

# THE WAGEWORKER



## WHAT TWO BRAVE WOMEN ACCOMPLISHED

"Our best capital in our crusade was our great stock of ignorance," said Margaret A. Haley at the First Christian church last week, when she told of the crusade made in behalf of the Chicago teachers. "Had we known what we were going to meet it is doubtful if we would have mustered up courage enough even to begin."

Then Miss Haley proceeded to tell a story of injustice to a brave army of women, of political knavery, of official neglect of duty, of judicial corruption, of self-sacrifice, of long suffering and of final triumph over every conceivable obstacle. It was a story as fascinating as a novel, and as instructive as a course in civil government. Indeed, neither the public schools nor the universities dare tell the true inwardness of our modern municipal and state governments as it was exposed by this courageous woman who had met and vanquished politicians, corporations, ward heelers, subsidized newspapers and dishonest citizens.

"We have school houses in Chicago that are as unsanitary as the foulest sweat shops," said Miss Haley. "In more than one the water seeps up through the floor in damp weather, and shoeless children are compelled to tread upon these floors day after day. In many rooms the teacher has from sixty to seventy-five little ones in her care, and to them she must be at once instructor, mother, physician, seamstress and nurse. For doing all this work she receives a smaller wage than the employe of the board of education who drives the school supply wagon, a smaller wage than the janitor. Her wages were pitifully small and had not been increased a penny in twenty years. On the contrary her annual pay had been reduced by a reduction of the length of the school year."

This was the situation in 1889, when the teachers of Chicago in sheer desperation met in mass meeting and petitioned the board of education for relief. Then it was that Dr. Harper of Chicago University said that recognition of the petition would be a mistake, as it would be a recognition of organization; that if the faculty of Chicago University dared to submit such a petition it would mean instant dismissal. The board of education refused to grant the petition, claiming that it had no money to pay out in increased salaries. Not a daily newspaper in Chicago even mentioned the facts as they existed, for reasons that will afterwards appear. The teachers wondered why a county so rich as Cook, and a city of such immense and growing wealth as Chicago could not pay decent wages to the educators who were molding the citizenship of the future. One day a relative of Elizabeth Goggins hinted to her that perhaps a lot of the big taxpayers were dodging their taxes. "Just look up the law relating to the taxation of corporations and see if the law is being enforced," he whispered.

Miss Goggins and Miss Haley were intimate friends, so the two of them put their heads together. They discovered that the law set forth that corporations should be taxed on their capital stock and franchises. It took them a year to discover all the facts—a year in which they were snubbed, ignored, insulted and denounced. But they persevered. They finally secured a certified copy of the state auditor's report of the Cook county corporations listed for this tax. It showed just 128 corporations listed, not a one of them a "going concern." They were all "dead ones." And at the same time six thousand live corporations were utterly ignored. They wondered how this occurred. Why were these corporations allowed to escape taxation, thus starving the schools? Then they investigated, and this is what they found:

The Pullman company represented on the school board by a general attorney.

The Stock Yards company represented on the school board by a general attorney.

The Street Railway company represented on the school board by a general attorney.

The Gas company represented on the school board by a general attorney.

Other corporations represented on the board by attorneys or confidential agents and handy men.

Further investigation revealed that the state board of equalization, whose duty it was to fix and levy the taxes was made up in a similar manner.

Then they sought legal advice, and went to ex-Governor John P. Altgeld.

"I had read about the mandamus," said Miss Haley, "and of how it was always effective when used against workingmen. I wondered if it could be used against rich corporations. Governor Altgeld told us we were on the right track, but said we would not succeed. 'The mandamus is the proper recourse,' he said, 'but no judge will dare issue it to compel the board of equalization to act.'"

"But we were so ignorant that we determined to try it, anyhow."

Miss Haley and Miss Goggins marshalled all their facts and went before Judge Thompson and asked for a writ of mandamus compelling the state board of equalization to act. Right here these two brave women saw their first ray of sunshine. Judge Thompson was an

honest man, an upright judge, and he issued the mandamus, demanding that the board of equalization act under a rule adopted twenty years before and ever afterwards ignored. The members of the board of equalization, politicians all, laughed at Judge Thompson and refused to act. Judge Thompson set the powerful machinery of his court in motion and the board of equalization was cited to appear and show cause why its members should not be jailed for contempt. This was something new—jailing men who were not mere greasy mechanics because they ignored a court's order. The board hastily met and adjourned sine die. Then the members went before Judge Thompson and said their hands were tied; that they had adjourned and couldn't obey the court's order. Judge Thompson, however, knew the law, and decided that the board was a continuous body and always in a position to transact business. "Make this levy under your own rule or go to jail," said the judge.

The board met, but in the meantime its bosses had secured an injunction from a federal judge restraining them from obeying the mandamus issued by Judge Thompson. "All right," said Judge Thompson, "obedience to the federal judge means jail for contempt of my order. 'Obedience to Judge Thompson's mandamus means jail for ignoring my injunction,'" said the federal judge.

