

THE WAGWORKER



A Newspaper with a Mission and without a Muzzle that is published in the Interest of Wageworkers Everywhere.

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A Lesson in Unionism

Having followed our youngsters to the Pacific coast and located myself on a suburban chicken ranch, I was surprised and pleased to find that one of our nearest neighbors was Billy Gorman. His father, a well-to-do farmer, had been my neighbor years ago in western New York. Billy had at first made but poor use of his abilities and opportunities, and after a brief career as a country lawyer and small politician had left his country for his country's good. But, soon taking a sudden turn for the better, he had learned the trade of a sawyer in a planing mill in Barberton, O., and had permanently adopted the life and habits of an industrious and thrifty mechanic. With a view to more rapid accumulation of worldly goods he had followed the star of empire and of high wages to San Francisco, coming by way of Texas, where he worked two years in the Murray cotton gin factories in Dallas.

I greatly enjoyed renewing my acquaintance with Billy, who was at his worst a very interesting and likable boy. We had many good visits over our garden fence, in the course of which I learned much of his interesting history since leaving his early home. I even advised him to shed his corduroys, now that his steady habits must be fully confirmed, and take up again the practice of the law, for which he had shown a great liking and aptitude even as a youth. But he claimed to be contented with his condition, and wished to take no further chances with the excitements and temptations of the forum and its environments.

"Anything fresh, Billy?" I asked him this morning.

"Why, yes," he replied, "I have had a letter from my old foreman with Clark Bros. in Barberton. They are setting up a new plant in Fort Wayne, and directed him to offer me a good place there, if my services are not too high priced."

I had previously known that the Murray company held out tempting inducements to dissuade Billy from leaving Dallas, which he did mainly on account of the suffering of his family in the torrid summer climate of Texas.

"Billy," said I, "you have been marked for promotion in every place where you have worked till you got to San Francisco. Here you have stood four years at the same set of saws, with no prospect in sight of ever being offered a better position."

"But," Billy rejoined, "if Clark Bros. gave me a department in Fort Wayne, I should have to work at least an hour longer and for probably half a dollar less a day than I get here at my saws."

"That may be, but your position here is not so good but it might be better. What strikes me is that you have either lost your superior qualities as a man and a cutter and handler of fine lumber, or else they are not appreciated here as they have been elsewhere. Do you know the reason?"

"Yes, I do," replied Billy. "It is the labor unions here, the same that secure me better pay for hand work than Clark Bros. would have to pay for my alleged superior capabilities in Indiana."

"As to your high wages, I understand that they are at the mercy of those same unions, which may at any time, without your consent or approval, call you off from your work altogether."

"Yes, that is true, and you can see," indicating his pretty home, and its ample surroundings, "what provision I am trying to make against such an emergency. Three-fourths of our neighbors, too, are workmen like me, and are throwing the same kind of an anchor to windward."

"Well, whether or no," I pursued, "is not half a dollar a day poor compensation for keeping at manual work which any man could do, and leaving your higher and more valuable capacities unused and undeveloped?"

"O, I give my higher capacities their innings out of work hours. I have found more than a plenty to do and to think of which has been profitable to me in one way or another."

"Yes, Billy; but how let me ask: Do you try as hard to do your best for your employer, now that you are a union man working in a completely unionized industry? And does your employer know or care if you do? In short, does not your union connection tend to make you no better than any one of a dozen sawyers in your shops?"

"Perhaps; but at the same time it tends to make each of the dozen sawyers as good as I am, which on the whole is a great gain, eh? Of course the unions, like many modern improvements, work some disadvantage to individuals, but we claim to show a large balance of public benefit to their credit."

"But you wouldn't claim that they have been a benefit in destroying all

friendly personal feeling between employers and employees?"

"Granting that they are to blame for this, which I don't admit," said Billy, "why should there be that friendly personal interest between those who sell labor and those who buy it, any more than between those who produce and sell eggs and those who buy them? Except as a matter of policy I should no more give any employer more than the ordinary amount of effort in a day's work than you should count out 12 eggs for a dozen."

"And the incentive of good policy has been removed through the influence of the unions," I added, inquiringly.

"Yes, by making our proper relations better understood. We no longer regard our employer as a patron to be conciliated by works of supererogation nor does he look us over in search of a good boy to pat on the head. My employer is a very worthy man and a member of the employers' association. He and I both know that we are liable to be some day engaged in a battle between our respective organizations, a battle caused by no fault whatever of his or mine. Of course this prevents any sense of friendly interest between us, for in war we must not love our enemies."

