

Under Which Flag, Mr. Union Man?

J. W. Van Cleave Says:

"The injunction's purpose is to head off injury for which, if allowed to be committed, the victim can secure no adequate remedy by the courts. It is the promptness, the certainty, and the justice of the punishment in contempt cases which renders the injunction so effective in preventing attacks on property and life. Jury trial would bring delay and uncertainty. Thus it would give a license to violence, would make industry and property insecure, would increase the number and the destructiveness of labor contests, and would assail legitimate trade of all sorts.

"It is the duty of American business men, regardless of their party, to bury Bryan and Bryanism under such an avalanche of votes in 1908 that the work will not have to be done over again in 1912, or ever."—Statement by J. W. Van Cleave, President National Association of Manufacturers, and President of the Buck Stove Co., St. Louis.

What Samuel Gompers Says:

"I am very well satisfied with the democratic platform as promulgated at the Denver convention, and I will do everything to support these declarations, and of course that means we will work for the election of the men who stand for our principles.

"I have never expected defeat in any undertaking, never hoped for defeat, and never have given up fighting for an idea or principle that I firmly believed to be right and just. I will always be found fighting for what I believe is right, no matter what the temporary results may be. I believe that in this fight we now have on hand, that we will win; and I shall work for Mr. Bryan's election and for the ratification of the principles that we have advocated as officers and as an organization."—Statement by Samuel Gompers, President American Federation of Labor, and now charged with contempt of court at the instigation of J. W. Van Cleave.

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THE LABOR DECISIONS OF JUDGE WILLIAM H. TAFT

"I am tired of this man Gompers running around the country claiming to have the labor vote in his pocket, and lying about me."

Stung by the just criticisms of organized labor for his unjust decisions against organized labor, and trembling with fear for success because of the almost unanimous opposition of organized labor, William Howard Taft used the above language while addressing the people of North Platte, Nebr.

Judge Taft's assertion that Gompers claims to carry the labor vote around in his pocket is on a par with his statement that his decisions in labor cases are the "magna charta of organized labor."

Samuel Gompers has never claimed to "carry the vote of union men in his pocket," and Judge Taft knows it. Yet Judge Taft, this "upright judge," this "honorable man," repeats the cruel and silly lie, hoping that his repetition of it will deceive a few voters.

His assertion that Samuel Gompers has lied about him is as false as his other assertion.

And Judge Taft's assertion that his labor decisions are really the "magna charta of organized labor" is the silliest of all.

Does William H. Taft imagine for a moment that all union men are pinheaded fools who may be deceived by smooth words and oily phrases?

Just now the republican committees are industriously circulating a pamphlet written by Frederick N. Judson, who happened to be the attorney for the railway brotherhoods in the celebrated Wabash injunction case. Judson is a republican lawyer, and in his anxiety to help the cause of his party he attempts to befog the labor issue and deceive the workers.

It is true that when Mr. Judson argued the Wabash injunction case for the Railway Brotherhoods he quoted a portion of Taft's decision in the case of Arthur and Sargent, using the quotation to prove that the railway men were within their rights. But in that portion of the Taft decision quoted by Judson no new principles of trades union ethics were pronounced. What was it that Judge Taft said that Judson and his political colleagues—including Taft—call the "magna charta" of trades unionism? Here is one sentence:

"It is a benefit to themselves and the public that laborers should unite for their common interests and for lawful purposes—they have labor to sell."

Wonderful exposition of judicial knowledge. And Taft calls that his "magna charta of labor."

The world has recognized that right ever since Moses led the first great strike—that of the Jewish brickmakers—although Pharaoh, the Taft of his time, tried to enjoin them.

But what does he mean by "lawful purposes?" That is what organized labor is trying to find out.

Judge Taft says it is not lawful for one man to strike in order to benefit another man. He says it is not lawful for one engineer to step down from the cab because his continuing at work injures his fellows and thus injures himself. He says that it is beneficial for laborers to unite for their common interests, and then sends them to jail for acting in their common interests. And that is Taft's "magna charta of labor!"

"They have labor to sell!" says Judge Taft. Thanks for that temporary concession. But now and then workingmen feel that they do not want to sell their labor because the sale will injure their future prospects and the prospects of their fellows. Judge Taft, in the same decision quoted by Judson, declared that under certain circumstances the laborer had to sell his labor or go to jail. And Judge Taft insisted upon his right to designate the circumstances.

"If they stand together," continues Judge Taft, "they

are often able, all of them, to obtain better prices for their labor than dealing singly with rich employes, because the necessity of the single employe may compel him to accept any price that is offered."

O, noble deliverer! O, wise and able champion of the rights of men!

Not until Judge Taft judicially decided these points, and made them "the magna charta of labor" did we understand that we could do better by organizing, nor did we realize that we had a right to organize. Of course, the mere fact that men did organize a thousand years before Judge Taft was born does not remove the other fact that it was Judge Taft who discovered that we had a right to organize. But, somehow or other, we have been going to jail for it more frequently since Judge Taft granted us the "magna charta" than we did before.

