

WHY THE TIMES ARE HARD.

From the middle of 1870 to almost the middle of 1871 there was the Franco-German war. Then came peace—the indemnity of two hundred and twenty millions sterling paid to Germany, and the schemes of vast and rapid expenditure occasioned in that country by the sudden acquirement of so much riches. Two or three years previously Austria and Hungary had become one nation and had entered upon a free and constitutional life. Italy had become unified, and all over Germany there had been a removal of the obsolete and autocratic impediments to labor and skill. The Suez canal was opened at the end of 1869. Telegraphs were being carried to the farthest parts of the commercial world; and by successive inventions steam vessels had been brought to a point of economy which gave them the command of the longest voyages. But besides all these influences—nearly all of them in their spheres and degrees revolutionary—the United States since 1867 had been constructing railways at a pace never before reached in that or any other region; and not railways only, but canals, docks, wharves, warehouses, and every sort of fixed investment directed to the extension, of business, commerce, and manufactures. In Europe there had been since about 1862 the regular appearance as large borrowers of a group of half-barbarous states never before heard of in the money-market. Turkey, Egypt, Honduras, Peru, Roumania, Venezuela, and the whole tribe of South American settlements obtained year by year tens of millions sterling, and applied at least some portion of the money to the purchase of English materials and labor.

The effect of the war of 1870-71 in stopping nearly all productive labor and enterprise in France and Germany—the waste, in short, of gigantic hostilities carried on for a twelve-month—and the delirium of the peace and its accompanying ransom in the conquering nation threw upon this country in 1871-3 the task of supplying the urgent demands of no small part of Europe. To the fortunate persons who happened to be in possession of the means of supply—notably the owners of coal-mines and iron-works—the results were fabulous. As we all well remember, nothing was talked of but colossal fortunes made in a few months, and an advance of wages and prices beyond all example. The whole industrial and commercial machine was being driven with a velocity and subjected to twists and alterations it could not long endure. A pause came in the summer of 1873. The panic in New York in September of that year told very plainly that in the United States the tension had become insupportable, that floating capital was exhausted for a time, and that cost of production had destroyed consumption. Exactly the same phenomena repeated themselves in Germany, Austria, Russia, Holland, and Belgium. In all these countries since the autumn of 1873 there has been a process of relapse and retreat from a state of things in which expenditure of all kinds had outrun the first income and then the floating capital; in which wages had long exceeded the intrinsic value of the work performed in exchange for them, and in which the market prices of securities had been raised excessively by a belief in future profits very far larger than the community could furnish or afford.

The case of the United States and of Central Europe is in effect our own. The six years 1867-73 included, as regards commerce and manufactures, a great number of events and changes, each of them more or less revolutionary than any preceding period of the same length—events and changes, too, which affected a greater number of countries and regions. Considering the profound character of the disturbing causes, the wonder is that the reaction has not been even more disastrous than it has been and is; and it is precisely the amplitude of the arresting and compensating forces now at the command of industry and commerce which affords the best reason for believing that recovery is certain, and perhaps not far distant.—'Pall Mall Gazette.'

CUTTING THE FLAGSTAFF.

(Rev. Father Garin's Lecture continued.)

At the first break of the day, Kauiiti, according to the order, sounds the attack at the opposite extremities. The Government forces are soon on the spot to resist the attack, and firing rages. In less than a quarter-of-an-hour the Maoris have taken the first battery which was erected on that quarter. During the engagement, the Bishop with his companions, not knowing how far destruction could be carried on, leaves his residence and takes to the boats. Whilst the men are pushing the boats from the shore into the sea, one of them receives a bullet through his hat and another through his coat. As the battle is going on in that part of the town, the soldiers of the battery on the road to the flagstaff, seeing that they had nothing to do, came down from the battery to assist those who were fighting down in the town; likewise those who were in the fortifications came out for the same purpose, leaving their posts.

This was Heke's moment! Scarcely had the last soldier evacuated, leaving the place open, than Heke rushes in, singing out in the Maori fashion: "Tena kokiri kiatoa, kiatoa! Hurrah!" Now, boys; come on, hurrah! There you would have seen the iron plates yielding under the steel of the axe, savages fearlessly shouting, striking heavy blows regardless of danger. In vain did the soldiers, turning back, direct against the fortification the gun which was turned against the battlefield, and fire against Heke and his fellows. The cannon balls go through the thick planks and the clay, but the singing and the axes are doing their work. Ten minutes, and a deafening hurrah from Heke and his men announces to the town that the flagstaff is down once more.

In every country of the world we see men fighting for their land, whether their rights are true or imaginary; nevertheless it gives to man an energy and a courage almost superhuman, and such was the case with Heke and his men.

Already the barracks have fallen under the power of the Maoris. Fighting is kept up till half-past ten in the morning, when the ammunition magazine, having been set on fire, explodes. Then all the white population leave the town, which remains in the power of the natives, to take refuge on board of the man-of-war, and other vessels. Now the Maoris indulge in the plundering of the houses, some setting at random fire to the buildings.

