Organized self-help

Herbert Newton Casson

ORGANIZED SELF-HELP.

A HISTORY AND DEFENCE OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

BY

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"The Crime of Credulity," "The Red Light," Etc.

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Dedicated to the
American Federation of Labor.

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INTRODUCTION.

AT the time of writing (November, 1901) the American Federation of Labor has on its rolls 1,100,000 members, and is increasing at the rate of 350,000 a year. It not only contains more citizens than any church denomination or society in the United States, but is the strongest non-military organization in the world.

Yet very few, especially among our literary, business and professional classes, know anything about the nature and history of this gigantic federation of wage-workers. Whenever a strike occurs, the newspapers print pages of personalities, denunciations and trivial details, but very rarely give any valuable information upon which a level-headed opinion may be formed.

In every discussion, the less we know about the subject the more we shout and abuse our opponents; and this is especially the case in time of labor troubles. Such an atmosphere of passion is

created that arbitration and cool judgment become impossible. The disastrous struggle is prolonged, until the employer is threatened with bankruptcy and the workers with starvation, because no middle ground of agreement can be discovered.

This little book is especially designed to prevent such deadlocks, by removing the prejudices which stand in the way of arbitration, and by presenting in general terms the workers' side of the question. The refusal to arbitrate generally comes from the employer, not from the trade union; and in this refusal he is too often sustained by public sentiment.

If, therefore, it can be plainly shown that during the whole history of this Republic, the trade unions have promoted law and order, industrial peace, prosperity, education and morality; that they have been the pioneers in almost every humanitarian reform, and the most effective agencies in the development of our free institutions, the outside public, and more especially the directors of corporations, may come to a more tolerant and reasonable frame of mind.

The writer desires nothing more than *fair play.*

Whoever acts unjustly, whether he be unionist or capitalist, should lose his case. The only reason why this book does not present both sides of the question is because there are always a dozen to champion the capitalist to one who is willing to speak for the workingman.

The facts gathered in the following pages have all been collected from responsible writers, and in many cases corroborated by the observation of the writer. As it is the first attempt which has been made to describe the American Labor Movement as a whole, and obliged to be condensed into the fewest possible words, there will doubtless be many omissions. Many facts which are commonly known about trade unions have been purposely left out to make room for historical matter of especial interest.

All the chapters have been written in language that a child of ten can understand, so that any one who can read the ordinary newspaper can be put in possession of these important facts in American history. Every boy and girl in our Republic should know the means by which it has been built up, and

by which liberty and equal rights have been obtained.

The author will esteem it a special favor if readers will send him, by mail, any facts which may be omitted and which should be inserted in future editions.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRADE UNION AS A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS INSTITUTION.

ORGANIZED Labor and Organized Capital are engaged in a fight to a finish. It is the Trade Union against the Trust—the union workingman against the monopolist.

The final outcome of this fight will affect the welfare of every man, woman and child in the United States. It is not a private affair, it is an industrial Civil War. The question that is being decided is more than one of work and wages; it is whether this country is to be run in the interests of property or in the interests of the people.

On a question so important as this every one of us must form an opinion. If we do not investigate for ourselves and form intelligent opinions, we will be sure to believe what some newspaper says and form foolish opinions. No people are so clannish as capitalists, and as they control nearly every paper and magazine and library, their side of the

question has been presented as favorably as possible, while trade unionists have been too often denounced as dangerous agitators and rioters.

Therefore, as the average American citizen is not a fanatic, but a well-meaning, fair-minded sort of a fellow, there is a demand for a clear, simple statement of the Organized Labor side of the question. Thousands of people want to "hear the other side." Every morning they read accounts of these desperate battles called strikes; they notice the wonderful organization of these gigantic armies of workingmen, and the courage with which their unions face monopolists whom the kings of Europe do not dare to offend; and they want to know what it is all about.

As a matter of fact, there is nothing secret or mysterious or foreign about Organized Labor. Any ten-year-old boy can understand it. In every large community of intelligent working people a trade union is as legitimate as a savings bank and as indispensable as a post-office.

This is an age of organization in all civilized countries. Capitalists combine into corporations and trusts to lower expenses and increase profits, and wage-workers combine into unions to reduce

the hours of labor and to raise wages. The "scab" capitalist is driven out of business by the trust, and the "scab" workingman is driven out of employment by the union. The man, whether capitalist or workingman, who does not protect his business interests by organizing with others like himself is almost certain to become a bankrupt or a tramp.

Considered as a business proposition, from a purely selfish standpoint, the trade union and the trust are very similar; though, as we shall see further on, the trade union tends to elevate and enrich the nation, while the trust tends to destroy it. Business is industrial warfare; and as Francis A. Walker, the noted political economist, once said: "If the wage laborer does not pursue his interest, he loses his interest."

Not even the richest millionaire can stand alone against the Wall street communism of wealth that seeks to conquer the commerce of the world. About two years ago a New York financier, rated at $20,000,000, withdrew from the Sugar Trust, in which he had made his money, and struck out on his own account. He antagonized the great Railroad Trust and several others, and the result was that his millions melted away like snow in June.

He was bankrupted so thoroughly that he was obliged to turn over to his creditors his home, his chickens and his gold watch. Such is the difficulty of playing a lone hand against the business combinations of to-day.

If, therefore, union is necessary for millionaires, how much more necessary is it for workingmen, who have no "pull," no property and no social standing? A single non-union workingman can no more make a contract with a trust than a grasshopper can stop an express train. Yet both grasshoppers and workingmen have stopped trains and trusts by combining in large numbers. The individual worker has become as powerless as the individual voter. Neither can do anything alone, but by combining they can absolutely control every department of industry and government.

Take away the trade union and you take away the only hope the average workingman has of bettering his condition. A wage-worker is not like a stock-juggling financier; he has no hopes of sudden wealth. Every dollar in his pay-envelope must be earned and often doubly-earned by hard work. He is not, generally speaking, like a bank clerk; he has little hope of being picked out and pro-

moted. His chance of being made superintendent, at a salary of $5,000 a year, is about as probable as his chance of being sent to Congress. He has nothing to sell except his labor, and no means of getting a higher price for it except through his union.

"Recognizing the right of the capitalist to control his capital, we also claim and shall exercise the right to control our labor," said the Constitution of the St. Crispins, a shoemakers' union that exerted a great influence twenty-five years ago. And the only way that the price of labor can be controlled or increased is by the combination of all the workers who have any particular kind of labor to sell.

The days of "free contracts" between the individual worker and his employer are gone by. To-day workers are hired and fired by the hundred and often by the thousand. They have no chance to even enter their employers' office. In most cases they work for an anonymous corporation, and are treated by the company as so much raw material and numbered like trucks and drays. Neither employer nor workman knows one another by name.

Either, then, they must do as the farmers do—pay what they're asked and take what they're offered, or organize a union, elect a secretary, and send him into the company's office to make better terms on their behalf.

Abram S. Hewitt, a wealthy employer and ex-Mayor of New York, once said that it is only when the workers are organized that the contending parties in an industrial struggle are in a position to treat. "Capital will not listen," said he, "until Labor is in a position to compel a hearing."

Almost every capitalist imagines that he can increase his profits by cutting down wages. This is a great mistake, as we shall point out in another chapter; but it seems impossible to get the idea into the average capitalistic brain. Most employers, and especially those who belong to Trusts, want to make their will the only law of their employees. They want to deal with their men in the same way that old Judge Jacob Weaver dealt with the Indians. Weaver was a New Yorker who lived over a hundred years ago and who made a large fortune in the fur trade. He taught the Indians to sell their furs by weight, and persuaded them that his foot weighed one pound and his hand a

half-pound. Weaver had thus the credit, as well as the profit, of inventing the first "sliding scale" system of wages.