"These flourishing and prosperous industries of San Francisco then are, in fact, in a state of war?" I asked.

"That is about right. We work under an armed truce."

"Well, now, Billy, let us consider. The laborers must be employed, and the capitalists must employ them, if production and civilized existence are to continue. How do you justify the organizations which have brought about a war between these two inseparable and indispensable classes?"

"On the ground that they haven't brought about the war. They have changed the conditions of it, from an industrial despotism tempered by riot and insurrection, to a comparatively equal conflict. They have made the numerical superiority of the workers count peacefully in a dispute, as it ought to. And they have called the attention of the world to the fact that there is a war, an irrepressible conflict."

"Well, Billy, what would you call the cause of the war between capital and labor?"

"Why, I should call it just simply ignorance. Employers and employees fight each other because they haven't yet found out whom else to fight."

"Then why haven't your unions found the enemy?"

"Give us time," said Billy. "Have you noticed the labor vote in all the great cities this past year? We union men don't all think, but we all know who among us does think, and where to look for counsel and leadership when we want them. And before you know it the employers' unions and the labor unions will discover what is really doing the mischief. They will be blaming on each other. They will get sight of the common enemy. Then our guns are all mounted and loaded ready to train on him."

"Do you know 'his name'?" was my final inquiry.

"Sure I do. It is Privilege, Mr. Legal Privilege, short shrift to him!"

I took off my hat to Billy.—E. P. Rounsevell, in The Chicago Patriot.

THE MINERS' STRIKE.

Many Operators Signing Up and the Outlook is Good.

The long anticipated miners' strike is on at last, but it is not what the public was led to believe it would be. Scores of operators in both the bituminous and anthracite fields are signing up, and the number of men out, while smaller than anticipated, is being lessened every day.

So far the strike has not been marred by any disturbances worthy of note, save in one or two places where the foreign and ignorant element predominated. President Mitchell is handling the situation with his usual skill and the men are confident of winning.

"THE BRYANITES."

Col. "Ducky" Holmes' Players Have Been Duly Christened.

"Ducky" Holmes' baseball team has been duly christened "The Bryanites," and will be known by that name during the season. That is the result of a vote taken by a local evening paper.

The members of the team have about all reported for business and practice at the new park is going on merrily. Manager Holmes is not giving vent to any hot air about winning the pennant, but he avows and avers that he has got a mighty good club, and that he is going to give Lincoln an exhibition of clean ball that will tickle the fans' mightily.

WOMAN'S HOME COMPANION.

Reported That Its Management Has Signed with Printers.

Word was received in Lincoln Wednesday afternoon that the Crowell Publishing Co.'s successors in the publication of the Woman's Home Companion had signed up with the Springfield, O., Typographical Union and that the strike has been declared off. All the union printers return to work, and the men in other departments who went out with the printers are back again. Full details of the whole matter will be given next week.

If this report of victory is true—and there is no reason to doubt it—the union printers of the country have their wives and sisters in the Auxiliary to thank for it. Acting alone the printers would have been practically helpless, for the magazine caters almost wholly to the women. And when 3,000 earnest union women got busy with the advertisers and among the subscribers there was something doing in the financial department of the publication. It is a magnificent tribute to the unionism of the women and shows clearly that unionism can not win its real victories without them. The Wageworker doffs its bonnet to the Auxiliaries to the Typographical Union, and to the Auxiliaries of all trades unions everywhere. God bless 'em!

pay small. But gradually great changes have taken place. The hours have been shortened, the pay has been increased, and labor saving devices have been installed. The barber chair, as we know it today is of comparatively recent origin. First came the movable headrest. Then some inventive genius brought in the reclining chair. Now we have the reclining chair with pneumatic cushions, folding rests for the feet, movable headrest and comfort beyond compare.

"Mighty nice things to rest in," admitted the man in the chair.

"That's what," said the man on Chair No. 3. "And it helps the business. Lots of men drop in for a shave because they can snatch a few minutes rest in the chair. Thirty or forty years ago 50 cents was about the limit for a man to spend at one time with a barber. Nowadays it is not uncommon for a man to cheerfully give up a dollar or more. Shave, hair cut, shampoo, face massage, hair tonic and mustache curled—all of which makes good business."