After the fall of the tree, Heke, finding in the station of the flagstaff the wife and daughter of the guardian of the flag, who had been himself fighting against the Maoris, and had been wounded, respected these two females, and did not molest nor insult them, though they were now in a state of excited passions. But he gave orders to six of his men to lay down their weapons, to take a flag of truce, and to lead that mother with her daughter safe to a boat, so as to rejoin the man-of-war. At this sight firing ceases, the two victims are delivered to their people, who let those six men go back, then fighting resumes—a fact worthy of record, even amongst civilised nations.

By this time the Bishop, seeing that the natives were setting fire indiscriminately to the houses, comes back to his residence, and sends a note to Heke to ask him if they were also going to burn his buildings. Heke himself comes to the Bishop's house, and tells him that he will not allow this; but his men won't listen to him, and do all sorts of mischief. But he will publish a notice. On that account he asks for a sheet of paper, and writes himself in Maori the following notice, which he affixes to the wall of the house:—"Ki te ao Katooa. Notice to all the world, and let all peoples and all nations know that our fight is only against the red clothes, *Kahu whero* (so they used to call the soldiers). Let nobody burn or break the houses of the Bishop." Consequently the houses of the Bishop were not hurt; even the Maoris spared 15 houses belonging to others, only breaking them with axes, lest by setting the fire on them, those of the Bishop would get on fire.

The Bishop, going into his house, sees four or five Maoris taking away some objects and running for their life. He sends after them. Heke is so annoyed at it that he wants to kill the robbers, but the Bishop tells him not to shed any more blood, but only make them return what they stole.

Heke accompanies the Bishop into his buildings, and Kauiiti presents him with a chief's coat (*rangitira*).

In this affair there were several instances of humanity on the part of the natives. After the explosion of the powder magazine, the soldiers and national guards left the battlefield to go on board of the vessels; some of them taking off their hats to salute the Maoris, and these answering the salute and ceasing to fight, leaving them to go to their boats without hinderance, which was very much against their old custom, for in such cases they were in the habit of killing all those left in their power. Neither did they kill any of those who were lying wounded on the battle-field.

After the English soldiers had all retreated, the natives hoisted a flag of truce to give both camps time to carry their wounded and bury their dead. Such proceedings were already great signs of civilisation. For it was only a few years before, that, according to their savage habits, they used to cook and to eat their victims. But this time they would not even kill the settlers; they said their fight was only against the red clothes soldiers.

(To be continued.)

MONSTER CARP FROM BERLIN.

I HAVE received a very valuable addition to my museum in the form of a splendid giant carp, the largest I have ever had the pleasure of looking on. It was most kindly brought to Albany street to me by Lord Arthur Russell, M.P., for Tavistock, who, as we all know, takes the greatest interest in practical fish culture, and who knows as much about rare European fish as any living ichthyologist. The history of this carp is as follows: There is a fishmonger in Berlin who had given out that he could supply carp up to thirty pounds weight. Lord Odo Russell, British Ambassador at Berlin, gave this man an order for a large carp. After waiting some time the man produced the specimen which Lord Arthur has brought me. It came all the way from Berlin, carefully packed in a basket. It was in admirable preservation, and a little carbolic acid soon freshened him up. The weight of this splendid fish is no less than twenty-seven pounds; he measures two feet ten inches in length, and one foot eleven in circumference; his head is like a great pig, and his back like that of a hippopotamus. The largest carp in my museum is (a cast of course) of a fish which weighed twenty-one pounds. It was given to me by Mr. Charles, of Arrabella road. There are some very aged carp in Windsor Park. Yarrell records large carp as follows: A brace weighing thirty-five pounds, from Mr. Ludbrooke's Park, at Gton; a carp taken at Stourhead, thirty inches long, twenty-two inches girth, and weight eighteen pounds. There is a painting of a carp at Western Hall, Staffordshire, the seat of the Earl of Bradford, which weighed nineteen and a half pounds, so that Lord Odo Russell's monster German carp is, I believe, the largest on record in modern times. Of course I shall make casts of this splendid fish, and shall then present, in Lord Odo Russell's name, the fish to Professor Flower, for the Royal College of Surgeons. The carp's bones are very firm and white, and the fellow will make a splendid skeleton. Carp certainly live to a very great age. A correspondent not long since recorded a carp that was known from positive facts to be ninety years old. I should not be at all surprised if the fish now in my casting-room was not from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years old, and I am in great hopes that we shall be able to get some evidence as to age from the appearance of the bones of the skeleton. Carp, when very old, are said to turn white. The origin of this story is, that carp are very much subject to a disease of white fungus growing on the scales. I shall endeavor to obtain of the fishmonger in Berlin further particulars of this splendid fish, for which I am much indebted to the gentlemen who so kindly procured it for me.—'Frank Buckland.'