And the Illinois state board of education for the first time in thirty years was moving around fast enough to get up perspiration.

When the federal judge discovered that Judge Thompson meant business he crawled, knowing full well that he could only delay action, not prevent it. So the federal court's injunction was withdrawn and the board of equalization met, driven by the lash wielded by two determined little women, and obeyed the law. But they "edged away" from it as far as they dared. They added \$162,000,000 to the assessed valuation of Chicago corporate property. Then the subservient federal court got in its work and reduced this to \$55,000,000. The "fixers" who worked for the corporate tax dodgers could "fix" the federal judge, but they couldn't "fix" Judge Thompson, although they tried it hard enough. But after four years of struggle Miss Haley and Miss Goggins went before the Chicago board of education and said: "Here is the sum of \$250,000, the board of education's share of the taxes we have collected from the big tax dodgers. Now you give the teachers the long promised increase, and pay them the back salaries due."

Did the board of education do it?  
No! It proceeded to spend the money otherwise, increasing the

pay of supply wagon drivers, janitors, coal heavers and clerks in the board's headquarters. The women who had forced the payment of the tax were not even given a "thank you."

During all this time Miss Haley and Miss Goggins had been working at regular wages, not from the school board, but from the 5,000 teachers of Chicago who had organized a society of their own.

"We'll have to have some help," said Miss Haley. "Where will we turn?"

"To your natural allies," said Miss Jane Addams of Hull house fame.

"And who are they?" queried Miss Goggins.

"Who but the fathers and mothers of the children who are being robbed of their rightful educational advantages?" retorted Miss Addams. "The workingmen and the working women of Chicago."

The matter was submitted to a big meeting of teachers.

"But that will put us in a class with the labor unions," cried one horror-stricken teacher.

"You've been a labor union for four years and didn't know it," retorted Miss Addams. "Now play the game out. Enlist the help of the men who are most interested in public education."

Then the teachers of Chicago organized the Chicago Teachers' Federation and asked for a charter from the American Federation of Labor. As soon as the charter was granted the Federation sent its delegations to the Chicago Trades and Labor Council. There they told the story that the Chicago Tribune, the Chicago News and the Chicago Record-Herald had never dared to print.

"You bet we'll help!" said the union men of Chicago.

And then the politicians, the tax shirkers, the "fixers" and all the corrupt elements in Chicago society became panic stricken. "It's all off now; the teachers are going into politics."

Thus, today the teachers of Chicago are enjoying an increased wage and better consideration. The children of Chicago workingmen and women are getting better attention and training, and the unions of Chicago have received an inspiration from the work accomplished by a couple of women who are not supposed to know anything about politics.

"The moral is," said Miss Haley, "that you workingmen must give us women the ballot, and then we'll help to win a speedy victory. We may be ignorant of civic duty, but if we are any more ignorant on that point than the average man, our situation is benighted indeed."

Now why wouldn't the Tribune, the News and the Record-Herald help these women force the big corporations to contribute to the support of the public schools?

It's a long story if all the facts are told, but "corruption" lies at the bottom. The Tribune building is located on a site owned by the board of education. With its "fixer," a member of the board and through his working hand in glove with the attorneys of the shirking corporations, the Tribune got through a ninety-nine year lease at an annual rental of \$47,000—and the site is worth \$150,000 a year now and growing more valuable every year. See? And the News building is similarly situated. See? And the man who owns the Chicago News owns the Chicago Record-Herald. See?

O, yes, the daily papers are all right. All this talk of their being subsidized or merely the mouthpieces of the corporations is all rot. And the labor paper that cries out against existing conditions is an "anarchist sheet," the editor is a "grafter" who is trying to blackmail successful men of affairs, and workingmen who claim to be genuine unionists let the poison of the dailies soak into their minds while they send back the labor paper marked "refused."

This is a bare skeleton of Miss Haley's address. In conclusion she pointed out that the only salvation for American wage earners was to resort to the ballot box. "You must do it for the sake of yourselves, your wives and your children. There is a concerted movement on the part of the American Manufacturers' Association to make the public schools merely work shops in which your children may be trained to be the strikebreakers of tomorrow, the underpaid competitors of insensate machines. Their talk of 'manual training' is a farce and a fraud. They want to fit your children only for the hungry maws of the furnace, the mill, the mine and the factory. You must arouse yourselves to political action and fight side by side. And who could help you more in this coming political struggle than the brave wives who sacrifice with you every day?"

Miss Haley closed with an exhortation to union men to never become discouraged, never to "lay down," never to cry "quit," but to keep on fighting, no matter how gloomy the prospect nor how bitter the opposition. The exhortation was an inspiration to the few union men present who had worked so hard and so earnestly to provide such a rare treat for two thousand men who failed to take advantage of the opportunity. Every man who heard Miss Haley last week would walk miles to hear her again.

