

either side, they came at length to a door at the far end, which opened into an apartment handsomely furnished with mirrors, pictures, sofas, lounges, and all the appliances and adornments of modern comfort and luxury. On one side of the room was a row of bookshelves, well filled with books, and on the opposite side stood a pianoforte and music-stool.

Near one of the windows, at the far end, a young lady, elegantly attired, was seated with a book in her hand. She rose at the opening of the door, and, perceiving her brother, came towards him; and, as she drew near, Henry recognised in her the fair equestrian to whom he was indebted for his release from the forest.

"Now what do you think, Mary?" the young man exclaimed, "You told me you were surprised when you first heard Mr. Talbot mention his name. You will be more surprised when I inform you that this gentleman is really our father's friend, whom we so long expected, and whom we believed to have perished at sea."

THE WORKSHOP REGULATION ACT.

The Act of Parliament which bears the above title, and which is gradually coming into operation, has been called the Magna Charta of English childhood—a high-sounding designation, but not an inappropriate one when we realise the fact that by its various clauses it takes the working child and the growing lads and lasses of the factory and the workshop from under the arbitrary jurisdiction of the employer, and subjects them instead to the regulation of just, humane, and considerate laws. Let us glance briefly at the new regulations, and at some of the effects they are likely to produce.

Premising that the Act* is applicable to factories in the widest sense of the term—that is, to industrial establishments of all kinds where many hands are employed—the first thing that strikes us is the prohibition which excludes children under eight years of age from being employed at all—a clause which will deliver thousands of children from a bondage to which they ought never to have been subjected. A second regulation forbids the employment of any child on Sunday; a third limits the working hours of all children under thirteen years of age to six and a half hours a day; and a fourth compels the attendance of such working children at school for three hours daily, on five days in the week. Thus, where children are constantly employed, two sets of them have to be engaged, one set working in the fore part of the day, while the others are at school, and the other set working in the afternoon, while the morning workers are at school; though this regulation is subject to certain modifications—not at all damaging ones—made to suit the convenience of employers, under the sanction of the inspector of factories.

The parent is required to see that his child attends the daily school; and the employer is bound to ascertain every Monday morning that the child has so attended during the previous week—the school certificate book, filled up by the schoolmaster, being evidence of such attendance on the part of the child. The employer cannot set the child to work without such certificate, and it is therefore his interest to see that the child's attendance is regular; still, no responsibility attaches to the employer for any neglect on the part of the child—all such responsibility being very properly cast on the

parent. But here there is a difficulty sufficiently obvious: if a number of children absent themselves from school during one week, or any portion of a week, and cannot be employed during the following week on that account, two evils are the result—the master loses their labour, and his manufacture, it may be, stands still, and the idle children are remitted to further idleness. With a view to obviate this difficulty, Mr. Redgrave, the inspector of factories, proposes a remedy of a simple and practical kind, which, as it punishes the only real offender—the neglectful parent—cannot be too strongly recommended. The plan is merely an arrangement made with the schoolmaster, that he should, whenever a child does not appear in school at the appointed hour, send on the same day the name of the child to the manager or overlooker. If the child ought to have attended school in the morning, by sending the name to the manager he is enabled at once to prevent the child from working that afternoon, and to require the child to go to school instead; the child will thus make up the proper number of school attendances during the week, the parent will forfeit the *day's* wages—an immediate penalty of a moderate amount—and the employer will lose only one day's labour instead of five. If the child miss school in the afternoon, the same process is gone through, the manager forbidding the child to work the next morning, and requiring it to attend school instead. This is not a new arrangement: it has been in operation in many factories for years; and wherever this plan has been adopted it has succeeded in lessening the absences from schools. Although it requires prompt attention at first, yet the punishment follows so rapidly after the discovery of the neglect, that in a surprisingly short space of time children who have been truants, careless, irregular in their hours of attendance, and who have been in the habit of performing domestic duties at home instead of attending school, are transformed into regular and attentive frequenters of school, without the institution of legal proceedings against employers, who are less to blame in the matter than the parents, over whom they have no control, or against parents who err from their inability to appreciate the humane intentions of the Legislature. It appears at first to be a troublesome arrangement; but when it has been firmly carried out, and the children know that non-attendance at school will not be overlooked, and that they will certainly lose a day's wages, they give comparatively little trouble, and attend school as regularly as could be wished; in fact, the attendance of half-timers in many schools is punctual and constant, being frequently better than the attendance of the other scholars who are not under the restrictions of the Factory Acts.

Thus much at present as to the children between eight and thirteen years. Let us turn now to the "young persons," by whom the reader will understand persons of both sexes between thirteen and eighteen years. The Act provides that no female shall be employed on the Sunday, or shall work at any time in any part of any factory, where the melting or annealing of glass is carried on; and that no young person, and no woman, shall be employed either before six in the morning or after six in the evening, or on Saturday after two in the afternoon, with certain reservations.

