

WHY TIMES ARE BETTER.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST ON LABOR PROBLEMS.

Massachusetts Workmen Get Higher Wages and American Dollars Buy More Provisions.

In this age of rapid communication and scientific genius taking valuable light is thrown upon problems pertaining to the social condition of the masses. Every few months the United States Commissioner of Labor issues bulletins on questions of vital interest relating to the earnings of the masses, the purchasing power of money, prices of the chief articles of human consumption, etc., so that a man who desires to be accurate need not stumble.

One of the most important reports issued for many years is by the Commissioner of Labor for Massachusetts, which is the very heart of modern manufacturing. Horace G. Wadlin, chief of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, like his predecessors, is a skillful statistician, and the result is that Massachusetts figures will continue to be held in high esteem by reason of the expert care with which figures have been obtained.

The report for 1898 devotes forty-two interesting pages to comparative wages and prices of the necessities of life. This report affords a general betterment of the laboring classes. Though the report is quite dry for the average reader, the "Record-Union" presents the following vital and interesting facts in popular form:

The statistics were carefully gathered from original sources by agents of the bureau, and they have gathered data for the years 1860, 1872, 1878, 1881 and 1897. Three items are considered: Average weekly wages, average retail prices, and the purchasing power of money. All the great industrial centers were visited, pay rolls and time sheets were studied, and the proprietors of factories afforded every possible aid to the experts. The retail food prices were obtained at countless establishments patronized by working people, and the agents also ascertained rents and prices for board at places where the workers lived.

The report covers twenty-two leading industries, and the conclusion is that in 1897 wages were higher than in 1881 and lower than in 1872. In 1897 there was an increase of wages in fifteen of the established industries, a slight decrease in eight. The following table compiled from a mass of data for "Record-Union" readers, shows what industries showed an increase, the percentage of gain being given also:

HOW WAGES HAVE INCREASED.

Table with 2 columns: Occupation and Percentage Increase. Includes Agriculture (2.7%), Boots and shoes (7.59%), Building trades (46.31%), Cabinet making (13.12%), Carpet industries (33.96%), Carriage workers (8.91%), Cotton workers (1.58%), Glass trades (12.04%), Fine metal workers (15.04%), Musical instrument workers (14.23%), Printing (31.75%), Stone masons (4.83%), Workers in straw goods (15.31%), Workers in woollen goods (4.83%).

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PURCHASING POWER OF MONEY.

Table with 2 columns: Articles and Purchasing power of money in 1898 as compared with 1881. Includes Flour, wheat, superfine (55.54), Flour, family (50.77), Flour, rye (45.15), Corn meal (42.07), Codfish, dry (42.20), Beans (39.27), Rice (39.27), Sugar (39.27), Best granulated sugar (39.27), Soap (39.27), Starch (39.27), Roast beef (39.27), Rump steak (39.27), Forequarter (39.27), Hindquarter of veal (39.27), Feet cutlets (39.27), Mutton, forequarter (39.27), Mutton, leg (39.27), Salted pork (39.27), Butter (39.27), Eggs (39.27), Coal (39.27), Dry goods (39.27), Bread for men (39.27), Bread for women (39.27).

TO PLAY FOR THE OLD LADIES.

Miss Kittie Heyman, the accomplished pianist, will this afternoon visit the Old Ladies' Home at Seventh and Q streets, and play for them some of her sweetest melodies. This will be a rare treat for the inmates, who see and hear so little of what is going on in the outside world.

DAMAGE SUIT DISMISSED.

The case of Charles H. Hansen against Frank Rubstaller, N. Harvie and Frank Rubstaller, was yesterday dismissed in Judge Johnson's court on the motion of plaintiff's counsel. Hansen was hurt while at work as a bricklayer on the Rubstaller brewery building and sued for damages.

OFFICER FISHER IMPROVING.

Police Officer Michael Fisher, who for several days has been suffering from an abscess on his neck, underwent a successful operation yesterday. He is said to be getting along nicely, and his trotting mate, Moley, says that while "indisposed," he is conversant."

LIBRARY AT AUCTION.

At 509 J street, at 10 a. m. on Saturday next, D. J. Simmons & Co. will sell at auction the library of the late Dr. H. H. Pierson, consisting of over a thousand volumes of choice books.

TRY McMORRY'S BLEND COFFEE, 35c.

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Articles of Incorporation.

Articles of incorporation were yesterday filed in the office of the Secretary of State. Olat District Mill Company. Formed to operate in real estate, conduct commission business, etc. Principal place of business, San Francisco. Directors—Anton Michalitschke, Joseph Michalitschke, Robert Capelle, W. R. P. White and F. Gutschow, all San Francisco. Capital stock, \$50,0