The whole argument of Frederick N. Judson is the argument of a man who imagines that he is talking to a lot of numbskulls who will eagerly swallow any kind of dope spooned into them by a member of the legal fraternity. He utterly fails to mention the fact that the very decisions which he describes as being beneficial to organized labor have been used for the basis of every decision in the last fifteen years that has progressively hampered the work of trades unionism until today a trades union stands convicted of being a trust in restraint of trade. It is the same kind of "freedom" that the savage Indians offered their prisoners when they let the prisoners "run the gauntlet," the same kind of "freedom" that the witch hunters gave to suspects—if they walked on the water they were witches and must be burned, but if they sank and were drowned they were innocent.

In the Phelan contempt case Judge Taft laid down a principle which, if maintained, will render every trades union as innocuous as a summer breeze. This is the principle that was adhered to in the Danbury Hatters' case—the "direct interference with interstate commerce" idea. Under that principle it would be impossible to secure redress of wrongs by a strike. All that the employer against whom a strike is waged would have to do would be to show that he now and then sold some of the product of his factory in another state—and, presto, the strikers would be "restraining interstate commerce."

"The Magna Charta of Organized Labor!"

Do Taft and Judson think union men are a pack of fools? Or do Taft and Judson just talk foolishly for the fun of it?

Since Judge Taft's kindly granting of his "magna charta of organized labor" we have been restrained from accumulating funds to pay strike benefits. We have been restrained from paying strike benefits. Our preacher friends have been restrained from praying for our immortal souls. We have been restrained from consulting among ourselves with a view to mutual help. We have been restrained from notifying one another that certain firms were unfriendly to us. We have been restrained from using the United States mails for educational purposes. We have been restrained from making social visits. We have been restrained from feeding our hungry brethren. We have been jailed for daring to exercise the rights guaranteed by the constitution. Our property has been confiscated because we dared to exercise rights that have been recognized as valid rights from the days of Tubal Cain to the days of Judge William Howard Taft.

And yet William Howard Taft declares that his decisions which declared Arthur and Sargent to be conspirators, and which sent Phelan to jail on the testimony of a hired spy, were "the magna charta of organized labor!"

The workingmen who believe what Judge Taft says about his friendship for labor would readily believe that the less his weekly wage the more provisions he can buy for his wife and babies.

A BOOK FOR WORKINGMEN.

"Letters From a Workingman" Worthy of Every Man's Perusal.

One of the best books on labor topics that has ever come to the attention of The Wageworker is entitled "Letters From a Workingman." The author conceals his identity under the non de plume of "An American Mechanic," and it takes but a moment's perusal to realize that the man who wrote it is a mechanic, an American and a union man. The book deals with topics that are of ever present interest to the wage-earners of the United States, and appears as a collection of letters written by a machinist named "Sam" to a friend named "Jim." Some idea of the topics discussed may be had from the chapter headings: "The Workingman and the Church;" "Labor and the Saloon;" "Human Nature in the Shop;" "Spies in the Shop;" "A Living Wage;" "East Side Crowds and Foreign Missions."

These letters are written in a breezy chatty way, but every line breathes a philosophy that must be put into practice in the daily life if the present day labor problems ever are solved. In discussing the apprenticeship problem "Sam" says:

"Trade schools have been started for the purpose of teaching boys to become all round mechanics. It is supposed that this will help, and I guess it will to some extent. Employers' associations are strongly backing these enterprises, but in most cases the schools become recruiting stations for scabs when a strike is on."

And in that one brief statement "Sam" punctuates the whole theory of trades schools as outlined by the employers and sought to be foisted upon the people as a part of the public school system. Speaking of "The Workingman and the Church" the writer says:

"The fellows in the shop tell of a preacher who put on a pair of overalls and attended a number of churches to see how a 'genuine' workingman would be welcomed. They felt quite indignant about it, because, they said, no self-respecting workingman would go to church that way. He'd pull off his overalls, put on the best clothes he had, and go to church like any other man."

This is a sly, but deserved slap at a large percentage of preachers, who know just about that much of the workingman and how to reach him. "Sam," in the chapter on "Trades Union Principles," says:

"But about this whole business of judging unions—why does everybody gauge us by our worst points, whereas they themselves expect to be judged by their best? Folks don't treat any organization as they do ours, in this respect."

We could fill columns with extracts from the book without exhausting its many good points. But the book must be read to be appreciated. Several of the letters appeared in the "Outlook," the "Independent" and "The Christian Endeavor World." They are certain to have a far-reaching effect for good in the discussion of the great industrial problems that confront us.

Settlement of the Iowa Central railway shopmen's strike at Marshalltown, Ia., which has been on since April 22, was effected last week, after two days' conference. The men will return to work Monday. The shops remain union. A general advance of one cent is granted over the amount received when the strike was declared but the advance is several cents under the demand of the men at the time of the strike.