### PRINTERS' MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 31

Sunday, May 31, will be observed by Lincoln Typographical Union No. 209, and Capital Auxiliary No. 11, as "Printers' Memorial day."

It was Lincoln Typographical Union that inaugurated the movement which resulted in recognition of this annual observance by the International, and it is now a part of the general laws of the organization. On the last Sunday in May of every year, printers all over the United States and Canada, meet to pay a tribute of respect and love to the departed comrades of the craft. Lincoln printers, assisted by their wives, sisters, mothers and daughters will on that day lay the most fragrant blossoms upon the graves of those who have taken "30" from life's hook, and cashed their final "strings."

Following is the program of the morning and afternoon services of the day:

#### SUNDAY MORNING

The Union and Auxiliary will meet at the north entrance of the State House, promptly at 10:15, and at 10:30 will proceed in a body to the First Baptist church. Rev. Samuel Zane Batten, pastor, will deliver the memorial sermon. Special music will be prepared for this occasion.

#### SUNDAY AFTERNOON

At 3:15 the Union and Auxiliary will meet at Fraternity hall, N street entrance, and at 3:30 take special cars to Wyuka cemetery. At the Typographical Union's burial lot special memorial exercises will be held.  
Song....."Nearer, My God, to Thee".....Assembly  
Prayer.....Rev. J. Mickel.....  
Song....."Abide With Me".....  
Address.....L. D. Woodruff  
Honorary Member No. 209

Address.....J. R. Bain  
President No. 209  
Decoration of Burial Lot.....Union and Auxiliary  
Doxology.....Assembly

Members of the Union and Auxiliary, and friends of the two organizations, are requested to bring flowers to the cemetery. But two of the twelve deceased members buried in Wyuka are buried in the union's lot, and owing to the distances apart the entire decoration service will be held at the lot. The roll of the dead will be called, and as the name is called flowers will be spread upon the sod. Every member of the Union and Auxiliary is urged to attend both the morning and afternoon memorial services.

#### CENTRAL LABOR UNION.

Brief Session on Account of Desire to Visit Carpenters.

The Central Labor Union held a short session Tuesday evening, taking an early adjournment in order to allow the delegates to accept an invitation to hear Mr. Williams' address before the Carpenters' Union.

The committee in charge of the label show and Miss Haley's meeting made a partial report. Not all of the unions have paid in their per capita share of the expenses, but the committee is prepared to take care of all bills.

The label committee reported progress in its work of compiling a "labeled goods" list, and was given further time. This is a work that will keep the committee busy at odd times for several months, but the results will be worth while.

The matter of securing an address by Raymond Robins was discussed, but no definite action was taken. Mr. Robins can be secured for an address at a very small cost to the union men

of the city, and they will be guilty of almost criminal neglect if they do not take advantage of the opportunity.

#### THE PLUMBERS.

Picnic Fever is Becoming Epidemic and Needs Attention.

The union plumbers of Lincoln succumb to the picnic fever every spring, and just now the epidemic is beginning to make itself felt. A committee has been appointed to provide the necessary remedy, which is a picnic. The plumbers' picnics are always enjoyable. The one that will be held in the near future will be the "great-granddaddy of all plumbers' picnics." This is official.

Two more plumbers are now proud possessors of union cards, having been obligated at the regular meeting of the Lincoln local last Monday night.

Frank Best, who had a two months' seige of typhoid fever, is now able to work, and the boys rejoice with him in his recovery.

#### THE TEMPLE DIRECTORS.

A Short Session That Frames Up a Big Publicity Scheme.

The board of directors of the Lincoln Labor Temple Building Association held a short but eventful session Monday evening. Arrangements were made for a "publicity campaign" that will be inaugurated next week, but just what it is can not be well mentioned at this time. But great results are anticipated, and when the facts become known there will be something doing in the way of getting a Labor Temple started. This is a matter that has been under consideration for some time, and it has been wonderfully helped along by a gentleman whose friendship for union labor has been evidenced on more than one occasion.

The entire time of the meeting was taken up in completing the plans for the forthcoming "publicity meeting." President Dickson was absent on ac-

count of illness, and Vice-President Chaplin occupied the chair.

#### THE BARBERS.

Just an Item or Two About Knights of Razor and Shears.

The Detroit barbers who want a closed shop on Sunday told the council committee on ordinances that Assistant Corporation Counsel Hally gave them an opinion that such an ordinance would be valid as far as it concerned the public shops, but not those located in club houses or office buildings. The committee will ask for an opinion in writing.

There are 133,381 barbers and hair dressers in the United States. The union barbers claim to have a majority of their trade in the union.

"Look for the shop card!" The best barber shops in Lincoln display it.

The Lincoln local has made another payment on its Labor Temple stock. The "barber boys" are always on deck.