

sure the Newcastle men will not join this strike. They have had all that kind of business they want."

Other coal companies are in the same mind as the one named, and the fight is now on in earnest. The companies appear determined to stand out, claiming that the strike is wholly without justification, as there has been no general reduction in wages for several years, the men being employed under the wagescale of 1889. It will be interesting to note the attitude of the men after their week's experience, and in the changed aspect of affairs.

MAY DAY AT HOME AND ABROAD.

For years it has been the custom of laborers in foreign countries to make Mayday a special occasion of demonstration. The return of beautiful spring, the air filled with the fragrance of the huddling trees and flowers and the love-awakening warblings of the sweet, winged singers, has by a tacit understanding been the time selected by the sons of honest toil to give voice to their own sentiments and to let the world know that there are millions of human beings to whom the resurrection of nature to sunshine, life, love and joy serves but to intensify their own feelings of discontent and despair. They have made Mayday, above all other days, a time in which to recite loudly and sing in concert the wrongs, real and imaginary, under which they are suffering.

Only a few years ago the bold idea was conceived to induce every employe in the civilized world to strike on Mayday, just to show the world its helplessness without the laborer, and to demonstrate the incalculable loss the latter have it in their power to inflict on capitalists whenever they chose to act as a unit. The agitation was carried on with great diligence led by socialists and anarchists in Europe, and the authorities had to resort to extraordinary measures to prevent the realization of the plan. Of course, it came to nothing, or almost to, but great apprehension was at one time felt for the results, should a conflict ensue. So far the labor demonstrations in Europe have been confined to more or less imposing parades, hot speeches and drinking. In the larger cities a few hundred laborers would gather and march through the principal streets, displaying their banners and characteristic mottoes; they would sing patriotic songs in all sorts of keys, sharps and flats at once, cheer their orators, distribute literature, more or less red, and then resort to a beer garden and spend a week's wages or more until midnight, rendering themselves unable to provide a living for their families for several days to come, all the while closely watched by the police, objects of pity and contempt. No doubt there are exceptions among the numerous paraders of respectable laborers in some countries, but as a rule the labor demonstrations in Europe have been of this general character. As thoughtless tools in the hands of skillful agitators workmen have suffered themselves to be paraded in the streets, only to unstring the nerves of society and cause what annoyance there may be in that con-

dition. No serious harm has been done to anybody, except such as has been to the cause of labor itself.

Newspaper correspondents, however, have always made the most of it, and the press on this side has always had much to say about the wretched condition of the laborers abroad, predicting a terrible uprising as the result and all the time contrasting the situation in this country with that of Europe as one of Utopian excellence. It is all the more surprising, therefore, to find ourselves on this Mayday in a situation more grave than that which has confronted either France, Switzerland, Belgium or Germany for many a year. At the very steps of the Capitol today an advance guard of unemployed laborers are endeavoring to frame, according to their views, the legislation of the country, and thousands are directing their steps to Washington for the same purpose; while thousands and thousands more are expressing sympathy with the movement. At the same time the various labor organizations contemplate combining for united action in case of emergency; and what the final outcome will be, not even the sages of the country can foretell.

Surely it is the turn of the European press now to discuss our troubles, and its comments consist chiefly of expressions of surprise that the governments of the various states have not long ago made such a May demonstration impossible; that that would have been the European way weeks ago.

And in truth there is much in the situation that is matter of wonder. Americans argue that the right peaceably to assemble and petition for redress of grievances is accorded to the citizens of this country. Nobody questions this; but does that right include also the privilege of a free ride from coast to coast on the railroads or the levying of assessments in the shape of provisions on the communities through which the march goes? Does it warrant speeches of an almost incendiary nature, like that in which "General" Carter indulged in in this city yesterday?

All things considered, there is much in this Coxey movement that is not based on constitutional rights. It is an anomaly foreign to the institutions of the country. It may pass off without any serious results, but it may, under certain conditions, prove to be the little spark from which a great fire is kindled, uncontrollable and disastrous.

GREAT IS THE MISSISSIPPI.

The near approach of the season of floods in the Mississippi valley, the ever-recurring discussion of the jetties at the mouth and the levees along the banks of the mighty Father of Waters, and the project of bridging the colossal stream above New Orleans—all direct attention to the river itself, its tributaries, the engineering problems it has presented, the generous sums that have been and must still be spent upon its improvement, and lastly, to the restless enterprise of the American people which refuses to be satisfied so long as there is still one obstacle to overcome, or one more triumph of skill and daring to accomplish.

The spring is the season for floods in

the Mississippi, which in its lower course usually receives a culmination of the early freshets, coming mostly from eastern rivers, in March. From the western rivers come the later floods in June. Occasionally there is an intermediate flood resulting from a late rise from the Ohio, meeting and combining with an early freshet from the western and northwestern streams. It is worthy of note, and extremely important in view of what may at some time happen, that within the history of the white man's observation the highest floodwaters from the Ohio basin have never yet reached the lower Mississippi at the same time as the other basins, which act together, were discharging. Such a united maximum discharge would amount to more than 3,000,000 cubic feet per second, or greater by half than any recorded discharge.

While the western tributaries of the great river possess the greatest interest for citizens living on this side of it, an understanding of the subject may only be had by considering also the sources of contribution from the other side; for while the area comprised within the Ohio watershed measures only 202,000 square miles, as compared with an area of 541,000 square miles drained by the Missouri, the latter does not contribute as much as does the former, to the main river; and the upper Mississippi, draining an area of only 171,500 square miles, contributes nearly as much as does the Missouri, with more than three times the area. Further affluents of importance come from the west, south of the Missouri, between which and the Red river the drainage is in volume about three-fourths that of the Missouri; so that, for purposes of easy recollection, the proportions of these contributions may be given as 100, 76, 66 and 52 for the Ohio, Missouri, Upper Mississippi and the Lower Western rivers respectively; while the proportion of northern and eastern drainage combined is to the total western drainage as the figures 4 to 3 very nearly.

In this connection it may be mentioned that one explanation of the comparatively small volume of water turns into the Mississippi from the Missouri watershed is that, according to the observation of experienced explorers and recent reports of United States engineers, the upper Missouri is going underground. Actual measurements show that between Great Falls and Fort Benton, only twenty-five miles below, the loss in volume of water is no less than 456 cubic feet per second. The engineers explain that the water enters the soil and accounts for the presence of the great South Dakota artesian basin; and the finding of eyeless fish in these artesian waters is consistent with the explanation.

What gives to all this consideration of the Father of Waters—with his sources and volume and periods of rise and fall—its present interest, is the fact that there has just been begun the final survey for the great bridge over the river above New Orleans; the data above given will help the reader to an appreciation of the boldness of the project. The bridge is to have a main channel span of 1,070 feet, a height of 104 feet above the mean water line and a height of 85 feet above the highest