Consequently, if workingmen had no unions, there is no limit to the wrongs they would suffer at the hands of despotic capitalists. The misery of the victim would be as limitless as the greed of the oppressor. The competition in luxury now being waged by millionaires and their wives would cause one reduction to follow another in quick succession. Whenever a new palace was built, or a million dollars given to a college or a daughter married to a Duke, another ten-per-cent. cut-down would be ordered, or another hour added to the length of the day's work.

The trade union civilizes the capitalist. It prevents him from making a Persian Shah of himself. It draws a line between fair play and oppression and says, "Thus far, and no farther shall you go." It says to him, "This is America and not Russia; and you must do business the American way." It transforms the wage-earners from human machines into human beings.

"Whenever Capital disarms, Labor will; but not before," said Wendell Phillips. Before corpora-

tions and trusts were formed, when capitalists were weak and disorganized, there was some reason for their opposition to trade unions. But to-day the fight made by the Trusts against unionism is in every way unjust.

The modern capitalist is armed and organized. He is protected by every possible fortress of law. He has many editors and professors and preachers to defend his actions and abuse his opponents. He even counts on the police, the militia and the National Guard to always champion his side of the quarrel when he disagrees with his employees. His one aim and object in life is to get as much work done for as little money as possible, and to sell the product for the highest price he can secure.

So the unorganized workers are to-day as helpless as sheep in a den of wolves. They have no means by which they can effectively protest against any injustice from which they may be suffering. They are at the mercy of an economic antagonist.

Such is the predicament of the worker who has no union. The Trust-makers are racing to see who shall be the first billionaire, and they have no time to think of the insignificant $2-a-day atoms who wriggle about in their great mines and factories.

Fifty years ago, when ten workers worked side by side with their employer, in a little wooden factory, each separate workman counted for something. He called his employer by name and was free to give advice about the business. He was much more like a partner than a hired hand. But in the gigantic plants that now exist one worker counts for as little as a leaf on a tree. The bigger the plant, the smaller the workman, is a truth that most American wage-earners have found out by experience.

This shrinkage of the workman can only be overcome in two ways—by organization or by some catastrophe which greatly reduces the number of workingmen in the country. The latter happens occasionally, as after the Black Plague in Europe and during the Civil War in America, but it can hardly be recommended as a plan of reform.

Organization is, therefore, the only expedient by which the worker can retain any individual rights whatever. If he has no right to set a minimum price upon his labor, then the grocer has no right to set a price upon his groceries and the physician has no right to fix his own fee. When any body of

people are prevented from combining for mutual profit, business stops and slavery begins.

"I have a right to be a man," said Francis Lieber, "because I *am* a man." The unjustifiable attempt of capitalists to ignore trade unions, to refuse arbitration and lock the office door against the elected representative of the workingmen, is a denial of those fundamental rights upon which democracy and civilization stand.

The trade union is, in short, the natural product of the present industrial system. No agitator or body of labor leaders is to be credited with the production of the Labor Movement. The cause of unionism is the instinct of self-preservation, which is most highly developed in intelligent and robust nations.

When "Uncle Sam was rich enough to give us all a farm," and when farming on a small scale was profitable, the wage-earner was more independent. If his boss refused to raise his wages, he could go west and take up land. There was even a chance, before millionaires grew up, for a poorly-paid mechanic to start a little shop of his own.

To-day the bonanza farm and expensive agricultural machinery make it almost impossible for a

poor man to succeed in farming, even if he could get the land for nothing, and there is no chance whatever to start a factory with ten cents and a jack-knife, as many did fifty years ago.

The 5,000,000 wage-workers in the large factory cities of America have absolutely nothing to depend upon but their weekly wages. Their Saturday pay-envelope is to them what land is to the farmer. It is their life.

And whether the pay-envelope contains much or little, it is uncertain. At any time it may be stopped. A government report has shown that 65 per cent. of the unemployed men and 78 per cent. of the unemployed women of the United States were workers in the manufacturing industries.

Without any guarantee of steady employment, without political influence, without a cent of income from rent, profits or interest, without a square foot of land, without any home except the one which is hired by the month from the landlord, or without any prospect of an old-age pension, is it any wonder that the wage-workers organize unions for mutual protection? Is it any wonder that they consider trade unions to be "the indispensable means of enabling the sellers of labor to take care

of their own interests," to quote the words of John Stuart Mill?

Imagine a body of 500 men and women, who go every workday to the same factory, who live in the same part of the city, who discover that they have the same interests, and are in danger from the same source, and yet who never conceive the idea of combining for self-protection! Such a thing would be impossible, except among the lowest savages.

The demands made by trade unions have invariably been fair and moderate. For several generations labor organizations demanded little else beside the abolition of old abuses which had become intolerable. When Wendell Phillips wrote the platform for the Massachusetts Labor Party in 1871, he began it with this sentence, "We affirm that labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to all it creates." No trade union has ever struck for as extreme a demand as this.

Whatever separate unionists may think of the absolute rights of Labor, they do not as unionists demand anything more than an improvement of present industrial conditions. In Italy, Germany, France, Belgium and Austria labor organizations

are revolutionary clubs of Socialists. But that is not the case in this country.

Up to 1886, American labor bodies were inclined to favor schemes for social reorganization, such as Fourierism and Socialism; but they discovered that all these schemes ended in politics and politics ended in disruption. Since that time they have been more practical and business-like. They have kept clear of political traps and idealistic propaganda. At every annual convention some well-meaning but short-sighted enthusiast proposes to transform the whole Labor Movement into a Socialist political party, but after half an hour of fireworks the resolution is voted down and the members settle back to more important business.

Every intelligent unionist believes in united political action on the part of wage-workers. He has also his ideals and dreams of what business will be like in the twenty-first century, but he does not believe in mixing dreams with his bread and butter. Since 1890, trade union conventions have refused to admit delegates from political parties.

One of the abuses, for instance, which trade unions first set out to abolish was the infamous "truck store" system, which was very common

sixty years ago. This system originated partly because of the scarcity of currency and partly because of a dislike of the employers to see their working people too prosperous. It compelled a workingman to buy his goods from his employer's store, invariably on penalty of discharge.

At the end of the week or month the worker received in his "pay-envelope" a statement of his account with his boss, often showing him in debt instead of having a balance in his favor. If there was a balance, it was paid, not in cash, but by a due-bill, good for so much merchandise at the "pluck-me" store.

The employer fixed the rate of wages and also the prices of the store commodities, so that nothing but a bare existence was left to the working people. A Pittsburg reporter found that the prices in a "truck store" were 60 per cent. higher than in other stores near by. And the accounts that the men received did not specify articles, but merely said: "Sugar, 50c.;" "pork, $1.25;" "cloth, $3.00;" etc.

It is related that in 1862 a Scranton manufacturer hung outside the door of his factory a flag with these patriotic words upon it, "Your country's call obey." One of his work-girls said to him,

"Your inscription is not complete; it ought to read:

'Your country's call obey;
Work for us and take store pay.'"

In a number of States the "truck store" has been abolished by law, but it still is one of the main causes of poverty in the mining and cotton districts. Recently at a labor meeting in Throop, Pa., a young miner named Stephen McDonald made the following remarkable statement, showing what the conditions are where no trade unions exist:

"Men," said McDonald, "you all know me around here. You know the truth of what I say. I repeat it to you to remind you of the common lot of our misery and suffering which has made us combine to cry out for a better order of things.

"When I was six years and four months old I went to work in the breakers of the Pancoast Coal Company. I have worked nineteen years, every day that I could get. I have never been on an excursion in my life. I have never been to a theatre but twice in my life. I have not drank a drop of beer or liquor for five years, and for two years I have not smoked. I have practiced the

closest economy in food. But I have never been able to accumulate $100 in my life.

"Men, I have lived in the hamlet of Throop all my life. You and I know this has always been a company store town. We know in our hearts what that means, whatever the operators may say.

"Eleven years I worked for the Pancoast Coal Company, and during those eleven years I swear here before the Omnipotent I never handled one cent of earnings in money."

