

headed by their priests. The clergy of the Pardon always advance to receive and welcome them.

After vespers there takes place a grand procession. The young men and the maids, in all the pomp of costume, walk in long close lines, with infinite devotion, followed by bands of sailors, who go barefooted and sometimes almost unclad, if they happen to have made vows when in fear of shipwreck. The procession pauses at the cemetery of the town, where prayers are said, and in these prayers it is usual for the lord of the manor and his family to join.

The whole level plain is covered by this time with tents, under which pilgrims pass the night in vigils, and in listening to the religious songs. The minstrels go from one part to another of the whole encampment, singing no songs that are not of a serious kind, because the whole of the first day of the Pardon must be spent in holy thoughts. Worldly amusements are to follow.

At dawn on the second day worldly thoughts and pleasures are permitted to rush in; then begin all the amusements of a fair, and its excesses. The Kloers may then sing their love-songs for the last time, if they mean to hold by their choice of the priestly calling. Then it is that those famous dramas are performed, which last several days, and which are the last existing remnants of the Mysteries and Moralities that were the delight of our forefathers in almost all countries.

The Pardon here described I saw at Ros-porden in Finistère.

GROUND IN THE MILL.

"It is good when it happens," say the children,—“that we die before our time.” Poetry may be right or wrong in making little operatives who are ignorant of cowslips say anything like that. We mean here to speak prose. There are many ways of dying. Perhaps it is not good when a factory girl, who has not the whole spirit of play spun out of her for want of meadows, gambols upon bags of wool, a little too near the exposed machinery that is to work it up, and is immediately seized, and punished by the merciless machine that digs its shaft into her pinafore and hoists her up, tears out her left arm at the shoulder joint, breaks her right arm, and beats her on the head. No, that is not good; but it is not a case in point, the girl lives and may be one of those who think that it would have been good for her if she had died before her time.

She had her chance of dying, and she lost it. Possibly it was better for the boy whom his stern master, the machine, caught as he stood on a stool wickedly looking out of window at the sunlight and the flying clouds. These were no business of his, and he was fully punished when the machine he served

caught him by one arm and whirled him round and round till he was thrown down dead. There is no lack of such warnings to idle boys and girls. What right has a game-some youth to display levity before the supreme engine. “Watch me do a trick!” cried such a youth to his fellow, and put his arm familiarly within the arm of the great iron-hearted chief. “I’ll show you a trick,” gnashed the pitiless monster. A coil of strap fastened his arm to the shaft, and round he went. His leg was cut off, and fell into the room, his arm was broken in three or four places, his ankle was broken, his head was battered; he was not released alive.

Why do we talk about such horrible things? Because they exist, and their existence should be clearly known. Because there have occurred during the last three years, more than a hundred such deaths, and more than ten thousand (indeed, nearly twelve thousand) such accidents in our factories, and they are all, or nearly all, preventible.

These few thousands of catastrophes are the results of the administrative kindness so abundant in this country. They are all the fruits of mercy. A man was lime-washing the ceiling of an engine-room: he was seized by a horizontal shaft and killed immediately. A boy was brushing the dust from such a ceiling, before whitewashing: he had a cloth over his head to keep the dirt from falling on him; by that cloth the engine seized and held him to administer a chastisement with rods of iron. A youth while talking thoughtlessly took hold of a strap that hung over the shaft: his hand was wrenched off at the wrist. A man climbed to the top of his machine to put the strap on the drum: he wore a smock which the shaft caught; both of his arms were then torn out of the shoulder-joints, both legs were broken, and his head was severely bruised: in the end, of course, he died. What he suffered was all suffered in mercy. He was rent asunder, not perhaps for his own good; but, as a sacrifice to the commercial prosperity of Great Britain. There are few amongst us—even among the masters who share most largely in that prosperity—who are willing, we will hope and believe, to pay such a price as all this blood for any good or any gain that can accrue to them.