The effect of these regulations, in connection with those fixing the meal-times, is, that the ordinary hours of work are sixty in a week, namely, ten and a half hours on each of the first five days, and seven and a half on the Saturday. In the winter months, that is, from the first of October to the first of April, the hours of work

* Three separate Acts came into force on January 1st, "The Agricultural Gang Act," referred to at page 165, "The Factory Regulation Extension Act," and "The Workshop Regulation Act."

may be taken from between seven in the morning and seven in the evening, instead of between six and six; but no work can be done later than two in the afternoon on Saturday; though, in order that seven and a half hours may be obtained on the Saturday, the work may begin at six in the morning. One month's notice must be given to the inspector previous to any alteration of the hours of work for the months of winter.

With regard to meals, the Act decrees that one hour and a half must be allowed for meals to all children, young persons, and women, between half-past seven in the morning and six in the evening—one hour being given before three o'clock, and at least half an hour before one o'clock. The time allowed for meals, and the hours at which they are to be taken, are to be stated in the notice hung up in the works. Other conditions with regard to meals provide that they shall not be taken in the same rooms where unhealthy processes are carried on, or where there is not a wholesome provision for ventilation. For the convenience of the employer, or for that of the workers, it is allowed to lessen the time set apart for breakfast or dinner, and to make up to the worker for it by ceasing at an earlier hour in the evening—a practice which has prevailed for years, both in factories and in workshops not subjected to inspection, and has been found to work well.

The question of holidays is not left to be determined solely by the demands of business, or the disposition of employers. No child, young person, or woman is allowed by the Act to do any work on Christmas Day or Good Friday; and, in addition to these customary holidays, eight half-holidays must be given in the year, four of them at least in the summer months, a whole day's holiday being reckoned as two half-holidays.

Special sanitary regulations are enforced for the ventilation of work-rooms, and to prevent their overcrowding, as is also the use of mechanical means for obviating or abating the peril to life and limb attending certain dangerous processes of manufacture. Stringent rules are also laid down enforcing the boxing-off, or fencing of machinery, so as to secure to the workers the utmost possible immunity from danger.

Such, briefly stated, are the principal measures provided by the new Act. It must be evident that to bring them all into force at once, without warning or time for preparation, would only tend to confusion, loss, and hindrance of business. Certain temporary exceptions have therefore been allowed, the effect of which is to delay, unavoidably, the full operation of the Act for a period varying from six months to two years; but such exceptions are of comparatively small import, and it is probable will cease to be practically operative before the expiry of the date the law assigns to them. Again; as many of the regulations above quoted, would, if carried out to the letter, be altogether mischievous in certain branches of modern industry, it has been found necessary to modify the application of them to such departments of manufacture. Thus, in letter-press printing, in the manufacture of glass, in the making of paper, and in various other industries in which men work to catch time, or have to attend on processes which cannot be safely intermitted, it would be impossible to insure that regularity and periodicity which are the normal result of ordinary labour, if the new regulations were strictly adhered to. Modifications of the new rules are therefore made in favour of such trades, and it is in the discretion of the Secretary of State to extend such modified rules to any particular class of industry, should such extension be required by the exigency of trade. It must be understood, however, that these modifications are in no way

oppressive to the workers; they do not increase the number of the working hours per week, but only economise the hours by distributing them in such a manner as to secure the efficiency of the work done.

While we can but congratulate the child worker on the protection this Act awards, and on the education it provides for him, one awkward reflection presents itself. The Act does not apply—cannot apply—to children who work at home under their parents' roof. There are tens of thousands of such children in London and the provinces. In London numbers work at home at lucifer-box making, lozenge-box making, the making of card-boxes of various kinds, baby-shoe making, carpet-bag and carpet-slipper making, artificial-flower making, etc.; etc. The earnings of all such children are small, often not more than twopence or threepence a day; but where the family is large and the parents poor, they are regarded as indispensable. Now it is to be feared that the child who is shut out of the workshop until he has completed his eighth year will be very little benefited if his work is only transferred to his home, which there is too much reason to fear will be the case. Work at home has no limit as to age, and would seem to have hardly any as to time. It is a fact that in the straw-plaiting districts infants of three to four years are found at work splitting and even plaiting the straw; and in some of the miserable villages of the Black Country one comes upon whole families working at the forge—six or eight of them at one fire—making nails, a task at which boys and girls of five or six are often efficiently skilled, and at which we have found them working up to near ten at night. In many of the handicrafts of Birmingham, again, children far younger than eight are, or used to be, employed in the simpler and easier departments of the work. The question is, whether the closing of the factory and workshop against the very young may not be an injury instead of a benefit to them, unless the law step in also to forbid or to limit the home work and to enforce attendance at school instead. It would be a miserable thing if the new Act were allowed to be defeated by those who make their profits by children's labour; if the work which young children are forbidden to do in the factory be exchanged for work of the same or a different kind which may be done at home.

