

THE WAGEWORKER.

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CURT CURRENT COMMENTS

THE SAME CONTAINING A FEW UNBIASED OPINIONS ABOUT MATTERS OF MORE OR LESS INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC

I am grieved, humiliated, filled with regret. For three weeks I have watched the daily newspapers of Lincoln advertising a violation of the child labor law of Nebraska. I am so accustomed to having notices of violation of this law called to my attention that I am not usually surprised. But these violations are usually on the part of those who are admittedly out for the money, and who make no pretense of Christianity, humanitarianism or civic righteousness. Consequently, when I noted that a great religious assembly, headed by men who pretend to be above all things law-abiding, God-fearing and humanity-loving, deliberately advertising that the child labor law is going to be violated, I was shocked. I saw the law violated, too, after being advised for weeks that it would be done. I saw children under the legal age employed in a concert hall, and employed after the legal hours, too. I saw a lad 9 years old leading a band, for pay; a plain violation of the law. I saw other boys under the legal age playing under this lad's direction. And thousands of Christian men and women listened and applauded, and pillars of the church who had violated the law by employing these children, looked on with sanctimonious mein and said it was good.

Perhaps I should have interrupted and prevented this violation of the law. Perhaps not. Perhaps the good Christian men and women who violated the law by employing these children thought that because those whom they employed were only "dagoes" it was all right. I know that would have happened had I enforced the law in this case—I would have been the victim of another "protest," signed, perhaps, by the head man in the management of the great religious assembly guilty of violating the child labor law as flagrantly as any messenger service or big department store. But the whole matter will be left to the consciences of these devout violators of the law. But it strikes me that good people so awfully interested in the heathen children of China and India ought at least pay some little attention to the laws protecting children in our own country. What?

If the daily prints have quoted Rev. Dr. Risner correctly I am sorry I was not privileged to hear his addresses at the Epworth assembly. If the daily prints did do the right thing by him, the Rev. Dr. Risner is a minister after my own heart. The donning of a Prince Albert coat and a white tie does not seem to have had the usual depressing effect upon the gentlemen. Instead of having moral dyspepsia he seems filled with the religion of good cheer; to believe that Christianity is something more than long-faced lugubriousness. "Some of you people ought to make a collection of funny sayings and read them over every once in a while," said Dr. Risner. "What the church needs is action. It's the business of the church to keep folks so busy they won't have time to sin." Then Dr. Risner continued: "The church to be practical will have to give folks real human happiness. It is not true that religion alone will give all the joy a live person wants. We have to give innocent pleasures besides that appeal to the everyday man."

It would seem from all this that Rev. Dr. Risner's religion is something more than a religion of "don't." It seems to be a religion that appeals to young men and young women in whose veins runs the rich, red blood of youth. And the religion that appeals to such as these must be a religion of action, of innocent pleasure, of "doing," of all these things that go to make life in the new approach in pleasure, in a measure at least, to the pleasure they tell us will be ours in the life to come if we do right here.

It is a joy to note that there is a growing disposition on the part of the church people—to go to the people instead of waiting for the people to come to it; to make the Christian life attractive to men and women instead of repellent. I can remember when the Sabbath began at sundown Saturday and ended at sundown Sunday and between these hours we kids had to wear faces long enough to eat oats

out of a churn. To whistle was a sacrilege, an oto laugh meant a reprimand. It was nothing to have to sit for three mortal hours and hear some long-winded man afflicted with moral and mental dyspepsia tell us that we were all hair-hung and breeze-shaken over hell and damnation, and time and agin we kiddies have been scared witless by the wierd pictures of hell drawn for us by some leather-lunged sky pilot. Dance! Heavens, to even want to dance was next thing to the unpardonable sin.

Less than forty years ago Uncle John Oliver turned the water on to his mill wheel one Sunday morning to grind a grist for a sick neighbor, and the congregation of the village church was so sure that Uncle John was going to hell for that awful sin that they called a special prayer meeting to intercede with the Almighty in his behalf. And although I am still on the sunny side of fifty I can remember of more than one congregation being rent in twain by the introduction of an organ—something that the ultra-pious thought was the cap-sheaf invention of Old Nick.