"No, never mind the shampoo to-day."

"All right, sir. Comb wet or dry? All right. But one of the greatest changes has been in the personnel of the men who follow the business. They are proud of their trade now, take a pride in being skilled workmen, and have an organization that benefits both

IN LIVELY FREMONT.

Unions in That Good City Hustling to the Front.

There are six unions in Fremont, Neb., and all of them are alive and doing business. Enthusiasm is manifest among the union men and they maintain a Central Union that leaves nothing undone to advance the cause in that city. A movement is on foot to have the unions of Fremont represented in The Wageworker every week, and the editor assures the boys that they can have all the space they want.

Twelve years ago the editor of this paper assisted in the organization of a Typographical Union in Fremont, but owing to the panic of 1895-96 the union was forced to give up its charter. However, the time seems ripe for the organization of another union among the printers of that city.

All of Fremont's unions meet regularly and keep a sharp eye on trade conditions. They are working in one of the best of the small cities of the west, and they have plenty of room to grow. Representatives of The Wageworker are now there in the interests of the "Friendly List Edition," and are meeting with splendid success. It is to be hoped that the local unions will select a live correspondent and keep the Lincoln unions posted on what is doing in the lively little city on Jim Hill's new extension.

LOCAL MENTION.

A Few Brief News Notes About People and Things Hereabouts.

Is the label in your hat?
Is the label in your shoes?
Got a label on your collar? If not, why not?

Read what the Tribe of Ben-Hur has to say in this issue.

Louis Maupin is visiting with relatives in North Bend.

Is the label in your coat? It is if you are a good union man.

For union made shoes, best quality and style, go to Rogers & Perkins.

Rogers & Perkins carry the largest line of union made shoes in the city.

Mrs. J. E. Mickel and her two children, Harold and Helen, of Harvard, are visiting with relatives and friends in Lincoln.

"Blue Ribbon" cigars, manufactured by Neville & Gartner, and sold by all dealers, are union made in Lincoln. Smoke them and be happy.

Lincoln, Beatrice, Nebraska City, Plattsmouth, Fremont and Omaha will be represented in The Wageworker's "Friendly List Edition." And that edition will be a corker. Wait for it.

You can usually tell a Union Panter in Lincoln these days by the smile upon his face. The painters are meeting with huge success in their campaign for the closed shop, the eight-hour day and a slight increase in the minimum wage. The employers are coming across with enthusiasm, and the boys are giving them a hearty greeting.

A. T. Nelson, a member of the Stereotypers' Union, has decided to be a farmer, and has left town to take up residence on his farm at Alice, Nebraska. Mr. Nelson has been in the employ of the Western Newspaper Union for twenty-one years, and is one of the best at the trade in the west. He will be followed by the hearty good wishes of all the union men in the city.

MAKE IT A GENERAL HOLIDAY.

The baseball season in Lincoln will open on Wednesday, May 2, at which time Manager Rourke will bring his Omaha Indians down and let Manager Holmes' Bryanites make monkeys of them. Lincoln has been ripe for professional ball for three or four years, and now that it has it, it is up to the lovers of the sport to give it hearty support.

The Wageworker suggests that the opening day of the season be made a half-holiday, that all the business houses close and everybody like out to Antelope park and watch the Bryanites scalp the Indians. It will start the season off with a whoop and will make everybody feel good. Fifteen thousand people ought to be on hand to cheer "Ducky" Holmes' boys on to a glorious victory. Give us a half-holiday on Wednesday, May 2.

LET 'EM PAY WAGES.

A lot of Eastern papers are crying about a possible shortage of men to construct Western railroads. There is no trouble about men if swinish contractors will offer decent wages and provide accommodations fit for human beings. The average Western railroad contractor pays wages more suitable to China than to America and his camp would make a self-respecting hog long for home and mother. There are more men than jobs in this booming West of ours, and the railroads can hire them if they will pay living wages.—Denver Clarion-Advocate.

A Remarkable Strike

(From the Lincoln Daily Star)

Very few people, comparatively, outside of those directly affected, are aware that one of the greatest strikes in the history of trades unionism has been going on in the United States and Canada for upwards of six months. The first skirmishes began last October, although the real battle did not begin until January 2. It is the strike of the union printers of the country for the eight-hour day. The strike has been conducted in a most orderly manner. Not one charge of rioting or assault has been proved, although several charges were made. Injunctions setting forth charges of assault have been denied after full hearing, and several judges have even gone to the length of uttering what might be construed as compliments to the printers for their quiet and orderly conduct in the face of great provocation.