What man or woman of unbiased mind will say that such feudalistic institutions as the "truck store" should exist in this country? Yet it would be seen to-day side by side with almost every factory and mine if it had not been for the opposition of organized labor. Every worker who finds cash and not a due-bill in his pay-envelope may thank the labor leaders of the last generation for it.

Another great triumph of trade unions has been the reduction of the hours of labor. Many a dapper young clerk, too feather-headed to join a union, and many a mulish non-unionist, are to-day enjoying twenty-four hours less work every week because of the ten-hour and eight-hour campaigns carried on by the trade unions.

We are apt to forget that 100 years ago men, women and children toiled from 78 to 84 hours a week—13 and 14 hours a day. This was the average, but many employers ground 16 hours a day out of their jaded wage-slaves.

In 1800 every laboring man and mechanic was at work at 4 a. m. At 10 they had an hour for lunch, at 3 an hour for dinner, and then on till dark. As late as 1836 women and children began work in some factories at 4:30 a. m.; and in New England it was the custom to light the lamps and work an hour before dawn, as well as an hour after—thus stealing two hours a day from rest. Even this was not enough for some greedy employers, and it was proved in a number of cases that the factory clock had been tampered with and set back half an hour.

No negro slave or Russian serf or Egyptian fellah was ever driven to the last ounce of his strength as were the first factory workers of New England. By law negro slaves could not be worked longer than 14 hours a day in winter and 15 in summer, and they were always allowed to lounge through the day in Southern fashion. In Europe, Asia and Africa the workers have always been slow, listless and plodding.

But the factory workers of New England worked on their nerve. They condensed a European day's work into a couple of hours. "Hurry up, you!" roared the overseer if one of them stopped to wipe the sweat from his face.

The introduction of the piece-work system made the poor dupes believe that their hustling was for their own advantage. They did not know then that "whether you work by the piece or the day, your standard of living determines the pay."

Few of the inventions of capitalism have done more physical damage to the working people than the piece-work system, especially when the workday lasted from sunrise to sunset. It scourged the vitality out of tens of thousands. It often tore a man's life out in a few years. There is no exaggeration in saying that what would be a week's work for a German or English factory worker was often turned out in a day by a New England hustler.

In every American factory city you would see men and women who were wrecked by this terrific strain. White-haired and shattered in health at 40 years of age, they drifted from job to job for a few months and then lay down to rest forever. Flesh

and blood could not endure such a killing pace. First the stomach gave way, then the nerves, and finally the whole physical system collapsed. The poor used-up worker was thrown on the street like a squeezed lemon, and another man, fresh from the farm, took his place in the line.

The trade unions were the first to see the evils of this fierce system of production, and began a series of strikes for a reduction of the hours of labor. The first strike of which we have any record, which occurred in Philadelphia in 1791, was that of the carpenters for a 10-hour day. Their demand at the time was thought to be most impudent and unreasonable, and they were defeated.

To-day the average length of the workday in all factories is less than ten hours; and the benefits to employer and employee of the Saturday half-holiday are being recognized. A large number of firms have reduced the hours to nine per day, and a few have established the eight-hour day and found it the most successful of all. Even the sweated garment-makers have obtained a 59-hour week, wherever they are organized.

The present demand of organized labor is for a universal eight-hour day. Such a reform would

not be an experiment, as some government employees, *not all*, as required by law, have had an eight-hour day since 1869. It is interesting to know that General Banks, who introduced the eight-hour bill into Congress, had a short time before married a beautiful factory girl from Lowell, Mass. Mrs. Banks had known what it was like to work 13 hours a day, five weary hours too many, and thus romance succeeded where political economy failed.

The eight-hour day has been in operation in Australia for 45 years, and has now been made universal in New Zealand. Samuel M. Jones, of Toledo, cut down the hours of labor in the oil fields from 12 to 8 in 1896, and declares that the plan has cost a little more but gives better results.

At present every one admits what 100 years ago was maintained only by trade unions—the profitableness of rest and recreation. Unless you get working-power *into* people, you can't get it out. This was the great truth which employers and professors and political economists rejected, and which is to-day gradually reconstructing our whole system of economics.

The hours of labor are still far from being uni-

form—the school teacher, for instance, works 1,080 hours a year, while the garment-maker works 3,068 hours, or would if he had steady employment. And the conditions under which the teacher works are quite different from those endured by our fellow-citizens who make our clothes for us.

But the eight-hour day argument is slowly reaching both the capitalist's pocket and the public conscience. The capitalist is realizing that a shorter day means a better product—that jaded men and women cannot do good work. And our recreation-loving American public is beginning to understand what it means to work all through the dust and heat of summer, in the foul air of a noisy factory, for ten long hours a day.

The employer and his wife can scarcely endure even grand opera if it lasts for more than an hour without intermission; a ball or a concert becomes wearisome even with all manner of pleasurable surprises and novelties; yet the wage-worker is supposed to be as energetic as a locomotive and as tireless as Niagara from 8 a. m. until 6 at night.

In 1886 the unions made a vigorous demand for an eight-hour day, and over 200,000, chiefly in the building trades, were successful. A poem which

was very popular at that time, written by J. G. Blanchard, gave the best expression to the desires of the unionists. It is given here as a fair sample of trade union poetry:

"We mean to make things over; we're tired of toil for naught
But bare enough to live on, never an hour for thought.
We want to feel the sunshine, we want to smell the flowers;
We're sure that God has willed it, and we mean to have eight hours.
We're summoning our forces from the shipyard, shop and mill,
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will.

The beasts that graze the hillsides, the birds that wander free,
In the life that God has given, have a better lot than we.
Oh, hands and hearts are weary, as the long, long, work-days roll,
If life's to be filled with drudgery, what need of a human soul?
Let the shout ring down the valleys, and echo from every hill,
Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will."

The demand of the trade unions for a shorter workday is not a mere petition for less work and

more play. It is a solution of the social problem which machinery has created. Machinery has made a reduction of hours necessary in two ways—first, by throwing thousands out of employment; and second, by placing a greater strain and responsibility on the worker. Machinery has given an intensity and strenuousness to industry which has never before been known in the history of the world. Its tendency is to become more and more automatic, and to require fewer, but better-skilled workers to manage it. And it has increased production so marvellously that it would to-day be profitable in many industries to inaugurate a *four-hour* day, for the benefit of the workers and the product.

No problem is more pressing than that of the unemployed. A man who is out of work is deteriorating in ability and disposition. He is a social burden and in the long run a social menace. Nothing takes the grit and self-respect out of a man as much as an unsuccessful hunt for a job.

Carrol D. Wright estimates that in prosperous times the usual number of unemployed is 1,000,000, without counting tramps, criminals, habitual paupers or wealthy parasites. That is, there are every

day in the United States 1,000,000 more or less skilled workers, men and women, who *want to work,* but who cannot find an opportunity of doing so. This involves a national loss of millions a day in money, and an incalculable loss of human happiness and contentment and achievement.

The remedies proposed by most social reformers for this gigantic waste are petty and ludicrous. Charity-mongers suggest soup-kitchens, which is as sensible as to propose giving a pill to an earthquake. Doctrinaires suggest State factories, not seeing that this would create a still worse industrial tangle. Some demand a prevention of immigration, not recognizing that the causes of unemployment are domestic, not foreign. Others propose Labor Colonies, as in Germany and New Zealand, which would practically become mismanaged farms for paupers.

The only adequate and statesmanlike remedy is that advocated by organized labor—the shortening of the working day. This acts both directly and indirectly. It makes a larger labor force necessary, and also gives more rest and leisure to those who had been at work. Rest and leisure at once operate to raise the standard of living—new wants are

created, and to supply these wants more workers are employed. Thus a reduction of the hours of labor sends a wave of beneficence and prosperity all over the country, touching especially at every wage-earner's door, but stimulating the business of all legitimate capitalists as well.