It has taken that sort of thing a long time to die out—but, thank God, it is dying out, and rapidly. But is it any wonder that a religion of that sort failed to appeal to young men and women? Is it any wonder that those who clung desperately to that system of theology wondered amidst tears and groans why young people were not joining the church and taking part in religious works?

I am proud of quite an extensive acquaintance with Lincoln ministers, and nothing gives me more pleasure than to say that most of those whom I know are to be classed with Rev. Dr. Baisner instead of with the narrow-souled, mental dyspeptics who seem to think that heaven is a 7x9 resort for those who deem the acme of happiness to be able to shed tears and mortify the flesh. Rev. Mr. Harmon, Rev. Mr. Orr, Rev. Mr. Roach, Rev. Mr. Long, Rev. Mr. Zenor, Rev. Shepherd, O, the list is too long to enumerate! But I challenge any city of equal size in America to exhibit a ministry as liberal, as sympathetic, as stalwart and as able.

The good W. C. T. U. women who are writing Alice Roosevelt Longworth and asking her to quit smoking cigars and to quit smoking something to do considerably more worth their while. In the first place Mrs. Longworth's habits are none of their business. In the second place, the chances are a thousand to one that a majority of the meddlesome women could easily find something in the immediate vicinity of their own homes that they could, with profit to themselves and their families, undertake to reform. It isn't up to the W. C. T. U. women to reform Alice. That job is up to Nick. If anybody is to be censured for the giddy gyrations of the spoiled daughter of an over-advertised bunch of egotism, it is the man who married her. If he is willing to stand for his wife's doings, all right, but I often wonder how a man with masculine intestines who has such a wife can refrain from bending her launchwise across his knees, with her physiognomy downward, and applying a good stiff spanking where it is calculated to do the most good. I would suggest a good stiff hairbrush as quite the proper instrument. I have lively recollections of the efficacy of such an instrument.

The other day a big crowd of people heard a missionary tell about his work in China, and when he was through a lot of hysterical people threw dollars at him, telling him to use the aforesaid money to alleviate the woes of the Chink. That's all right, maybe. The Chink ought to be saved, but it looks mighty strange to me that so many good people are terribly interested in the welfare of heathens ten thousand miles away and apparently without a thought for the welfare of thousands upon thousands of men, women and children in this country. I've heard scores of appeals for help for the Chink and the Hindu, the Hottentot and the Kaffir, but from the pulpit of the church of Jesus Christ I've heard but two or three appeals for the helpless women and children who are being sac-

rificed upon the altar of greed in the horrible sweat shops of this Christian country. Ever hear one of those missionaries who is so eloquent in his pleas for the children of the Chink and Hottentot making a plea for the pinched-faced, thin-blooded, physically stunted American child who is being worked to death in the cotton factories of Puritan New England and Cavalier Georgia? Ever hear them begging for money to save from a fate worse than that endured by the Chink and the Hindu the helpless and hopeless female victims of greed whose life blood is sweated from them in the foul tenements of the east in order that thousands be ostentatiously given to "charity." We'll be in a whole lot better shape to save the heathen in foreign lands after we have accomplished by practice in our own America what we send missionaries to preach about in China and India.

What would the great Methodist church do if Adolph Busch of St. Louis should offer it a million of his brewery money for missionary purposes? Would it treat Mr. Busch with the same kindly consideration that it treated Mr. Rockefeller's "donation"? I trow not. And yet I hold that Adolph Busch's money is cleaner than Rockefeller's money. I have never yet forgiven the church in which my mother lived and died—lived the life of a saint and died with a face transfigured by the glory that shone upon her—I have never quite forgiven that church for having listened to the siren voice of Oily John and accepting a pile of his blood-stained and dirty dollars.

Perhaps I am narrow-minded and fanatical on this subject, but it seems to me as fit and proper to run a liquor saloon in connection with the church in order to raise money for church expenses, as it is to accept the money of a Rockefeller for the same purpose. I am not yet ready to subscribe to the doctrine that giving a part of the swag to charity atones for the crime.

