

THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS
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STRAIT'S LESSON FOR ENGLAND.

England's present war situation and labor has revealed to the public and government of that country several important facts, hitherto, according to London papers, too often ignored. The condition of English population have been brought to the brink of starvation by the cessation of transport facilities, for ships bringing food from foreign countries have been unable to unload for want of the "dockers' services. This "dreadful example" vividly shows what might happen in time of war when merchant ships would not even reach their docks, and conservative organs seize the occasion to impress upon their readers the great need of a powerful navy to convey and defend such food-laden vessels. Protectionists remind their

readers that in the day of the Napoleonic wars, England relied for herself the staple foodstuffs for which she now depends on foreign importations.

But the proximate cause of the strike is the looseness of the wages paid to British workmen, particularly the railway operatives. As the railroad tariffs are regulated by parliament, it is parliament, we are told, which long before this should have changed the general public, through the railway, such a price for transportation of travelers and goods as would enable railroad companies to remunerate their employees properly. Speaking of the helplessness of England with regard to food supplies in the case of war, the Daily Mail (London), a protectionist organ, remarks:

"The strike of transport workers is giving them some food and drink for a great naval war, if the British fleet does not instantly assert its superiority, if the British cruisers do not swiftly drive the enemy from the seas."

"Never in the past has there been any parallel to the condition of the England of today. Never before has a great nation of 45 million souls been reduced to such a state of helplessness for its food. In the brief space of 40 years, which is as nothing in the life of a nation, our imports of food from abroad have more than doubled. Today we import annually 20 million's worth of food and drink."

"In the past, even so late as the days of the Napoleonic wars, England still fed herself. The food she needed was raised at home. The incessant preoccupation of protecting the nation's food supply did not become the British admirals. Elsewhere, when our dreadnoughts steam forth for battle, two millions will be engaged round the work of the admitted-in-chief, the fear for the nation's food and the fear for the nation's ill-protected shores."

"Any interdiction of the coming of the corn ships, any vigorous and concerted attack upon them, and the nation must starve or pay prices for food which will be nearly beyond its power."

The thought of the small wages on which the proletariat must live in semi-starvation, misery and discontent reminds the journalists that there is some justice in labor's uncompromising protest, and we read in the Nation (London) that in England "profits and salaries have rapidly increased and the expenditure of the luxurious classes is on a grander scale than ever." This contrast with their own meager wages "is affecting the minds of the workmen." To quote further its words in favor of the trade unions:

"Trade has been good, and labor, coming perhaps late in the day when the tide is turning, is demanding its share. Those who feel something of the mass of misery involved in the wage situation of a country like ours may agree or disagree with a great deal that the men say or do, but will not waver in their conviction that the success of the unions in vindicating for labor a less abjectly return would tend to the alleviation of wide-spread misery and privation, and in the end to the more healthy and stable condition of industrial society as a whole."

The calm words of the Labor Leader

(London) run as follows:

"In England the strike has steadily becoming better educated. Public libraries throw open all the knowledge of the ages to those desiring to learn. This will, in itself, produce discontent. An educated proletariat will refuse to live at a low subsistence level, and if a high level cannot be obtained by legislation then periodically there will be times of unrest, strikes, demonstrations, and general labor troubles. Statesmen possessing the necessary amount of foresight could obviate it by legislation."

The cry for legislation in the matter turns the attention of the Morning Post (London) to the responsibilities of the government. The Post thinks that "the recent events have robbed the government of all prestige in the eyes of some millions of British citizens," and the Standard (London) speaks more plainly:

"London has had an object lesson, which it will not soon forget, in regard to the inevitable tendency of those socialistic and revolutionary doctrines that now infect the policy of men in power. General indignation at the scenes which London has witnessed during the past week may be slow to express itself, but Mr. Winston Churchill and his colleagues are well assured that it is not disarmed by the show of vigorous intention which at the 11th hour they thought proper to display. Public opinion will not condone the dereliction of duty which made it easy for the dock strikers to build up the commerce of a great port, to stop the people's supply of food, and to intimidate both their employers and the country by methods which an enemy would only resort to at its peril."

"Labor and its leaders in parliament are having their own way," declares the Pall Mall Gazette, and, answering at "the Olympian indifference of the government," adds that in settling the wage question, "Parliament will be compelled to take the matter in hand."

"The true criminals" in the strike problem, declares the Daily Mail (London), quoted above, "lie on the treasury bench." Even the powerful and independent Times (London) condemns the government's failure to provide remedy and address and speaks of the "audacious conspiracy against the public" in which "the most outrageous attacks upon the elementary rights which government owes to protect have been recently condoned" "by the feebleness of our rulers and the miserable spirit of party." Warning its readers against Mr. Asquith's socialistic leanings which permit him to yield to Tom Mann, who promises the striking workmen that he will establish poverty, and to adopt a policy which makes the way "clear for a wholesale system of legalized robbery and confiscation," the Outlook (London) thinks that there is a word to be said for the employers who have suffered so much "through the nervous impotence of a wailing minister" and proceeds as follows:

"The railways at the present time, like the iron and coal mines, hardly pay their way, yet they give employment to a vast army of work-people—certainly many more than would be the case if these forms of industry were nationalized. But the capital, skill, and energy of every enterprise is to be sacrificed to the capriciousness of a handful of labor agitators; fortunes which have been sunk in opening up new fields of labor are to be counted as naught. Labor must have its share of the spoils and liberalism must keep up the pillage. Property owners and the investing classes will have reason to remember Mr. Asquith's regime."

NEW VIOLINIST AT O. A. C.

Instruction on Stringed Instruments to Be Given by Miss Bowden.

Oregon Agricultural College, Sept. 6.—Miss Florence Bowden has been appointed instructor in the school of music at the Oregon Agricultural college for the coming year, to succeed Miss Mabel Woodbury for the instruction on stringed instruments.

Miss Bowden studied the violin under Alexander Watson, an English musician at St. John, N. H., under August Andersen, a graduate of Christiana conservatory, and under Emil Mahr at the New England Conservatory of Music at Boston. Her study of the cello was under August Andersen, and Wolf Fries of the New England conservatory. The viola she made a special study of under the direction of Emil Mahr, and the piano under Mrs. Jack Wilson of St. John, N. H., and

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