The eight-hour day is a fair sample of all trade union demands. It is, as we have seen, an improvement which will benefit the entire nation, with the sole exception of those leeches and parasites who live upon the toil and miseries of others. Nothing is more untrue than to say that unionism is a selfish class movement, indifferent to those larger national aims which statesmen are supposed to consider.

Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House, Chicago, recently said: "For many years I have been impressed with the noble purposes of trade unions and the desirability of the ends which they seek." Not long since a well-known New York manufacturer made a study of unionism, and the result is that he is to-day advertising the union label on billboards and in street-cars and newspapers, and has even written a book on the subject, enthusiastically commending the philosophy of organized labor.

In it he makes the following acknowledgment:

"Prior to the entrance of our firm into the field of unionism, there existed among its respective members the same aversion and antipathy for unions as at present exist with other merchants and manufacturers.

"We were firmly impressed with the theory that unions should not exist, that they destroyed the inalienable rights of citizens, and arrayed the laborer against the manufacturer and capitalist.

"Why, then, this change of heart? you may rightly ask. And we answer, not through any mercenary motive, but because the veil of darkness has been lifted from our eyes and we see and understand the principles of unionism and the justice of its policy."

The value of a trade union, not only to its own members, but to the nation, has not yet been recognized. It is difficult to persuade a corrupt man that any institution has an honest purpose; but those who have studied trade unionism, not in a college library or a bank parlor, but in the meeting-hall and the workshop, have been impressed by the wide scope of its program and the wisdom of its demands. A German writer, Dr. Jacobi, says:

"The records of one trade union, however small, will yet become a matter of more importance to the historian than all the battle-charges of history."

The unionist of to-day will be the statesman of to-morrow. A large proportion of trade union secretaries, and thousands of the rank and file, have libraries containing the most thoughtful and profound books on social questions. Their books have not been bought for the sake of the binding, as most Fifth avenue libraries are, but for the sake of the contents. They have been read and re-read, and, best of all, verified or corrected by hard experience. When the *Great Crisis* of the near future comes, the Abe Lincoln who shall guide the nation safely through will be a trade union graduate, at present as inconspicuous as Lincoln was when he split rails, or Grant when he sold potatoes.

Several years ago, when attending a hearing of a committee of the Massachusetts Legislature, I had the pleasure of seeing a trade union secretary explain to five stupid Senators the mysteries of the initiative and the referendum. Both political parties had placed the referendum in their platforms for the previous election, yet here was a

young Haverhill shoemaker explaining it to a party of politicians who had been elected to put it in operation.

It must be remembered that unions have had to develop in spite of a continuous onslaught of misrepresentation and abuse. No institution ever had more powerful enemies. The might of kings, creeds, armies and aristocracies withers away before the might of this latest world-conqueror—Organized Capital.

Every fact that could be combed up out of the hurly-burly of industrial strife, and every accusation that a host of hireling editors could invent, has been hurled against Organized Labor by Organized Capital. Labor legislation has been bought off by a swarm of lobbyists, side-tracked in committees by bribed politicians, and nullified by corrupt or prejudiced judges and inspectors.

Yet the fact still remains, which every lover of fair play must sooner or later acknowledge, that the welfare and perpetuation of this Republic depend not upon the victories of Organized Capital, but upon the growth and ultimate success of the great Trade Union Movement, which embodies the most robust, skilful and indispensable element in the nation.

CHAPTER II.

THE TRADE UNION PREVENTS LAWLESSNESS AND REVOLUTION.

THE trade union is the most effectual of all agencies for the prevention of lawless violence and private revenge. It is the social safety-valve which prevents explosions. By its means the most intelligent and reliable among the wage-workers attain to leadership, instead of the most reckless. The orderly action of the many abolishes abuses, instead of the lawless action of the few.

There have never been any Nihilists, force-anarchists, Molly Maguires, or White Caps where trade unionism was strong. And, in at least nine cases out of ten, the rioting that occurs during a strike is not only contrary to the reiterated orders of the labor organizer, but also entirely a matter of hoodlumism, with which the strikers have had nothing to do.

Yet it is as common as poverty to read attacks upon trade unions by the press, in which it is taken

for granted that unions were organized by rioters and social disturbers whose purpose was to tear down the props of civilization. McMaster classes trade unionists with lawless revolutionists and expresses mild wonder that the unions are permitted to exist. Bancroft attacks them savagely throughout his eulogies of the self-made sharpers who were the first to get rich in the various States.

Journalistic freshmen, who have never read a single trade union constitution in their lives, spin columns of bosh about the tyranny of the "walking delegate." He is described as an agitator who collects dues as greedily as if he were a New York Chief of Police. Strikes, riots and bloodshed are said to be his delight on the few rare occasions when he is not too drunk to fully appreciate them.

Having had the pleasure of knowing intimately several score or more of "walking delegates," I may be allowed perhaps to speak with some authority about them. The "walking delegate" is merely the business agent of the union. He obtained his name at first because of the fact that he received no allowance for car fare and carriages, and was obliged to walk from shop to shop. He

was not like the "riding delegate" of capital, who travels between his employer's office and the lobby of the Legislature in an automobile.

The business agent is the unionist who has been chosen by his mates as the most capable and reliable man among them. He is invariably a man of good habits, and very often is well-read and self-educated to a high degree. He does not order a strike; he only announces the order. His work is to do what he is told, and his duties are by no means few or easy.

Strikes, it must be remembered, come few and far between in the life of a trade union. They are always regarded by union men as a terrible and costly last resort. Therefore, it is the duty of the business agent to prevent strikes by interviewing employers and submitting differences to arbitration. The most successful business agent is he who obtains better conditions for the members of his union without the necessity of a strike.

The day's work of the *real* "walking delegate" (not the magazine-article one) consists in receiving and banking dues, in paying out the sick and out-of-work benefits, in getting work for unem-

ployed members, and in interviewing the employers against whom just complaints have been made.

It is also his duty to visit the sick and have injured members taken to the hospital. If a member of the union dies, and has no relatives to attend to his burial, it is the "walking delegate" who prevents him from being sent to the Potter's Field. On five or six different occasions I have been present at these trade union funerals, having been asked to say a few words over the body of some friendless wage-worker, who, if it had not been for the union and its agent, would have been thrown in a public trench like a dog.

Yet for all this difficult and responsible work the "walking delegate" receives only the standard wage of his trade, with few exceptions. He is the only professional man whose fees are fixed by those who employ him. His position is not a secure one, as he is elected for only one year at a time; and in case he is dismissed, he frequently finds himself "blacklisted" by employers and compelled to seek work in some distant State.

Cases have come under my notice in which these "walking delegates," so brutally libelled by men who are their ethical and intellectual inferiors,

literally worked themselves to death battling for the welfare of the members of their union.

In European trade unions, with the exception only of the English, there has always been a great deal of revolutionary or anarchistic sentiment; but that has never been the case in America. Free speech is the anti-toxin of anarchy. It is true that a large number of American unions have requested their members to withdraw from the militia, but that has been owing to the unlawful use of the militia by capitalists to break up strikes. Unionists are willing to defend their country against a foreign foe, but they are not willing to be used as public Pinkertons to shoot down their fellow-workers.

Organized Labor has its war record—longer and more honorable than that of those patriots for revenue only, who "saved the Union" and have been trying to bleed it ever since. When the Civil War began, nearly all the trade unions in the North were broken up, so large was the number of enlistments. One Philadelphia union of mechanics enlisted in a body, and the following entry was made upon the secretary's book: "It having been resolved to enlist with Uncle Sam for this war,

this organization stands adjourned until either the Union is safe or we are whipped."

The founder and first president of the International Cigar-Makers' Union enlisted and was killed in battle. In short, while capitalists and politicians had caused the war by their bluster and greed, it was the workers who did the fighting. In the war Congress there were the representatives of eighty banks, but not one representative from a trade union.