Dick Turpin and Robin Hood were two knights of the road who robbed the rich and gave liberally to the poor in order to salve their consciences. What clergyman will condone the crimes of these two highwaymen because of their thoughtfulness for the poor? Yet Dick and Robin were mighty fine and upright men compared to some of our financial kings who are lauded for their piety and philanthropy.

This week The Wageworker gives aspiring candidates an opportunity to take its readers into their confidence. I warmly commend the readers to the advertisements of political candidates herein contained. The man who writes about himself certainly ought to know his subject.

Now will somebody kindly tell us what difference it makes whether a congressional candidate is for county option or ferninst it?

The Buck Stove and Range Co. is billing the county with four-sheet posters. It not only pays to advertise, but it pays to be fair and just.

BILLY MAJOR.

The Office Boy's Little Observations

De odder night I saw 'em throwin' dollars t' the Chink kids wot don't have t' hustle like a lot of kids in dis town t' keep from violatin' de laws against indecent exposure by wearin' rags.

Honest Injun, de most fun I ever had in me life was when I took a crippled kid wid me an' let him shoot half de crackers.

Me mudder is so blamed busy lookin' after her own kids dat she ain't got no time t' be pesticeatin' around tryin' t' save oder women's kids.

Pap says he could help de heathen a lot if it didn't take all of his wages t' keep his own kids from goin' hungry.

I've noticed dat de feller wat's allus so anxious t' git all dat's comin' t' him ain't very particu'lar whether he gets what's comin' t' others or not.

Me mudder can see dirt on de back o' my neck furdur dan I can see de capitol dome.

De more I see o' some men de more I t'ink dat if there ain't no hell w'ot's de use.

De only diffrunce between seven-up an' flinch is de looks o' de cards.

HITTING THE POLITICAL PIPE

A FEW STRAY BITS OF GOSSIP CONCERNING MATTERS THAT HAVE TO DO WITH RUNNING THE CITY, COUNTY AND STATE

Last week we asked Senator Burkett how he voted on the house amendment relieving labor unions from prosecution under the Sherman anti-trust act. Shortly after the paper was deposited in the postoffice we learned that Senator Burkett voted for the amended bill—that is, he voted to relieve labor organizations from attack under the guise of throttling trusts in restraint of trade. We gladly make this fact public without waiting to hear from Senator Burkett.

We would like to see "Dick" Metcalfe and Charles O. Whedon pitted against one another for the senatorship. Not because we believe Metcalfe could easily defeat Whedon, but because it would be a cinch that no matter which should be elected Nebraska would be represented in the senate by a man who would not dodge and trim, and who would always be found on the side of the people.

Several republican legislative candidates in Lancaster county, and at least two democratic candidates, have refused to sign "Statement No. 1." In other words they will not agree to vote for the people's choice for United States senator. Can it be possible that they refuse to pledge themselves because they want to be in a position to barter and trade their votes? The legislative candidate who refuses to sign "Statement No. 1" should be beaten so badly that he'll never bob up for office again.

Governor Shallenberger has made good. There has not been a single breath of scandal in any of the state institutions—something that has not occurred during the term of any other governor. The state tax levy is lower than it has been for years, despite largely increased appropriations for education and vastly increased cost of maintaining state institutions. There has been no abuse of the pardoning power, consequently no turning loose upon society of offenders against the law. During the last legislative session but one real labor bill was passed—the maximum train crew law. Governor Shallenberger signed it without hesitation despite the protests of the railroad corporations. Compelled by statute to approve a contract for the labor of convicts, he insisted upon and secured a supplemental contract preventing the sale of prison made garments within the state, and this, too, despite the opposition of the republican members of the board. During the street car strike in Omaha great pressure was brought to bear upon Governor Shallenberger to call out the state militia. He refused to consider the demand and told the union busters of Omaha that they could find relief in arbitration, not in martial law. It so happened that the corporation against which the strike was called was an inter-state corporation, and the Bureau of Labor was helpless in the face of the fact that a federal injunction would have been issued the minute the head of the bureau tried to conduct an investigation as provided by the state statute. But during the height of that strike Governor Shallenberger not only gave the deputy labor commissioner a free hand in trying to bring about a settlement, but gave him and the strikers every possible and legal encouragement in the way of securing a satisfactory settlement. One of the first acts of the present deputy commissioner of labor was to take the initial steps in forming the State Federation of Labor, and in this work the deputy commissioner had the co-operation of Governor Shallenberger.

