

A MONUMENT TO TRADES UNIONISM

Standing on the summit of a high hill just east of the city of Colorado Springs, Colo., is an institution unique in its character, successful in its plan, and a model that bids fair to be followed by the erection of similar institutions. It is the Union Printers' Home, built and maintained by the members of the International Typographical Union for the use and benefit of the sick, disabled and indigent members of the craft. It is the only institution of its kind built and maintained by a trades union, and its success has been so manifest that other trades unions have taken the preliminary steps looking towards the erection of similar homes for their members.

For nearly thirty years the union printers of the country discussed at their annual conventions the subject of erecting a "home" for needy craftsmen, but it was not until the convention of 1888 that the project took tangible form. At that convention a communication was read from George W. Childs, editor and publisher of the Philadelphia Ledger, offering to start a fund for the erection of a home by donating \$5,000. Immediately the convention decided to accept the offer and to begin active work towards the end sought. Later, Mr. Child's partner in the banking business, Mr. Drexel, gave an additional \$5,000 for the home fund. This \$10,000 is all that was ever contributed by outsiders for the erection of the home, the rest of the money being contributed directly by the union printers of the country. The publicity given to the Childs-Drexel donations gave rise to the erroneous idea that Messrs. Childs and Drexel built and endowed the home. At first it was known as "The Childs-Drexel Home for Union Printers," but this name was soon discarded and it is now known as "The Union Printers' Home."

Citizens of Colorado Springs donated land upon which to erect the home, but every dollar raised for its erection and maintenance, with the exception above noted, has been raised by the voluntary contributions and assessments of the printers themselves. Some idea of what may be done by co-operation may be had by noting that although the International Typographical Union numbered barely 30,000 members when the start on the home was made, and has never reached 50,000 since, more than \$600,000 has been expended in the building and maintaining of the home.

The home was dedicated in 1892, and from that date to the present time its growth has been phenomenal, and its management has been such as to reflect great credit upon the union which supports it. There was but one building at the start, a stone structure four stories high, including the high basement, in which is located the dining rooms, billiard room, barber shop and kitchen. Within a short time after the completion and occupancy of this building it was found imperative that a hospital be erected for the treatment of tuberculosis patients—that disease being unusually prevalent in the craft and the complaint of a majority of those demanding constant hospital treatment. The question of finance immediately presented itself. "How may we obtain the money?" asked the trustees of the home. "Tell us how much you want and we'll give it," came the ready response from the rank and file. It was decided to ask every member of the union to contribute 50 cents at Christmas time that year as a "Christmas present" to the home, and the request was made. The answer was so unanimous that before the first of February enough money was in hand to erect and equip a splendid three-story hospital annex. In this annex tuberculosis patients receive the best of care and attention. In addition tents of unique construction have been placed about the grounds, and all those who may be benefited by life in these tents are placed therein. The tents are thoroughly ventilated, steam heated in winter and possess every modern convenience.

The home is maintained by an assessment of ten cents a month upon every member of the International. The assessment was but five cents a month at the start, and this was supplemented by contributions of one hour's work each year by every member of the union. On Mr. Childs' birthday every union printer east of the Mississippi river donated the proceeds of one hour's

work, and on Mr. Drexel's birthday the printers west of the Mississippi river did the same thing. Some very prominent men who came from the ranks of the printers have donated this one hour's work. Every year the late Representative Amos J. Cummings of New York went into a newspaper office in New York City, showed his card and worked at the case for an hour. Then he measured his "string," cashed it at the counting room window and handed the money to the local secretary-treasurer. The late Governor Hogg of Texas was a union printer, and for several years he observed Mr. Drexel's birthday by working an hour at the case and contributing the proceeds to the support of the home.

A movement is now under way to erect a new building on the grounds to be known as the "Cummings Memorial Building." The cost will be about \$30,000, and already one-half of that sum is in hand, the voluntary donations of the members of the union.

The Union Printers' Home has now been in practical and successful operation for fourteen years. The rules of its conduct are few and simple. There is very little of red tape in its management, and the union printer who needs its shelter has but to apply with the recommendation of his local union and the endorsement of the board of trustees who manage the home's affairs. There are now 150 guests at the home. Note the use of the word "guests." The men who enjoy the shelter and benefits of the home are not looked upon as "inmates," and they and their fellow craftsmen resent the application of the word "charity" as commonly used. The men are guests because they are enjoying benefits that they have earned by their own contributions. Union printers will accept the revised version of the Bible in the respect that the word "charity" is rendered as "love," for fraternity—love—is the basic principle upon which the Union Printers' Home was built and is maintained.

The home now costs about \$60,000 a year to maintain, an amount that is raised by an assessment of ten cents a month on each member. It is thoroughly realized that the home must be enlarged and the amount raised for its maintenance increased. But among the 45,000 union printers there is not one word of protest against increasing the expense. They are rightfully proud of the magnificent institution they have erected and are maintaining so successfully, and it goes without saying that they will readily respond to any request for more money—for all the money that is needed to maintain a home suited to the needs of the great organization.