In the War of Independence the union workmen did their share, without being given any of the glory by historians. It was the Iron-Workers' Union that forged the enormous iron chain that was stretched across the Hudson at West Point in 1778. Again and again the English tried in vain to break it. Six weeks of the most arduous labor were required to make it, and the men toiled night and day until it was in place. This chain was the largest ever forged, its weight being 186 tons. Every link was three feet in length, three of them being still preserved in the Glen Island Museum. Did not those iron-workers, toiling shirtless in a hail of sparks, accomplish as much for the defence

of their country as many of those who wore uniforms and received medals?

While a strike often causes much social discomfort, it is not essentially riotous in any respect. It is not even as much of an incentive to riot as the action of Trusts in closing up or tearing down factories.

The right to strike is as essential as the right of free speech or suffrage. "Thank God," said Abraham Lincoln, "we have a system of labor where there can be a strike. Whatever the pressure, there is a point where the workingman may *stop*." President Lincoln made this vigorous declaration at Hartford in 1860, referring to the Lynn shoemakers' great strike. It is one of his sayings which is *not* quoted in the usual sugar-coated magazine article on Lincoln.

John Stuart Mill was one of the first philosophers who saw the necessity of strikes in a democracy. "Strikes," he said, "and the trade societies which render strikes possible, are not a mischievous, but, on the contrary, a valuable part of the existing machinery of society." "Strikes are necessary to break up unwholesome custom," said Francis A. Walker.

Oppression has always been intensified by submission. The employer who can do as he pleases with his men very seldom does what his men please. "England," said Gladstone, "never concedes anything to Ireland, except when moved to do so by fear." Every liberty which the mass of men possess was won by organized resistance to the tyrannical few. When all men combine and refuse to be wronged, the last tyrant will be destroyed, but not before.

A strike against unjust conditions springs from that sacred germ of resistance in the human mind. Its spirit is the spirit of '76. One of the noblest prophecies of Edward Bellamy was that a time should come when statues of "The Strikers" should replace those to mere military heroes in our public parks.

America was founded upon a successful strike against taxation without representation. From Magna Charta to the great Dock Strike, the British people have won their liberties by stubborn and organized resistance. Cromwell instituted a national strike against the king and the aristocracy of England, and the king lost

the strike and his head, too, in those rough-handed times.

The man who is too submissive to strike, who, when his pay is reduced or his work increased, will sit down and wipe his eyes and say, "Let well enough alone," and "Thank God it's no worse," is not fit to live in a Republic. He should emigrate to Siam or Thibet, or some country which has not been liberated by the courage and devotion of a host of patriots.

"The very life-blood in our veins is the heritage of those characters who thousands of years ago longed for a better condition—for a better land. We should not crush that divine spirit of unrest which gives us whatever civilization exists." So writes a Broadway manufacturer, who has been noble enough to write in defence of organized labor and its aims.

As to the attacks made upon non-union men during a strike, there is a great deal to be said in favor of the strikers. Put yourself in the place of a striker and a great deal of new light will be thrown upon the situation. To win the strike means to abolish some injustice that has become intolerable. It means a little more com-

fort in a life that has little enough—a little more security against poverty. To lose means to drop still lower in the scale—to have fewer rights and comforts instead of more. It may mean the loss of a job—the eating up of the little sum in the savings bank—the dreaded tramp from town to town, looking for work.

The failure of a strike to a wage-worker means much more than a mere shrinkage of capital or a few weeks' annoyance. It may mean the destruction of the union into which he has paid dues for years—the union which cares for him in sickness, and provides for his family if he dies. He is landless, homeless and practically friendless; he has nothing but his union to save him from that awful abyss of poverty which swallows up the moneyless man.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that he should feel a fierce aversion to these "scabs," these imported strike-smashers, who come to fight against their own interests and his? In many instances these non-unionists are professional "scabs"—men who offer themselves for the express purpose of breaking up strikes. The strikers know many of them by name, and their

record is passed from one to another. For the sake of double wages or a cash bonus or a free drunk these "scabs" go from place to place, hiring themselves to any employer who is endeavoring to break up a union.

These men are regarded by unionists with the same fear and hatred as is felt for anarchists by the monarchs of Europe. A union man looks upon one of these professional "scabs" with the dread and contempt that a Turkish merchant feels for one of the brutal eunuchs of the Sultan's palace, whose work is to kidnap and strangle those whom the Sultan dislikes.

Consequently, when one of these "traitors" is seen on the streets during a strike, this animosity, intensified often into a frenzy by the presence of a large crowd, breaks out into acts of violence and disorder.

No union leader ever advocates violence. If he did, he could be held responsible for every brick thrown by a newsboy. And in the arrests of rioters made during a strike, it is seldom that a union man is convicted.

The story of the strikers' wrongs, it must be remembered, is told in the newspapers and dis-

cussed in the streets. It is picked up by the hoodlum, who at all times is the quickest to express public opinion. The hoodlum is by no means in sympathy with unionism. He is too uncivilized to understand it. He has no convictions; he is always on the popular side. He would just as soon throw rocks at one man as another, as long as he had a chance to yell and chase somebody. He reads the newspapers, and a forceful headline makes a strong impression upon him.

So, when the presence of a crowd makes escape easy, the hoodlum is on hand with bricks and clubs, to "have some fun." He knows the "psychological moment" when the public is ready to sympathize with lawlessness, and when it arrives he takes advantage of it. The union is no more responsible for the hoodlums than a dead man is for the pickpockets who attend his funeral and rob the mourners.

Some of the rioters may likely have been "scabs" themselves in some previous strike, but no matter who they are, their lawlessness is blamed upon the strikers by the press and often by the law-courts. The least possible display

of violence generally receives more space in the newspapers than the real issues that are at stake. The smashing of a $4,000 street-car is given more prominence than a reduction in wages which means $40,000 a year to the strikers.

There is no more connection between a strike and a strike-riot than there is between a river and a drowning accident. We do not want the river drained dry because some unskilled boatman has met with a mishap. And the incalculable national benefit that has been derived from unions and strikes dwarfs the few occasional breakages and broken heads into insignificance.

After all, the great truth remains that law and order are not the most essential things. Those who put them above everything else, will find Russia more to their taste. Far better have an occasional spasm of revolt—a strenuous fit of house-cleaning in business and politics—than the stagnant calm of despotism.

The first of all human needs is Liberty and the second is Justice—these are as the soil in which all other human rights grow. Far better have America, with its thousand or more

strikes a year, than passive Persia, with its cringing, india-rubber serfs—a nation of rabbits governed by a wolf.

But to return to strikes; they have often been carried on without the least bitterness on either side. An honest difference of opinion led to a trial of strength between the union and the employer, and arbitration finally settled the difficulty. Bitter resentment is never shown by the strikers unless they have been treated in some unjust or contemptuous manner.

If employers had been half as ready to hear the other side as they have been to discharge their workmen, there would have been less trouble in the industrial world. "If they don't want us to bite, they shouldn't treat us like dogs," said a miner during the recent coal strike.

"The damn fools don't know what is good for them," said Pierpont Morgan at the commencement of the late strike of steel-workers. Such a savage sneer, repeated from factory to factory, would not tend to produce pleasant feelings in the minds of those intelligent unionists, who did know what was good for them.

The rioting in the coal regions has in almost

every case been caused by the harsh tactics of the big operators. When the miners would elect a capable man as agent for their union, the operators would bribe him away by offering him a better paid job elsewhere. Ignorant Huns, who could not handle a safety-lamp or read a danger signal, were sent into the mines, and naturally the other miners went on strike. All manner of schemes were tried, to make the miner dig up twice as much coal as he got paid for.

The Spring Valley outrage will not be forgotten by this generation of miners. In 1886, 2,500 coal miners were lured to Spring Valley by promises of steady work and good wages. Two years later, when they had settled down and paid several instalments on their homes, the mines were suddenly closed and kept closed until the miners were starved into accepting half of their former wages. This is one of the stories that miners tell to one another on Sundays, and it has not helped to make them "loyal to their employers."