These accidents have arisen in the manner following. By the Factory Act, passed in the seventh year of Her Majesty’s reign, it was enacted, among other things, that all parts of the mill-gearing in a factory should be securely fenced. There were no buts and ifs in the Act itself; these were allowed to step in and limit its powers of preventing accidents out of a merciful respect, not for the blood of the operatives, but for the gold of the mill-owners. It was strongly represented

that to fence those parts of machinery that were higher than the heads of workmen—more than seven feet above the ground—would be to incur an expense wholly unnecessary. Kind-hearted interpreters of the law, therefore, agreed with mill-owners that seven feet of fencing should be held sufficient. The result of this accommodation—taking only the accounts of the last three years—has been to credit mercy with some pounds and shillings in the books of English manufacturers; we cannot say how many, but we hope they are enough to balance the account against mercy made out on behalf of the English factory workers thus:—Mercy debtor to justice, of poor men, women, and children, one hundred and six lives, one hundred and forty-two hands or arms, one thousand two hundred and eighty-seven (or, in bulk, how many bushels of) fingers, for the breaking of one thousand three hundred and forty bones, for five hundred and fifty-nine damaged heads, and for eight thousand two hundred and eighty-two miscellaneous injuries. It remains to be settled how much cash saved to the purses of the manufacturers is a satisfactory and proper off-set to this expenditure of life and limb and this crushing of bone in the persons of their work-people.

For, be it strictly observed, this expenditure of life is the direct result of that good-natured determination not to carry out the full provision of the Factory Act, but to consider enough done if the boxing-off of machinery be made compulsory in each room to the height of seven feet from the floor. Neglect as to the rest, of which we have given the sum of a three-years' account, could lead, it was said, only to a few accidents that would not matter—that would really not be worth much cost of prevention. As kings do no wrong, so machines never stop; and what great harm is done, if A, putting a strap on a driving pulley, is caught by the legs and whirled round at the rate of ninety revolutions in a minute?—what if B, adjusting gear, gets one arm and two thighs broken, an elbow dislocated and a temple cracked?—what if C, picking some cotton from the lathe strips, should become entangled, have an arm torn off, and be dashed up and down, now against the floor, and now against the ceiling?—what if D, sowing a belt, should be dragged up by the neckerchief and bruised by steam-power as if he were oats?—what if the boy E, holding a belt which the master had been sewing, be suddenly snapped up by it, whirled round a hundred and twenty times in a minute, and at each revolution knocked against the ceiling till his bones are almost reduced to powder?—what if F, oiling a shaft, be caught first by the neckerchief, then by the clothes, and have his lungs broken, his arm crushed, and his body torn?—what if G, packing yarn into a cart,

and stretching out his hand for a corner of the cart-cover blown across a horizontal shaft, be caught up, partly dismembered, and thrown down a corpse?—what if H, caught by a strap, should die with a broken back-bone, and I die crushed against a beam in the ceiling, and little K, carrying waste tow from one part to another, be caught up by it and have his throat cut, and L die after one arm had been torn off and his two feet crushed, and M die of a fractured skull, and N die with his left leg and right arm wrenched from their sockets, and O, not killed, have the hair of his head torn away, and P be scalped and slain, and Q be beaten to death against a joist of the ceiling, and R, coming down a ladder, be caught by his wrapper, and bruised, broken, and torn till he is dead, and S have his bones all broken against a wall, and all the rest of the alphabet be killed by boiler explosions or destroyed in ways as horrible, and many more men be killed than there are letters in the alphabet to call them by? *Every case here instanced has happened, and so have many others, in the last three years.* Granted, but what can all this matter, in the face of the succeeding facts?—that to enclose all horizontal shafts in mills would put the mill-owners to great expense; that little danger is to be apprehended from such shafts to prudent persons, and that mill-owners have a most anxious desire to protect the lives and limbs of their work people. These are the facts urged by a deputation of manufacturers that has been deprecating any attempt to make this anxiety more lively than it has hitherto been.

They found such deprecation necessary. When it became very evident that, in addition to a large list of most serious accidents, there were but forty lives offered up annually to save mill-owners a little trouble and expense, a circular was issued by the factory-inspectors on the last day of January in the present year, expressing their determination to enforce the whole Factory Act to the utmost after the first of June next, and so to compel every shaft of machinery, at whatever cost and of whatever kind, to be fenced off. Thereupon London beheld a deputation, asking mercy from the Government for the aggrieved and threatened manufacturers. We have, more than once, in discussing other topics of this kind, dwelt upon the necessity of the most strict repression of all misplaced tenderness like that for which this committee seems to have petitioned. Preventible accidents must be sternly prevented.

Let Justice wake, and Rigour take her time,
For, lo! our mercy is become our crime."

