

though the latter is overworked too. The workers in towns are never healthy in the third generation if the parents on both sides have been town-born and town-bred ; and we can only wonder what would become of the stature and stamina of the urban working class were it not recuperated by a constant stream of immigrants from the country, bringing with them fresh bone and blood.

In the meantime we live to work, whereas, more properly, we ought to work to live. As a matter of fact the worker does not live : he merely vegetates. His existence is a dull round of up in the morning, and down at night : and if he were to start a diary, with the intention of recording in it the incidents of each passing day, he would find it such a dull, monotonous, uneventful affair, that he would in a short time throw it up in disgust. The lives of birds and beasts unless they have been domesticated, constitute one long holiday ; the lives of the great mass of mankind are one long term of penal servitude, with hard labour, and the fare too often little better than bread and water.

That the progress of civilization has been largely one-sided in its ameliorative influence on the conditions of life is rendered glaringly apparent to us when we learn that, in regard to the main elements of happiness and wellbeing, our forefathers were better situated 400 years ago than we are to-day. In the works of reliable historians we read that in the fifteenth century the labourers only worked a normal day of Eight Hours ! Their work, moreover, was, as we know, more pleasant than our work is to-day. The creative, artistic faculty of the craftsman entered more largely into it ; more labour was expended upon it ; better materials were embodied in it. In short, the product was made to use and enjoy rather than to sell : quality was more of a desideratum than cheapness. In spite of occasional periods of warfare and turmoil, the social atmosphere of mediæval life was, on the whole, more leisurely, more rational, and less feverish than that of to-day. Finally, there is abundant evidence that the remuneration was such as to justify Thorold Rogers in characterising this period as the Golden Age of Labour.

The time will come when the worker will laugh at the timidity which made him hesitate to believe an eight hours day possible, and to demand it from the employing class. If the vast amount of waste labour that goes on in every industrial community were put an end to, and if every one did his fair share of the world's work, not eight, nor six, but three or four hours' work a-day would be adequate to supply all of us with more of the comforts and refinements of life than we enjoy at present.