The great Pullman strike was caused by a reduction of 25 per cent. after the Company had

divided up an annual profit of $2,880,000. To make it an even three millions, the Company proposed to take the butter from the workingmen's bread.

Manufacturers have been known to inaugurate a "strike" to convey the idea that their goods would be scarce, and thus work off a shop-worn stock. The employees would in this way find themselves locked out, and regarded as strikers by the general public.

The structural iron-workers who are now putting up the high East River bridge in New York city were compelled to strike to get even $4 a day for their perilous work. Yet the New York World reporter who spent half an hour with them on their dangerous narrow scaffolding received $50 from the paper for his exploit, and declared that he would not repeat the adventure for a million.

Strike-riots are caused, not only by injustice on the part of the employer, but also by the aggressive action of either capitalists or police. A mere crowd of strikers is not a riot, yet it is often treated as such. In 1877, at Pittsburg during the great railway strike, the militia fired

a volley into a crowd of men, women and children, instantly killing sixteen of them, and wounding many others. This made the people frantic, as might be expected, and $1,000,000 worth of railroad property was destroyed.

All the loss of life at Homestead might also have been prevented if the advice of the trade union leaders had been taken. They offered to provide guards for Carnegie's mills, as they certainly did not want the places in which they earned their living to be destroyed by hoodlums. Carnegie refused the offer with contempt, and brought in his gang of Pinkertons instead, thus directly instigating the riot that occurred. Not even the professional "scabs" are more justly hated by honest workingmen than are the Pinkerton detectives. These "bulldogs of capital" are recruited from among criminals and the desperadoes of the slums. Stories are told of their destroying property in order to cast the blame on the strikers, and increase the value of their own services as "protectors."

The representatives of the law have often been the first and most serious lawbreakers during the process of a strike. This was notably

the case at Albany, where the militia shot dead two well-known citizens during the street-car strike; and at Hazelton, where the Sheriff and a gang of picked-up ruffians shot and killed 24 unarmed coal miners. In neither case did the workers retaliate, nor did the law punish the criminals.

Capitalists have again and again pitted race against race, and started feuds which have made law and order impossible. In the coal regions they have imported the Huns against the Americans, and the negroes against both. They have imported an unpopular race and armed them, so that bloodshed was unavoidable. In this way the Armenians were brought into the shoe-factory cities, and the Chinese into North Adams. In justice to the Armenians, it should be said that a couple of years in this country are generally enough to make them staunch unionists.

In 1887 a corporation lawyer told a prominent labor leader that "we have hired anarchists to be members of your unions so that they might stir up the devil and bring discredit upon your whole movement." It was also proved,

after the A. R. U. strike, that the railroad companies had hired roughs to set fire to a lot of worn-out freight cars, so that the railroads could claim damages and at the same time turn public opinion against the strikers.

In fact, capitalists have always been more lawless than wage-earners, though they have generally escaped punishment. Frequently one railroad company will tear up the tracks of its rival. The building up of the Standard Oil Company is a long tale of bribery, lawlessness and even violence, as Henry D. Lloyd has proved from the court records.

There have been savage riots in Congress and Legislatures, among our lawmakers themselves. The first was a free fight between Congressmen Lyons and Griswold, over a hundred years ago. Then came the brutal attack of Brooks upon Sumner, almost resulting in a murder. And just before the Spanish War, while Congress was in session, Congressmen Brumm and Bartlett started a riot which resulted in a score of black eyes and bleeding faces. Books and inkbottles were thrown, coats were ripped off and desks were torn up and smashed, not by a rude

crowd of strikers, but by Congressmen who are supposed to be the law-abiding exemplars of the nation.

In 1890 an agent of the Whiskey Trust offered a gauger 200 shares of stock to put an infernal machine under a rival independent distillery in Chicago. This was sworn to in court, but the "pull" of the Trust prevented the conviction of the agent. Two years previous, this same distillery had been injured severely by a dynamite explosion. It was at last sold to the Trust and the attempts to destroy it ceased. The criminality of the notorious "Whiskey Ring" of capitalists in 1875 should not be forgotten, when a gigantic conspiracy to defraud the government of the tax on distilled spirits was exposed, and 238 whiskey men and politicians were indicted.

It is well known by most people that capitalists as a class are constantly evading or breaking the laws, besides debauching legislators by the purchase of legislation favorable to their own schemes. Our highly respectable bankers, who would sooner strike an enemy with a mortgage than a brick, are perpetually

breaking the laws that relate to their business. A recently published "History of Banking" openly admits that in 1893 the banks issued emergency paper money without paying the legal 10 per cent. tax to the government.

Chas. Francis Adams, President of the Union Pacific Railway, admitted that "irresponsible and secret combinations among railways have always existed." And he added that no law could prevent them.

The black-list is as illegal as the boycott, and a far more cruel weapon, yet it is frequently used by capitalists. The black-list has followed a workman across the continent and finally driven him out of his trade. One workman, an axemaker, of whom I have heard, was black-listed so effectually that he applied for work at 63 shops without success.

There is also this great difference between the worker and the capitalist in the matter of lawlessness—the worker is battling for necessities, not luxuries; for earnings, not dividends; for a social benefit, not for a private advantage. The smashing of a few panes of window-glass or the pummeling of a few "scabs" does far less

injury to the national welfare than the corrupt purchase of franchises by corporations.

The really serious, insidious crimes against free institutions and an honest government are not committed by workingmen, and least of all by trade unions. As Mayor Swift, of Chicago, said in '96, in an address given to the principal club of capitalists in the city: "Talk about anarchy! Talk about breathing the spirit of commercialism! Who does it more than the representative citizens of Chicago? Who bribes the Common Council? *It is not the men in the common walks of life.* It is you capitalists, you business men."

"If our civilization is destroyed," says Henry D. Lloyd, "it will not be by barbarians from below, but by barbarians from above. Our great money-makers are gluttons of luxury and power, rough, unsocialized, believing that mankind must be kept terrorized."

The real danger to the Republic is not from strikers, but from the corrupt politicians, the biassed judges and the despotic monopolists. Freedom was never yet put in danger by revolts against oppression. What did Jefferson say he feared

most when, in his ripe old age, he had time to carefully consider the destinies of his country? He said: "The great object of my fear is the Federal judiciary." The decisions of the Supreme Court on the questions of slavery, Trusts and the Income Tax have amply justified his fears.

In a country like China or ancient Egypt, caste and religion prevented disorder by glueing society together; but in a democracy like ours nothing but equal rights and fair play can prevent constant outbreaks and even revolutions. In proportion to our population we have not to-day one-tenth as many riots, or as much rowdyism, as there was 100 years ago, when workingmen had no unions and fewer rights. In those days the popular hatred of aristocracy showed itself in a thousand petty acts of violence.

For instance, a teamster in 1800 delighted to take a wheel off a carriage, to break the shaft or tip it and its well-dressed occupants into the ditch. At the theatres, the people in the gallery jeered and hooted at the people in the boxes. They sang lewd songs and made coarse jokes. Any particularly stylish-looking man was ordered by the gang in the gallery to take off his hat; and if he

refused to do so he was pelted with sticks, stones, bottles, etc., until he either obeyed or was driven from the theatre. In those days all men, as well as women, kept their hats on during the play.

Well-dressed men and women were intentionally jostled on the sidewalks. To the poorly paid, uneducated laborer, democracy meant no more than a chance to be impudent to aristocrats. Until the hours of labor were reduced, gangs of roughs, called "Plug-Uglies," "Butt-Enders," etc., insulted and terrorized the passers-by in all the factory towns in New England. "Knock his face in," "Rock him round the corner," and all manner of vile epithets were howled after any one whose fastidious dress attracted their attention.