The printers have quietly submitted wherever they could not secure a modification of the injunctions, and have relied wholly on moral suasion and the justice of their cause. In the management of their strike they have set a splendid example to all trades union organizations. That the printers are winning is proof that their methods are the best. The general public hears very little of the struggle because it has very few "news features," but wherever people understand the situation their sympathies are almost wholly with the Typographical union.

THE BARBERS.

Some Comments on Changes in the Craft's Condition Lately.

"Ever stop to think about what great changes have taken place in the barber business during the last two or three hundred years?" queried the man on Chair No. 3. "Barbering is one of the oldest trades in the world. It antedates mechanics of all kinds. There were hundreds of barbers before printing was invented. For a thousand years before the steam engine was invented barbers were doing business at the sign of the striped pole. Long years before Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, or Aaron made the golden calf, men were engaged in the barber business. Our trade is one of the oldest in the world, and yet greater changes have been made in it during the last half-century than in all the centuries that have gone before."

"No, I don't care for any tonic," said the man in the chair. "Just tell me some more about the barber business."

"Well," said the man on Chair No. 3, "in the old days the barber was a sort of surgeon as well. From the surgical end of the profession we get the present barber sign—the striped pole. The stripes represent the bandages the barbers used to wind around the subjects of their surgical skill. That knob at the top of the pole used to be a basin, representing the basin that the old barber-surgeons were wont to use to catch the blood of their patients. A generation or two ago bleeding was a sovereign remedy for everything from fits to sore eyes, and the barber-surgeon was called on to do the tapping."

"And they do it yet," ventured the man in the chair.

"Yes, non-union barbers do," replied the man on Chair No. 3. "Union barbers have quit the bleeding business. As I was saying, the barbers used to be surgeons. In the eighteenth century King George II's royal edict separated the two professions, and surgery as a part of the barber business was prohibited. For centuries the business was rather looked down upon, and it was a poor paying business at best. The hours were woefully long and the

A Slap in Labor's Face

President Roosevelt's answer to the petition of the labor interests presented to him Wednesday was characteristic of some of his most exasperating traits. With all possible vehemence he proceeds to claim that he is more devoted to the interests of the wage-worker than anyone else can possibly be, and then proceeds to tell these elected delegates, representing 2,000,000 organized working people, that everything they ask is either wrong or has been already granted by his own beneficent solicitude.

It is easy to see why the present chief executive often exasperates those who are his best friends. The positive opinions and self-assertion which have given him his power and his usefulness are not so pleasant to meet when opposed to what is desired by a given individual or organization.

The president is nothing if not inflexible, and when this trait is exhibited in accordance with one's own convictions it is admirable; when contrawise it is enough to make one rage!

The News is well content when this obstinate assurance of all-wisdom is fighting for rate control and corporation surveillance, but when it is used to insist on lessening the stringency of Chinese exclusion, approving a so-called anti-injunction law which virtually legalizes injunctions against labor and insists on an unlimited day for Panama labor, we could wish that his imperial mandates were not so emphatic.

Labor protested that Chinese laborers were already coming in considerable numbers because of the president's insistence on more lenient interpretation of present laws. The president calmly denied the fact in toto, and said he should insist on more liberal laws as well as more lax enforcement.

While he still insisted that neither skilled nor unskilled labor should be allowed to enter America!

Labor's delegation urged that the anti-injunction bill before congress was virtually a bill to authorize what has heretofore been unauthorized—injunction restraining labor from striking. It was shown that it implied a property right on the part of capital in the laborer.

Yet the president quietly informed them that this was a bill he himself had worked out. "The law," he says, "was whipped into its present shape at a number of conferences between representatives of the railroad organizations and the department of justice and the bureau of corporations," and he thinks it is all right.

The eight-hour law issues were treated with equal contempt, yet he avowed that no one favored eight hours for labor so much as he? Employers of the government are refused all right of petition for legislation in their behalf. Yet Roosevelt informs the 2,000,000 men that appealed to him that this denial of petition is his will. Employees of the government must be as subservient to their boss as any other wageworkers and could appeal only to the heads of their departments. "Discipline" must be maintained.

