

SOME STRIKING FACTS ABOUT MATCH INDUSTRY

It is perhaps more characteristic of Americans than of any other people to hold small things in contempt, forgetting that "little drops of water, little grains of sand" constitute the planet we inhabit. A match is a small and insignificant affair, yet multiplied as it has been in this country and the rest of the civilized world it has been one of the most potential agents of modern material development. It has come into use at a late day in the world's history. There are many living among us still who can remember when the flint and tinder were the regular means of starting a fresh fire, and the old one carefully preserved by burying the embers night after night to be revived in the morning. It is 80 years ago the present year that the lucifer match, the first genuine friction match, was invented, and even that required an attachment of bent sandpaper to produce the desired results.

It is hard for the present generation to realize the inconveniences from which the friction match emancipated their ancestors. The manufacture of this product has become a great and even somewhat diversified industry, because every section seems to have matches peculiar to itself. A man who has been a commercial traveler for

many years, tells us that if he were taken up and carried to any point east of the Alleghenies he could tell within a hundred miles of where he was by the matches he should find in use. There is also a national pride in matches. A recent mayor of Manchester, England, visiting friends in Boston, a few days ago, spoke very highly of our "abominable matches," and declared that he did not see how a high-spirited, independent and enterprising people like ourselves put up with them.

700,000,000,000 a Year.

The American people, however, appear to be fairly well contented with the home product, else they would not buy and consume so many with comparatively so little grumbling. They use up about 700,000,000,000 a year or about half of all that are manufactured in the world. There are hundreds of factories scattered over the country, one plant on the Pacific coast covering 240 acres and operating over 30 miles of railroad, over which is carried to it daily 200,000 feet of sugar pine and yellow pine logs for the match machines. Inferior lumber will not do. It must be straight-grained and free from knots and carefully treated in addition. The by-product goes into larger things. The factory on the Pacific coast referred to turns out as this by-product a thousand doors and 800 window sashes daily. In a single year one match company in the lake region cut 225,000 board feet of pine, though that was intended for more than a year's product.

It is no wonder when we consider these figures, that the matchmakers are becoming anxious. And that is true in other countries as well as our own. In Germany and France there is a movement to have forests planted just for match timber, and we may soon face a famine in match wood in this country, for not all kinds can be used for that purpose. It may also happen that invention may develop something that will take the place of matches. It is not probable that the limit of progress has been reached in the means of producing fire at need. There is no Promethean penalty for the man who shall make the discovery but rather welcome and reward by his eager fellow men.

TONIGHT

George Primrose and his big minstrel company will play an engage-

ment at the Steward on Monday, January 6. This engagement will again emphasize the fact that real minstrelsy is not dead, as this form of entertainment is entirely an American feature, which has gradually drifted away from the idea of its originator. There was a time when the public would stand for a so-called minstrel show to appear in oriental scenes and costumes, powdered wigs and painted faces, which was rather charming to



George Primrose, the Great Minstrel Man.

look upon, because it was new, but this style having lost its novelty is no longer charming and, furthermore, theatergoers now want American minstrelsy that is true to negro life of plantation days and truly a feature of our own country. Mr. Primrose is the first to furnish this genuine form of amusement, but with modern embellishments of a kind that enhances the effect. The gaudily bedecked costumes and white-face minstrelsy has seen its day. In its place has come the merry darkey fun intermingled with up-to-date songs and humor, led by George Primrose.

The Midland Jubilee Singers.

This excellent organization of colored people will give an entertainment at the opera house on Thursday evening, January 9, under the auspices of the high school. The club is said to be the finest college glee club now traveling. They sing the old plantation songs with that utter abandon which characterizes the negro race. They also sing music of a more difficult type, but there are no Black Patti's among them and no straining after operatic effects.

"The Man of the Hour."

Playgoers will no doubt view with great favor "The Man of the Hour," which will be seen at Steward's opera house Tuesday night, January 21, being presented here with a special selected company under the management of William A. Brady and Joseph R. Grismer. "The Man of the Hour" from all reports, easily ranks as one of the most substantial hits of the past season of the new one. It is said to contain more generous laughs than many a farce, and the love interest is absorbing. The play is said to be strong, convincing and uncommonly interesting and proves particularly effective as a dramatic vehicle, because it deals with a familiar subject in a most virile manner.

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