De Tocqueville noticed this growing menace to social order seventy years ago, and said: "The lower orders which inhabit the large American cities constitute a rabble even more formidable than the populace of European cities." In a non-military country of political equals, like ours, a horde of undisciplined, ignorant, non-union wage-workers would mean a series of revolutions, ending in a military feudalism. Our government would be as insecure as that of Venezuela or some other

South American Republic where a citizen becomes a rebel at a moment's notice. The safety of our middle-class people, though few of them realize it, depends primarily upon the intelligence, organization and general welfare of the wage-workers.

The trade union is the great school for grown-ups, where discipline and self-respect are taught. It emancipates the worker from that old-time terrorism which used to make it impossible to get a workingman to sign his name to a petition for more wages, lest the dreaded boss should see it and put him on the black-list. It transforms the "Butt-Ender" into a citizen and replaces force with reason. Most capitalists and professors would be much improved by a two years' course in a trade union.

The experienced unionist never rushes into a strike. He acts with less haste and more force. Like Fabius, he waits for the right moment, and when the time comes he strikes hard. Thirty years of unionism has shown that nothing prevents strikes so effectively as a strong, well-financed union. The Cigarmakers' Union, for instance, has prevented over 200 strikes in three years. For four years the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union has pre-

vented strikes in the shoe trade by making contracts with the manufacturers, referring all disputes to a board of arbitration.

The disorganized condition of the farmers and mechanics caused two serious rebellions in early American history, besides several large bread-riots. In 1786 Daniel Shay led an insurrection against the State government of Massachusetts. He and his men prevented courts from sitting, and nearly captured the Springfield arsenal. Several small battles were fought before his force was dispersed.

American historians write of "Shay's Rebellion" as if it were an uprising of law-breaking hoodlums, when in reality it was far more justifiable than John Brown's raid. Shay was a captain in the Revolutionary army, and acted merely as the agent of public opinion. At that time thousands of debtors were being dragged to the courts, bankrupted and imprisoned. Rascally lawyers were extorting ruinous fees and tangling honest, industrious men in the meshes of the law. Money was scarce and taxation was unendurable, while the State officials were voting high salaries into their own pockets. There were no "Farmers' Granges" or trade unions

to make an organized protest against these abuses, and the natural result was a rebellion that extended from Massachusetts to Rhode Island and Vermont.

In 1844 another rebellion, also misrepresented by historians, occurred in Rhode Island. Its leader was Thomas W. Dorr, and its object was manhood suffrage. Dorr was elected Governor by a majority of the people of the State, but the Federal government declared his election to be void, and sent troops to displace him. He and several hundred of his followers armed themselves and resisted, but were defeated. Dorr was sentenced to solitary imprisonment for life at hard labor, but was pardoned in 1847.

It is quite certain that Dorr was a cultured, noble-spirited patriot, who loved his country, not wisely, perhaps, but too well. Whittier was his intimate friend, and calls him a high-minded scholar and philanthropist. While in jail Dorr was cruelly ill-treated, but no one dared to plead for him except Whittier and several labor papers. Now that every one admits the justice of his demand for manhood suffrage, what was called his

"crime" should be forgiven and only his noble purpose remembered.

From the rebellions of Shay and Dorr, and their innumerable counterparts in human history, we may learn the folly of repression and the "iron hand." Misery is an explosive, and will and should remain so. The only safe way of dealing with Misery is to give it a fair hearing and to remove its causes. Otherwise it has certain terrible ways of attracting attention to itself, as many a Russian Czar has discovered.

"If you forbid free speech," said the plain-spoken New York Journal, "if you tell men that they must not use persuasion, you tell them at the same time that they must use force; and, by violating the law and the Constitution, you justify them in using force and violating the law on their side."

Before unions were made legal in England, all sorts of violence was committed by dissatisfied workingmen. Bodies of "machine-breakers" broke into the factories and smashed the machinery; belts were cut and engines torn down. When unionism became strong, all this destructiveness ceased at once. "The trade unions are

usually the best teachers of law, order and discipline," says the "Encyclopedia of Social Reforms."

Rome forbade strikes, and allowed unions to exist merely as regiments of an industrial army that had few rights except to obey orders. As a result, the workers rose again and again in armed rebellion against their masters. Rome was never safe from the plots that were devised in its industrial cellar. In 143 B. C., the laborers of Sicily revolted against the Romans, and maintained their freedom for ten years. They put to death every capitalist in the island, except two or three, who had treated them with kindness. Forty years later the next generation of workers in Sicily rebelled in the same way as their fathers, and for five years defeated every army that was sent against them.

Two generations before the Christian era the greatest slave rebellion in history began in Rome. Its leader was Spartacus, a shepherd, who was to be dragged to Rome and compelled to fight other workers in the gladiatorial arena to amuse the landlords, capitalists, politicians and their wives.

Spartacus, with seventy-eight other captive workingmen, fought himself free and gathered a vast army of 200,000 laborers around him. He de-

feated the Roman soldiers in twelve great battles, and at one time had the Imperial City at his mercy. For four years he shook the Roman Empire to its foundations, until Crassus finally conquered him, dispersed his army and crucified 6,000 of them on the battle-field.

Greece also made strikes illegal and suffered from several labor wars. In 413 B. C. the earliest great rebellion of laborers occurred, in the Laurium silver mines, which belong to the city of Athens. Twenty thousand miners rebelled and escaped to Sparta, which was then at war with Athens. This rebellion had the effect of deciding the Peloponnesian war in favor of Sparta. In those days it was taught by the colleges that laborers had no souls; and according to the law it was no crime for an employer to kill a workman who displeased him. Yet even then, when the workers organized they were strong enough to decide international contests and to bring down ruin upon their oppressors.

To sum up, no law can prevent resistance to oppression, and it is infinitely better that the resistance should come from a responsible trade

union than from a mob. The pages of history are red with warnings against the policy of repression, and in no time or place has such a policy been as shortsighted and suicidal as it would be in our twentieth century republic.

CHAPTER III.

THE TRADE UNION IS THE DISTRIBUTOR OF PROSPERITY.

"IF I owned this canal, I'd take all these nasty gates out of it," said a little boy to his father, as the steamer on which they were sailing was passing through the locks of the Sault Ste. Marie Canal. To the child's mind the locks were nothing but vexatious obstacles in the boat's course. He did not know that without those "gates" the canal would be a shallow brook, absolutely worthless for purposes of navigation.

And so, whenever a strike occurs, there are always a number of people with grown-up bodies and baby minds, who cry out that trade unions interfere with business and general prosperity. Others who know better, but whose opinions are governed by some capitalistic interests, take up the cry, until to-day it is a very common belief that prosperity is endangered by labor organizations.

This assertion is not only untrue, but absurd, to

those who are acquainted with the industrial history of America. If it had not been for trade unions workingmen might now be working for 50 cents a day, and business might be as dull and sluggish as it is in Spain, where the laborer buys a new suit once in five years and lives on rye and garlic.

The high rate of wages in this country, compared with Europe and Asia, is not accidental. It is not due to the greater benevolence on the part of American capitalists. It is not due to the fact that this is a new country; the Canadian province of Quebec is a new country, yet wages are lower there than in England. It is due to the *seventy-five-years' fight against low wages* made by organized labor.

This country was not a workingman's paradise when it was first settled. Every inch of progress for the laborer has had to be fought for. Whatever share of prosperity the average man has today is owing to the sturdy independence and united efforts of those who believed in the "rights of labor."

When America was a British colony the workingman had no more rights than a horse. A law

was passed in Massachusetts in 1633 enacting that all "master workmen" should be paid not more than two shillings (48 cents) a day, or 28 cents a day and board. This was the maximum rate. There was no law to prevent the employer from paying less.

It was only the best skilled mechanics who could hope for 48 cents a day. Other workingmen were to have their rate of wages *fixed by the constable,* and were to be paid from 20 cents to 36 cents a day and board themselves. Any employer who paid more than these fixed rates was fined, and so was any worker who demanded more. The wage-worker who tried to raise the market price of his labor was regarded as an anarchist and a criminal and dragged before the nearest judge.