Of the Panama eight-hour protest still less was made. Panama labor conditions were peculiar to Panama. Nevertheless, what he said regarding the falling off of the West Indian negro labor suggests that need of an eight-hour regulation. These negroes, he says, work very well Monday and Tuesday, but Wednesday there is a falling off, and by Saturday sometimes not more than one-fourth remain. Perhaps if they were worked but eight hours Monday and Tuesday they would stay on through the week, and progress would be advanced thereby.

But the 2,000,000 men might as well sent no delegation. There will be a yielding. The president will hold his own inflexible opinion.—Denver News

Christ and the Toiler

"Labor troubles" come as the result of an advancing civilization. Social unrest is sometimes an indication of social progress. There are no labor troubles in "Darkest Africa." Therefore, the cloud on the industrial horizon is his silver lining, if one will but look for it.

Many are the signs of development on the part of the working man, but most hopeful is the spirit of pride that he is taking in his position as a worker and as a citizen. Whatever may be said as to the condition of the toiler in some industries or in some countries, his position as the man upon whom rest the prosperity and the happiness of the whole people, is more and more being recognized. The brain of the country is paying tribute to the toiler.

It is in this respect that he has for himself, that he is winning the respect of others.

While it is true that the mass of men must of necessity belong to that great company who toil with their hands, nevertheless, the dignity of that toil has heightened the worker. It is an inspiration to realize that all toil—even the manual work of the artisan—may become as sacred as that of the preacher and of the priest. Men sometimes make a distinction between secular and religious work. Jesus Christ never did. To him all work was sacred. Jesus Christ as a carpenter was just as divine as when He cleansed the leper or preached to the multitude. In every case He was carrying out the will of God. When Jesus stood by the river Jordan, and the heavens opened, and the voice declared: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He had never, so far as he knew, performed a miracle or preached a sermon. He had simply been toiling as a carpenter in the little town of Nazareth. He had pleased God as a carpenter.

Here is nerve for the arm and enthusiasm for the skill—"I am working with God in carrying on His world." There was much more to the labor of Jesus than mere food and clothing and money. The sound of that hammer meant more to the world than so many products in wood. Every nail reached down to the coffin lid of some old tyrant or superstition. Every chip of the chisel released a hundred slaves. Not so far-reaching will be the result of every worker's efforts in this century, but it is a privilege to have at least a part in the work of the world's redemption by being a co-laborer with Christ in whatever field he may send us.

Helpful the thought too, that in the daily grind we have One who has passed through it all, so that He can sympathize with us in the abuse, the misunderstanding, the bitterness and all the suffering that comes to us in the performance of duty.

"This is the gospel of Labor.—Ring it, ye bells of the kirk! The Lord of Love came down from above To live with the men who work. This is the rose He planted Here is the thorn-cursed soil: Heaven is blessed with perfect rest, But the blessing of earth is toil." —Rev. Charles Stetzel.

TRIBE OF BEN-HUR.

One of the Great Fraternal Orders of the United States.

If you were going away from your home and family to be gone for three or four weeks, you would most certainly leave them enough money to buy their actual necessities while you were away, wouldn't you? If you could know beforehand that you were to be called away from home and family by death and could never return to them, to add them as you had in the past, wouldn't you do all in your power before you left to provide means for their care and support after your departure? Fraternal insurance furnishes the easiest and best way to provide for them, because you can so easily meet the small monthly payments required to provide a substantial sum payable to your beneficiaries in the event of your death, or payable to yourself if you reach the age of seventy.

The Tribe of Ben-Hur was organized twelve years ago and now has over one hundred thousand members. It also has an ample Reserve Fund, which is increasing in proportion as the membership increases, thus guaranteeing the payment of all claims, for all time to come.

Capital City Court No. 22, has nearly eight hundred members and at the present rapid rate of increase, will soon have the honor of being the largest Court belonging to the Tribe of Ben-Hur in the United States. During the present month there will be no membership nor initiation fees charged, thus making it easy to make the start and secure that much needed protection for yourself and family. It is a sin to neglect it longer. Send your name to C. L. Meshier, Assistant State Manager, No. 115 North Eleventh street and he will see that some good brother or sister calls upon you. Auto-phone 2714.

You can get union made shoes, men's and women's, at S. L. McCoy's, 1529 O street. And when you buy them of him you are patronizing a good union man.