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OUR NEW ACQUISITION.

We take much pleasure in announcing that we have concluded negotiations with the proprietors of the Progress of the World, the publication of which has been discontinued with the March issue, as the result of which that well known and highly creditable journal will henceforth be absorbed by the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN, and the subscribers to the Progress of the World will receive the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN for a period equivalent to the balance of the subscriptions still due them.

The Progress of the World was a monthly illustrated magazine, summarizing in entertaining description the leading current events in the progress of human achievements and general history, and it has made no promises which it has not amply fulfilled.

Inasmuch as the Progress of the World worked on somewhat similar lines to this journal, our newly adopted subscribers will find in the weekly pages of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN an enlarged treatment of a familiar class of subjects.

THE LABOR QUESTION IN JAPAN.

Like causes are producing like results in Japan, and the remarkable industrial development of the country is bringing in its train those very same industrial troubles which have harassed or are still perplexing the older civilizations of the West. If recent labor troubles are an indication, it looks as though the apparent prosperity of Japan was not as healthy as it might be, and that it was based very largely on the poverty and misery of the wage earners.

Various writers upon Japan have familiarized us with the condition of the Japanese lower classes, especially of those which are engaged in agricultural pursuits. These descriptions have shown that though the peasant is poor, he has few wants and less cares, and lives a free and happy life. The coming of the mill and the factory has brought confinement, monotonous toil, long hours, and no adequate increase in the pitiful wages which are everywhere paid in Japan. The toilers have felt all the burdens of an industrial age without its rewards, and the result has been that the factory owners are having great difficulty in securing operatives to keep their machinery going on full time. So serious has the question become that recruiting agents are being sent out into the agricultural districts; and these, be it said, are meeting with very slight success. They find that the Japanese parents, who as a class have a more than average love for their children, prefer to keep them in the positive poverty of country life, with its cheerful and healthy surroundings, rather than let them go to the doubtful advantages of factory life.

That human nature is a constant factor in all parts of the world is shown by the fact that employers of factory labor in Japan have already formed combinations, with a view to protecting their own interests by keeping wages at their present low figure. A significant instance of the persistency with which these unions carry out their plans is recorded in the case of a certain factory which declined to join the union and endeavored to give its employes more liberal treatment. The result has been that it was immediately boycotted by all the members of the union, every obstruction was thrown in the way of its ordinary transaction of business, and a systematic attempt was made to prevent its obtaining employes. Thereupon the progressive firm employed agents on a commission, who were to induce girls from other factories to enter its service. Forthwith the union informed the purchasers of their own goods that no more sales would be made to them unless they gave up all dealings with this particular firm. The warning, however, has not affected their trade—a fact which proves that public sentiment is opposed to the methods of the union.

According to the report made by Mr. Robert P. Porter, superintendent of the eleventh census of the United States, to the National Association of Manufacturers, the wages paid in the various Japanese industries are invariably low. It seems that the highest wages are paid to tailors who make European garments, these receiving 24 6 cents (gold) per day. The ordinary pay for tailors is 14 2 cents per day. Other wages are as follows: Stonecutters, 18 2 cents; printers, 13 3 cents; typesetters, 14 cents; porcelain makers, 14 9 cents; blacksmiths, 15 5 cents; and dyers receive 12 7 cents per day.

These wages were low enough, one would think; but when we come to study the agricultural industry, the case is more pitiful yet. Male farm hands get at most 9 5 cents per day; female farm hands, 6 cents; and day laborers, 11 cents. These, we are told, are maximum figures! The minimum figures are from 2 1/2 to 7 cents a day less, female farm hands sometimes receiving only 3 5 cents per day; female silk growers, 4 4 cents; day laborers, 7 3 cents; printers, 7 7 cents; and typesetters, 7 6 cents.