One of the results of the limitation by law of child labour is likely to be an advance in the price of such manufactures as children take part in producing, and this result is to be expected as soon as ever the operation of the Act begins to be felt by employers. It is not that they will pay more money in wages in proportion to the work done (though it is likely enough that they will have to do that), but rather that in many cases they will get but half a day's work on the same area, and out of the same plant, which have heretofore furnished a whole day's work, and thus their cost of production will be enhanced. This consideration points to another possible result, by no means to be deplored, according to our notion, and that is, the gradual diminution and final abolition in some trades of child labour altogether. For it may well be that the expense and the trouble of superintending two sets of child-workers in one day may render it more profitable, or as profitable and less troublesome, to substitute adult labour in lieu of that of the child. To some extent this is likely to take place at once, but it will hardly be practicable in those branches of industry which are carried on upon an extensive scale, and where the margin of profit is so very small that any increase in wages must swallow up the employer's gains. What may have to be guarded against with reference to such cases and other analogous ones, is the

creation by new circumstances of a new class of middlemen employers, who shall undertake specified descriptions of labour performable by young children, and distribute it broadcast among the poorer families of our larger manufacturing districts. Such a system would effectually defeat the "humane intentions of the Legislature," if it became at all general—in which case we should have a race of industrial baby-farmers comparable to the old rural gang-masters whose exploits aroused such general indignation a short time ago. We will hope, however, that any such evil consummation will be sufficiently guarded against, even if it be not speedily rendered impossible by the forthcoming laws, which are to provide a suitable education for every poor man's child, and which will of course prevent his working while he ought to be learning.

THE MIDNIGHT SKY AT LONDON. MAY.

BY EDWIN DUNEIN, F.R.A.S., ROYAL OBSERVATORY.

If we refer to our diagram representing the sky south of the zenith for midnight in the middle of May, we shall discover that it is enriched by several of the most celebrated stars of the first magnitude, visible above the horizon of London, as Vega, Arcturus, Altair, Antares, and Spica. In addition to these, the planet Saturn is a conspicuous object in Scorpio, and easily distinguished from the bright stars near it, by the absence of any scintillation, or twinkling. Saturn, for the reasons given in January, is not inserted in the south view, but its position can be seen in the corresponding index map. Many new constellations have appeared in the east and south-east since last month, while the general advance of all the stars from east to west is clearly marked by the altered positions of the brightest objects.

Taking, then, the lower diagram first, the attention of the observer is directed to the zenith, which is now occupied by the constellation Hercules. It is the first time this year that Hercules is wholly contained in the southern half of the sky at midnight. There are one or two stars of the second magnitude, and several of the third in this constellation, some of which are near the zenith, east of the meridian line. Hercules extends over a large portion of this region of the heavens. West of Hercules, and on the meridian, the semicircular group of stars forming the Northern Crown is very conspicuous, its brightest jewel being Alphecca, or Gemma, in the centre. Directly below Corona Borealis is Serpens, with several stars of the second and third magnitudes; and, lower still, very near the horizon, is Scorpio, with its principal star Antares, and several others tolerably bright. Some degrees above Antares Saturn will be recognised. Looking due east, the brilliant Vega attracts our notice, about thirty degrees from the zenith. This star has passed since April 15th, from the northern half of the sky to the southern. Near Vega there are several stars in Lyra of the third magnitude. Below Lyra is Beta Cygni, or Albiero, a double star celebrated for the number of observations made on the colours of its two components. Between Albiero and the eastern horizon are several small constellations, the principal being Vulpecula, Sagitta, Delphinus, and Equuleus, the horizon itself being occupied by the sign Aquarius. In the E.S.E. the constellation Aquila can be distinguished by its group of three stars, the central one being Altair, of the first magnitude. In the diagram, Altair is in-

serted near the eastern limit; it is, however, about thirty degrees above the horizon. The horizon in the south-east and south is occupied, beginning from Aquarius in the east, by Capricornus, Sagittarius, Scorpio, Lupus, and Centaurus. If we now turn to the west and south-west sky, we shall have little difficulty in identifying most of the constellations and stars, with which some of our readers are probably by this time acquainted. These are Boötes, Coma Berenices, Virgo, Libra, and a few others. Looking due west, Cor Caroli is situated nearly



INDEX-MAP, LOOKING NORTH, MAY 15.

half-way between the zenith and horizon, surrounded always by stars of comparatively small magnitude. The first star of importance from the zenith towards the south-west is Beta Boötis, between which and Arcturus are several bright objects; Arcturus itself being recognised by its ruddy appearance. Farther down in the same direction Spica can be seen. At this time a line drawn from the zenith through Arcturus passes through Spica. Near the south-west horizon, west of Spica, the stars in Corvus are still to be distinguished. Between Cor Caroli and the horizon all the principal stars in Leo can be identified, Regulus being very near to the horizon. This star is not included in the diagram, which contains only a few stars in the most easterly part of this constellation. The horizon from west to south contains parts of Sextans, Hydra, Crater, and Corvus.



INDEX-MAP, LOOKING SOUTH, MAY 15.

The complete list of constellations which adorn the southern half of the midnight sky of May is composed of Hercules, Corona Borealis, Boötes, Coma Berenices, Virgo, Libra, Serpens, Ophiuchus, Aquila, Sagitta, Del-