The home grounds are beautiful beyond description. Cement walks are bordered with flowers, and the grounds are a revelation in the art of landscape gardening. Sitting in front of the home and in the midst of the beautiful grounds, the guest can look to the west and see the ever changing shadows of the clouds as they flit to and fro across the mountains, and eighteen miles away the hoary summit of Pike's Peak stands as a mute and everlasting sentinel. The mountains stretch away to the north and south, and with the naked eye the guests can see across a vista 120 miles in extent and beautiful beyond comparison. The health giving sunshine and air builds up the body and brain of the enfeebled guests, and within the confines of this magnificent home many a tired printer has spent his last days in rest and peace, closed his eyes amidst surroundings furnished by loving hands, and passed into the great beyond without a care.

There is one thing that brings instant disgrace and expulsion from the home—intoxication. Other rules may be violated a few times and result in only reprimand or a small fine. But a repetition of the offense of intoxication brings expulsion, and expulsion for that cause means that the expelled guest may never return. Each guest receives a small pension, about enough for "tobacco money," and violations of the rules are punished by suspension of this pension or confinement to the home grounds for a stated period. Those who obey the rules may come and go as they please, subject only to the rules that annex patients must be on the grounds between 6 p. m. and 6 a. m., and the other guests on the grounds between 10 p. m. and 6 a. m. The only thing the guests have to do is to lay around and try to get well. Most of their time is spent in the read-

ing and library rooms, where all of the best publications are received regularly. The home library now contains about 3,000 volumes, and under a plan of donation adopted at the convention last month it will be increased a thousand or more volumes every year. This will entail the hastening of the erection of the Cummings Memorial building, as already the home lacks for room.

Several local unions have furnished rooms which bear the names of those locals. The "Denver room" contains a magnificent telescope with which one may see plainly the tourists on Pike's Peak. The "Chicago room," the "George W. Childs Room" and the "Jefferson Davis room" are all handsomely furnished and would do credit to the palatial residence of any millionaire in America.

It large part, the meat, poultry and eggs consumed at the home are produced on the grounds, and every year the item of expense for these things grows smaller. Superintendent Charles Deacon and his wife occupy a handsome little stone cottage erected near the main building, and Mrs. Deacon officiates as matron. They have been in charge of the home for the past six years, and during their incumbency the improvements in management and in the appearance of the grounds have been such as to reflect great credit upon them. It is safe to say that no institution in America is surrounded by prettier grounds than the Union Printers' Home.

In front of the home grounds is a magnificent arched gateway upon which is inscribed "Union Printers' Home." Upon the gateway of the Stygian region is written: "Abandon hope all ye who enter here." Upon the gateway to the home might well be inscribed: "Take on new hope, all ye who enter here," for many who thought their days were numbered and few have entered through that gate, and within the shelter of the home have found new strength and gone out again into the workaday world and taken their stand among the toilers.

Truly the Union Printers' Home at Colorado Springs stands as the greatest monument ever erected to the principles of trades unionism. It embodies in its structure the fraternity, the love, the mutual helpfulness, the "all for one and one for all" spirit that must imbue every man who is a true trades unionist, and which must be present in every union that is true to the cause of the toilers of earth. Criticise trades unionism as you will, the home at Colorado Springs is a mute answer to every criticism. The men who have built and who maintain that home will readily admit that trades unionists have made many, very many, mistakes. But they will point to the home as evidence that they are trying to reach a higher level, that they are endeavoring to further the teachings of the Man of Nazareth by a practical application of His words: "Love one another." WILL M. MAUPIN.

LOST BOYS

The Commoner has been asked to print the following:

Oliver Knight, fourteen years old, but looks older, weight 110 to 115 pounds. Powder mark on left side nose, red spot on cheek under left eye; was dressed in dark worsted suit. The boy is likely to be working for some farmer. An anxious mother is eating her heart out in suspense. If found notify M. O. Brown, sheriff of Guthrie county, Guthrie Center, Iowa.

Mrs. Flora Boggs of Thayer, W. Va., desires information concerning her son, George Boggs. The last Mrs. Boggs heard from her son he was in Omaha, about a year ago, and he was then thinking of going to Oklahoma, but his mother has not heard from him since. Any information will be thankfully received by this mother.

Edgar Smith, Sr., of Murfreesboro, Tenn., desires information concerning his son, Edgar Smith, Jr. Edgar is sixteen years old and well grown for his age. He was last seen at Mitchell, Neb., July 13, and was then on his way east from Wyoming. If any Commoner reader has information concerning the whereabouts of this lad, he will confer a favor by telegraphing Edgar Smith, Sr., Murfreesboro, Tenn. Kansas and Missouri papers are requested to copy this paragraph, and thereby confer a favor upon the parents.