With these wages prevailing in the labor market, it is easily understood how Japan can compete successfully with the older countries in the production of certain manufactured products, and that she can do so is shown by the fact that the value of its exports increased from \$15,553,472, in 1868, to \$136,112,177 in 1895. The low wages of Japanese labor and the rapid in-

crease in her industries have led the manufacturers of other countries to fear that they could not hold their own in competition, and to regard a Japanese control of certain markets as inevitable. We think, however, that the danger is very remote, for the reason that the very labor troubles of which we have spoken above will act as a controlling and leveling influence, by bringing about an increase in the pay of the Japanese workman. The higher wages of the artisan will cause him to acquire more expensive tastes than he had in his country life, and with this will come new ideas of his own rightful share in the profits of the manufactured article. The competition among employers to secure labor will also favor a rise in the scale of wages; and as even the ingenuity of the Japanese people cannot hope to compensate for this by proportionate improvements in machinery and methods of manufacture, it is certain that the total cost of manufacture must in the future increase in Japan.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL.

BY WILLIAM H. HALE.

An important meeting of the Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was held on April 21 at the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington, pursuant to a call by the late president, Prof. E. D. Cope, dated March 31, only twelve days before his death.

Such an event is unprecedented in the history of the association; in fact, no other president has ever died during his term of office. The succession to the office, under the constitution, devolves upon the senior vice-president, who is Prof. Theodore Gill, of Washington, vice-president for the section of zoology. Prof. Gill has been a member of the association since 1868.

The permanent secretary, Prof. F. W. Putnam, called the council to order and stated the constitutional provision under which Prof. Gill was authorized to preside. The latter then took the chair. As it appeared that the president just deceased had not prepared his annual message for the approaching Detroit meeting, a vote of the council was passed, requesting Prof. Gill to deliver the annual address, in the form of an obituary of President Cope, which he undertook to do.

Owing to the importance of the approaching meeting, the council was very fully attended, some twenty members having been present, including the president elect, Prof. Wolcott Gibbs, who is also president of the National Academy of Sciences, then in session at Washington. Secretary Putnam read letters from Sir Vernon Harcourt, inviting members of the American Association to attend the Toronto meeting of the British Association on the same terms as the latter, viz., on payment of \$5 dues; while the officers of the Detroit meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science will be made honorary members of the Toronto meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. It will be remembered that the American Association meets at Detroit on Monday, August 9, and the British Association at Toronto, Wednesday, August 18.

Secretary Putnam was authorized to thank the British Association for their courtesy in extending the privileges of the meeting to the American Association, and also was requested to call the attention of the British Association to our constitutional provision which entitles all members of foreign scientific societies to honorary membership at our meetings without payment of dues, and to invite them to attend.

It was stated that several members would reach this country in season to attend our meeting, while the great majority would barely arrive in time for their own meeting at Toronto, stopping over at Montreal on Tuesday, where they would be guests of the city.

Prof. Nichols, on behalf of the section of physics, requested permission of the council to enroll visiting physicists as honorary vice-presidents of that section, which suggestion Prof. Atkinson proposed to supersede by making them honorary members of the sectional committee; but as both arrangements were found to be unconstitutional, it was finally voted to invite foreign guests to register as honorary members of the several sections in which they were specially interested.

Death has made unusual havoc in the council since the meeting at Buffalo. Besides President Cope, B. A. Gould, one of the past presidents, and an auditor of the association, and G. Brown Goode, president-elect of the section of zoology, have passed away. S. C. Chandler was elected auditor and L. O. Howard was nominated as president of the zoological section, to be elected at the general session of the association at Detroit. Ten persons were elected to membership.

Secretary Putnam, who has recently visited Detroit, reported extremely satisfactory progress in arrangements for the meeting; the facilities for physical comfort and convenience surpassing those of any preceding meeting. The hotel headquarters will be at the large new hotel, the Cadillac, with reduced rates to members. The general headquarters, and all the general and sectional meetings and lectures, will be at the fine new