earns a year. He spends 200 for rent, 70 for clothes and 73 per week for food. He complains of heavy taxes. He was formerly a member of Fachverin. In summer he sometimes goes to a concert. He subscribes to the Oriskasse.

HAS TO LIVE PLAINLY.

Friederich Baumgart, aged thirty-seven, lives on the fourth floor of No. 71 Reinsberger strasse. He has a wife and seven children living, and the eighth is expected soon. The eldest boy is fourteen. He earns 7 marks a week. The wife is kept busy taking care of the house and the pale, pinched children. When I called the parents and five children were huddled together in the chief stube, the mother and girls knitting and the babies lying about on mattresses. Three children attend the gemeinde schule. Herr Baumgart has worked for the same master for the last four years, 270 days in the year at 47½ pfennigs per hour. His poliz, or boss, is a good fellow. Herr Baumgart spends 270 marks per year for rent. Food for his family costs 18 marks weekly, and clothes costs 200 marks a year. The family are obliged to content themselves with a dinner of bread, weak coffee and an occasional herring. Supper consists of bread, vegetables and coffee. Herr Baumgart and his son eat a bit of bread and sausage and drink a mug of beer at noon, which cost 15 pfennigs. He subscribes to the Ortskasse, but saves nothing. He has no money for theatres. He amuses himself with the children and avoids politics.

DOWN ON HIS LUCK.

Herr Karl Rust is a respectable bricklayer down on his luck. He rents two damp, unhealthy, whitewashed cellars on Klapstock strasse. He has a wife and one grown up daughter at home, besides an adopted infant in arms. The daughter makes one mark a day at dressmaking. His wife is too old to work. Herr Rust made great sacrifices to educate his five children. He sent several to middle class schools and one to a governess. Latterly he only worked half the year. He has had no work since October, and his small savings are melting away. When employed he makes 45 pfennigs an hour. He disapproves of socialism, but joined in the general strike with 8,000 Berlin bricklayers last year. The men wanted a raise of 5 pfennigs in wages and got it. They struck again for another raise this year, but were beaten. As a foreman himself, he had earned 60 pfennigs an hour. Foreman's wages average from 60 to 70 pfennigs per hour. Herr Rust had subscribed for fifteen years to the sick fund of the Gemerkverein, but left in disgust because they cut down the allowance. He pays 30 marks (about $7.20) for a rough suit of clothes. He gets one square meal at night and has no amusement. His rent costs 147 marks. He subscribes to the burial board fund, and thinks that when too old to work the best thing for him to do is to die.

SUMMARIZING THE SITUATION.

Even the poorest houses I visited seemed to be tolerably drained and well supplied with water. The average of domestic morality seems to be high. I found hardly any irregular households. The men are civil and sober and altogether good examples of what might be found in the same walk of life in London, Paris or even New York.

OUR PARIS LETTER.

An Interesting Lot of News From the Gay French Capital.

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PARIS, Nov. 20.—[New York Herald Cable—Special to the BEE]—The government cannot find any suitable Frenchman willing to go to Tonquin as resident general. The French chambers have given up as hopeless all efforts to agree upon the budget, and the conservatives loudly proclaim a dissolution of the chamber and a new election to be the only solution of the problem.

ANOTHER MYSTERIOUS MURDER IN PARIS.

There seems to be a dead lock everywhere except in criminality, and yesterday was discovered perhaps one of the most weird and mysterious murders of the year. On October 29 a young man, dressed in a workman's blouse, called at No. 20 rue De La Cerisale, near the boulevard Henri Quatre. He asked the concierge, who is a thin, nervous little man with long hair, named Forcade, to lease him a small back chamber, or rather a closet, then vacant, and which could only be entered by means of a ladder. The young man in the blouse paid ten francs and said: "On the 15th of November I shall come to live in that room with my wife." He took the key and walked off, and the concierge never saw him again. Yesterday the concierge, becoming uneasy, thought he would enter the cabinet, let but not occupied. He, however, first knocked, and not being surprised at receiving no answer, opened the door with a pass key. The room was dark, and the concierge noticed a strange, suffocating smell. In a few moments the concierge's eyes, becoming accustomed to the darkness, he noticed two naked human fe