

OPPRESSION.

In looking over the last number of that "most excellent and useful paper," the Saturday Evening Post, I saw a statement of the cause of the *turn out* among the female operatives of the Dover (N. H.) factory. This *turn out* has formed the subject of a squib, probably, for half the newspapers, from Maine to Georgia.—The circumstance of 3 or 400 girls, or women marching out of their factory, in a procession, and firing off a lot of gunpowder, and the facetious advertisement of the factory agent for 2 or 300 better behaved women, made, altogether, a comical story, quite worth telling. Few papers have given us the reasons for the *turn out*, and perhaps not one has condescended to examine the grounds of the matter, extenuate the conduct of the oppressed females, and denounce the capricious and galling tyranny of the agent, or his purse-proud masters.

The cause of the cessation from labour by the female operatives of Dover (N. H.) factory, was the imposition of a set of *new regulations*, by the agent—and a more tyrannous stretch of arbitrary power than these regulations it is difficult to conceive; tame and spiritless must be the man or woman who could submit to such a yoke of bondage, and cold the feelings of him who could peruse the account unmoved. I will give you the obnoxious regulations.

"1st. No person will be admitted within the yard except on business, without permission from an Agent."

This modestly couched article is much more severe than it appears; carried to its full extent, it shuts up the girls as if they were in a nunnery.

"2d. The bell to call the people to their work will be rung five minutes and tolled five minutes, at the last stroke the entrance will be closed, and a fee of 12 1-2 cents exacted of any one for whom it may be opened.

What would the good people of this city say, to see 3 or 400 girls running, like hunted deer, on the ringing of a bell? I think I see them now, scampering along the road—wedged up in the gateway—pushing one another aside—breathless with haste—each thinking "the devil take the hindmost." But, even allowing that they can *always* go, dine, and return, in an hour, it is too much to fine a

labourer a quarter of a day's wages for the loss of one minute's time.

"3d. No person can be allowed to leave work, without permission from their Overseer."

So, if a girl has the fidgets, or any other of the thousand grievances of the sex, she must ask *permission* to leave work!—Comment is unnecessary.

"No talking can be permitted while at work, except on business."

This, no doubt, the Dover fair sex considered "the unkindest cut of all." This was reducing them to the level of the State prisoners at Sing Sing, who are not allowed to speak a word.

"Spirituous Liquor, Smoking, nor any kind of amusement will be allowed in the Work-shops, Yards, or Factories."

I know not what kind of young women they may be in Dover, to need restriction in the use of ardent spirits.

"4th. To preserve the present high character of our profession and give the enemies of Domestic Manufactures no cause of exultation, a strictly moral conduct is required from every one. Gambling, Drinking, or any other debaucheries will procure the immediate and disgraceful dismissal of the individual."

With all these enemies of Domestic Manufactures are to be won over by these regulations,

as was, they must be lovers of tyranny and oppression—they must desire to see the world divided into lords and slaves—they must desire to see a portion of their fellow creatures grow up as mere machines—without spirit, sense of their rights, or knowledge of their true place in the scale of nature, with all the dignified attributes of the human soul merged in the exalted art of tying a knot in a thread of cotton! Surely it was not necessary to tell 3 or 400 young women, that if they were guilty of any *debauchery* they would be dismissed! It is but a few years since these large cotton factories had an existence in this country—did they find a vulgar population, or have they had a debasing influence?

"5th. Self-respect, it is expected, will induce every one to be as constant, in attendance on some place of Divine Worship, as circumstances will permit."

This is quite snng. I forbear comment.

"6th. All those that faithfully perform their duty, have prevented as far as possible the waste or destruction of the Company's property, and wish to leave their employ, may, by giving fourteen days' notice of their intention, receive a certificate that they were regularly discharged at their own request."

This caps the climax. Any female who may have spirit enough to resist the domineering of her oppressors, will be denied a character. Wretched, indeed, must be the state of subjection in these factories, if the having, or not having of a certificate of good conduct, on leaving, is to have any effect on the operative's future life. It is a base attempt to hold a rod of punishment over the wretched captive, not only during her bondage, but to pursue her to her last gasp of life, if she be not a submissive and trembling spaniel.

"7th. Those who take jobs will be considered as overseers of the persons employed by them, and subject to these Rules"

This is not material; the next is specious enough.

The Agent is desirous of cultivating the most friendly feeling among all the members of this establishment, and while on the one hand a rigid attention to duty and observance of these regulations and any other that may be found necessary to establish which do not affect their legal rights as citizens, will be required, he assures the individuals under his charge, that it will give him pleasure to be of service to them."

Alas, for the factories, if all are to copy the Dover one: and alas for the unfortunate and degraded victims who are to be (as it were) reared, and to live and die in them! What Spartan mothers will their factory girls make who have been trained to sink all the rights of human nature, to qualify them to watch a cotton thread.

The agent who imposes these regulations is probably nothing but a supple tool of higher powers. While a few men are able to amass princely fortunes, from the captivity and incessant application of a large number of poor girls, they surely should deem themselves bound to make the situation of their dependants as little irksome as possible, and not devise schemes to tax their exertions to the utmost extent, and lay them under restrictions revolting to their feelings.

One word more—How were the funds raised to build the said factory! I would bet a weeks wages (though I have not laid a wager for many years) that a part, at least, of the funds were raised through banks. If so, we have one more instance of the manner in which the labouring classes have hitherto forged their own chains. Every cent of paper capital makes labour so much poorer. It is quite probable, if every thing connected with the building and its builders could be known, we should find that this precious Dover factory owes its existence to bank paper. Thus the working men build a factory out of their wages, which becomes the property of more cunning men, who use it for their own aggrandizement, and the oppression and debasement of their fellow creatures.

MALET.