The result of the deputation is not wholly satisfactory. There follows so much interference by the Home Office in favour of the mill-owners, as to absolve them from the necessity of absolutely boxing-up all their machines, and

to require only that they use any precautions that occur to them for the prevention of the accidents now so deplorably frequent. Machinery might, for example, be adjusted when the shafts are not in motion; ceilings white-washed only when all the machinery is standing still; men working near shafts should wear closely-fitting dresses, and so forth. Manufacturers are to do as they please, and cut down in their own way the matter furnished for their annual of horrors. Only of this they are warned, that they must reduce it; and that, hereafter, the friends of injured operatives will be encouraged to sue for compensation upon death or loss of limb, and Government will sometimes act as prosecutor. What do we find now in the reports? For severe injury to a young person caused by gross and cognisable neglect to fence or shaft, the punishment awarded to a wealthy firm is a fine of ten pounds twelve shillings costs. For killing a woman by the same act of indifference to life and limb, another large firm is fined ten pounds, and has to pay one guinea costs. A fine of a thousand pounds and twelve months at the treadmill would, in the last case, have been an award much nearer the mark of honesty, and have indicated something like a civilised sense of the sacredness of human life. If the same firm had, by an illegal act of negligence, caused the death of a neighbour's horse, they would have had forty, fifty, sixty pounds to pay for it. Ten pounds was the expense of picking a man's wife, a child's mother, limb from limb.

We have not spoken too strongly on this subject. We are indignant against no class, but discuss only one section of a topic that concerns, in some form, almost every division of society. Since, however, we now find ourselves speaking about factories, and turning over leaves of the reports of Factory Inspectors, we may as well have our grumble out, or, at any rate, so far prolong it as to make room for one more subject of dissatisfaction. It is important that Factory management should be watched by the public; in a friendly spirit indeed—for it is no small part of our whole English mind and body—but with the strictness which every man who means well should exercise in judgment on himself, in scrutiny of his own actions. We are told that in one Inspector's district—only in one district—mills and engines have so multiplied, during the last three years, in number and power, that additional work has, in that period, been created for the employment of another forty thousand hands. Every reporter has the same kind of tale to tell. During the last year, in our manufacturing districts, additions to the steam power found employment for an additional army of operatives, nearly thirty thousand strong. The Factory system, therefore, is developing itself most rapidly. It grows too fast, perhaps; at present the mills are, for a short time, in excess of the

work required, and in many cases lie idle for two days in the week, or for one or two hours in the day. The succession of strikes, too, in Preston, Wigan, Hindley, Burnley, Padiham, and Bacup and the other places, have left a large number of men out of employ, and caused, for a long time, a total sacrifice of wages, to the extent of some twenty thousand pounds a week. These, however, are all temporary difficulties: the great extension of the Factory system is a permanent fact, and it must be made to bring good with it, not evil.

The law wisely requires that mill-owners, who employ children, shall also teach them, and a minimum, as to time, of schooling is assigned. Before this regulation was compulsory, there were some good schools kept as show-places by certain persons; but, when the maintenance of them became a necessity, and schools were no longer exceptional curiosities, these show-places often fell into complete neglect; they were no longer goods that would attract the public. In Scotland this part of the Factory Law seems to be well worked; and, for its own sake, as a beneficial requirement. That does not, however, seem to be the case in England. All the Inspectors tell us of the lamentable state of the factory schools in this country; allowance being, of course, made for a few worthy exceptions. It is doubtful whether much good will come out of them, unless they be themselves organised by men determined that they shall fulfil their purpose. English Factory children have yet to be really taught.

"Let them prove their inward souls against the notion

That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!

Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,

Grinding life down from its mark;

And the children's souls, which God is calling sunward,

Spin on blindly in the dark."

Here they are left spinning in the dark. Let Mr. Redgrave's account of a factory school visited by him, near Leeds, suffice to show:—

"It was held in a large room, and the Inspector visiting it at twenty minutes before twelve, found the children at play in the yard, and the master at work in the school-room, sawing up the black board to make fittings of a house to which he proposed transferring his business. The children being summoned, came in carelessly, their disorderly habits evidently not repressed by their master, but checked slightly by the appearance of a strange gentleman. Two girls lolling in the porch were summoned in, and the teacher then triumphantly drew out of his pocket a whistle, whereupon to blow the order for attention. It was the only whole thing that he had to teach with. There were the twenty children ranged along the wall of a room able to contain seven times the number; there were the bits of black board, the master's arms, with a hand-saw, and a hammer for apparatus, and