There is one quarter from which Frank Tyrrell is expecting nothing but untiring opposition—the head offices of the Lincoln Traction Co. The reason is not far to seek. Tyrrell is insisting that the Traction Co. get right with the people it pretends to serve. Not only that, but he has taken a decided stand on the side of the underpaid and overworked car men in the service of that company. The Wageworker has not one word of opposition for either Mr. Strode or Mr. Spencer. We have known Mr. Strode for many years, and know him to be a man of parts—a lawyer of splendid ability, a citizen worthy of all respect and a public official who made good every way. That he would

make an efficient county attorney is beyond question. But this thing of "swapping horses in the middle of the stream" is unwise. Mr. Tyrrell has begun a great work in the interests of the people, and for this reason, if for no other, we are in favor of his reelection.

Some time or other in a century long passed, somebody, Cardinal Richelieu, we believe—said: "If I had served my God as I have served my king—and so on. After reading Mr. Whedon's circular and his reply to Senator's Burkett's alleged answers thereto, we are reminded that if Mr. Whedon had studied his Bible as he has studied the Congressional Record he would have been today the best posted man alive on the scriptures.

The "open primary" ballot is going to cause all sorts of trouble. A great many men are of the opinion that under the open primary they can vote for any name on the blanket ballot. That's where they will be badly fooled. They must vote either one ticket or the other—there can be no "scratching" on the primary ballot. The man who votes for Shallenberger for governor can not vote for Barton for auditor. The man who votes for Dahlan for governor can not vote for Hayward for congress. If he tries to do any of these things his whole ballot will be thrown out. Every voter must choose his ticket—democrat, republican, prohibitionist or socialist—and vote only for candidates on that ticket.

When Will Fowler was state superintendent of public instruction, J. L. McBrien was his deputy. When Fowler stepped down McBrien stepped in and made Mr. Bishop his deputy. When McBrien stepped down Bishop stepped in and appointed Frank Perdue his deputy. Bishop is about to retire and Perdue is aspiring to succeed him. Is it not about time to put a stop to this "law of primogeniture" or "law of entail" or "office-holding by inheritance" or whatever you may call it? The headquarters of about as smooth a political machine as was ever set up in Nebraska are located on the first floor of the state house, southeast corner.

George Tobey has one thing to contend with in his race for republican nomination for congress—the feeling on the part of the other counties in the district that Lancaster is inclined to "hog" it when it comes to distributing the political pie. This feeling, however, is not so strong as it was a couple of years ago when Pollard of Cass county was the republican candidate and went down to defeat because he misunderstood the temper of First district republicans. The republicans of the west will not stand for Joe Cannonism, and Tobey has not hesitated to announce his opposition to Uncle Joe and all his nefarious works. If the feeling against Lancaster is not too strong, Tobey will be nominated, and there is a prospect of a merry fight for the election. Maguire has made good and will have a lot of republican support, but he is up against a brutal republican majority. As between republican aspirants Tobey has the advantage according to the prognosticator of this Family Advisor.

It is really wonderful the way Metcalfe senatorial stock has been booming for the past ten days. "Met" was a little late in getting into the race, but this was not due to any other fact than that William B. Price filed early and "Met" refused to enter the race against his friend. This is not the first time "Met" has been mentioned for the senatorship. A few years ago he received the solid democratic vote in the legislature. This happened six years ago when Burkett landed the prize. If "Met" goes to the United States senate—and here's hoping—he will raise the average of intelligence, honesty, ability and commonsense an awful lot.

Having been caught with goods on him Uncle Mose Kinkaid now comes serenely to the front with the claim that he should be absolved from all blame because he has disposed of the goods to an "innocent purchaser." Uncle Mose is the innocent guy, isn't he?