The worker of to-day has thus escaped one unendurable evil—his wages are not fixed by the police. If they were, then every trade union would have to be transformed into a "Parkhurst Society," wasting its efforts in the visionary endeavor to keep police captains honest, or arranging terms with "John Doe."

In colonial days Indians who worked in the fields

got 36 cents a day, and women received from 6 cents to 8 cents a day and board.

The first workingman in America to get a dollar a day was John Marshall, of Braintree, Mass. He made this world-beating record from 1697 to 1711. It seems that Marshall was such an "all-around man" that his services were greatly in demand. He was by turns a carpenter, lathe-maker, painter, brick-maker, etc. Among his own generation he was quite famous, and he should certainly be remembered and honored for his cleverness and business ability. Some time, let us hope, we shall have a niche in a new "Hall of Fame" for John Marshall, the first workingman in the world who compelled Capital to pay him a dollar a day.

After the War of Independence, work and wages remained the same. The Revolution did not mean two cents a day more to any worker in the country. As McMaster says: "In the general advance made by society in fifty years (1775 to 1825) the workingman had shared but little. Many old grievances no longer troubled him, but new ones, more numerous and galling than the old, were pressing him sorely. Wages had risen, but not in proportion to the cost of living."

In 1794 it was stated in Congress that a good workman in Vermont could get no more than $4 a month and board, and had to buy his own clothes. In all the States at that time there were men working for $3 a month and board.

The city of Washington was built by workers who got not more than 50 cents a day. The diggers, choppers, hod-carriers, etc., got $70 a year, and worked, as all laborers did, from sunrise to sunset.

When this century began, wages in New York were 40 cents a day, and in Baltimore 36 cents. The average rate, all over the country, was $65 a year, with board and perhaps lodging. Compositors got as much as $8 a week, which was regarded as an enormous sum. This was partly due to the fact that only educated men could be employed, and partly because the compositors have always been the most persistent advocates of higher wages. It was their custom to have an annual strike or "turn-out" to get better terms from their employers.

It was common for farm-hands to get $2 a week, upon which they had to support themselves, and often a family as well. In 1825 hundreds were

glad to work for 25 cents and 37½ cents a day through the winter, and many an industrious man worked 14 hours a day for nothing more than his keep.

The wages that I have been quoting are what the worker was *supposed* to get—what his employer promised him. But it must be kept in mind that the workingman had no law to secure the payment of his wages until 1830. A rascally contractor could work a gang of men for a year and then refuse to pay them.

Wages were not paid weekly or monthly, but at long irregular intervals; and what was worst of all, they were very often paid in *bad money*. Anything was considered good enough to pay a workingman with, and so they were given counterfeit bills, notes of broken banks, depreciated money, etc.

It is not hard to imagine the bitter misery that invaded many a laborer's cottage in those days of "free labor," when after months of weary waiting for his wages, the poor, defrauded worker brought home to his half-fed family a check for $25 on a broken bank. The romantic writers of "historical

novels" always abstain very carefully from picturing such a scene.

What little money the working people had was made mostly of copper. Silver was hard to get, and gold was as rare as diamonds. In 1789 the copper money depreciated, because of the tricks of politicians or bankers; and for a while it took 64 pennies to make a shilling. In some States copper money was refused everywhere. As a result, there was the greatest distress among the working people. McMaster speaks of their "deplorable plight." Shops were closed and hundreds lingered for weeks on the verge of starvation. And all this was caused by a stoppage of pennies, such was the moneyless condition of the laboring class.

Food was by no means cheap in those days. Pork was 20 cents a pound, corn was 75 cents a bushel, wheat $2.10 a bushel, bread 8 cents a loaf. As McMaster admits, "Nothing but perfect health, steady work, sobriety, the strictest economy, and the help of his wife could enable a married man to live."

Yet even then, as now, the blame for poverty was thrown upon the poor and not upon social conditions. We find, in the sermons and lectures of

the time, the astounding assertion made that poverty was caused by "intemperance and ill-advised charity." No committee of manufacturers proposed to raise wages, and no conference of ministers or board of professors asked them to do so. Every four years the whole country was rocked with the excitement of an election, but no election meant an extra ten cents' worth of prosperity to the laboring man.

Big enterprises were being undertaken, such as the digging of the Erie Canal, the building of railroads and steamships, the enlarging of factories, etc., but all were for the sole benefit of the capitalist and financier. No matter how much the volume of business increased, wages remained low except where the trade unions forced them higher.

As late as 1835, the Baltimore weavers were working 12 hours a day for 65 cents. At Great Falls, N. H., in 1844, the factory girls labored from 5 a. m. until 7 p. m., with only 15 minutes for breakfast and 30 minutes for dinner. What they *earned* we do not know, but all they received was $1.25 to $2 a week.

In New York at this time seamstresses got from 75 cents to $1.50 a week, and matchbox-makers

got 5 cents a gross, or one cent for 30 boxes. "Smart" employers sent agents on board of incoming steamships to hire immigrants to work for $20 to $30 a year and board. This was, of course, the low-water mark of wages, but shows what may be expected when capitalists are not restrained by fear of trade union retaliation.

Fancy pictures have been drawn of the universal prosperity of fifty years ago. Carey, the political economist, said in 1845: "In Massachusetts all have property and invest their surplus upon their own possessions. Every man lives in his own house, and works in the mill of which he is part owner." Lyell praised the factory system of Lowell, and said the workers appeared like "a set of ladies and gentlemen playing at factory for their own amusement." Charles Dickens visited America at the same time, and said that "a beggar upon the streets of Boston would create as much astonishment as an angel with a drawn sword."

If this latter observation be true, then angels' visits in those days were not "few and far between," as in 1843 no fewer than 50,000 people received relief from the city in New York alone, being one-seventh of the population. The exact

number of paupers in Boston is not given, but relatively the amount of destitution was quite as great.

The prosperity of the Lowell mill-workers is another fallacy which is becoming historical and therefore sacred. It seems that a little paper called the "Lowell Offering" was published for several years by the factory girls, and it gave outsiders, and especially English visitors, an entirely wrong impression of our factory system.

The important truth about the Lowell factories of that time is that *the average wages of the 8,000 workers was $1.50 a week.* Many got as low as 55 cents, and would thus have to work nearly two weeks to pay for a subscription to their own paper. It is also difficult to see when they found time to write poems and essays, as they worked 13 hours a day, without an hour less on Saturday. A writer in the "Workingmen's Advocate," a labor paper published at that time, states that the "Lowell Offering" was an idea of the employers and was not supported by the factory workers.

A similarly deceptive paper was published at Exeter, N. H., and called "The Factory Girls'

Garland." The factory girls who were supposed to edit it were not only being driven 13 hours a day, but were also compelled to attend church regularly under penalty of losing their jobs. Thus, unless they were afflicted with insomnia, they had no time to weave literary "Garlands."

It is no doubt true that the factory workers of that time were the best in the world, and quite capable of editing magazines. But they were certainly not illustrations of the prosperity of non-union working people. In a young agricultural country, where money was scarce, and everyone was accustomed to hard work, the first factories were a welcome change, no matter what they paid. The sons and daughters of nearby farmers were glad to work for a little pocket-money and had no idea of the market value of their labor. They lived at home and paid little or nothing for board. It was fun for the first few months and they did not discover until it was too late that this "pocket-money" was afterwards to be their only means of support.

Lowell was then, and is now, a heaven on

earth for capitalists, and the other thing for wage-workers. Like New Bedford, Fall River, Manchester and Lawrence, it is simply a collection of slave-barracks called factories in which unhappy tens of thousands hustle and sweat for barely enough wages to pay their last week's debts.

Two years before Dickens' visit, many of the poor were frozen to death in the large cities. Bakers' shops were raided by the starving people. Horace Greeley said there were "30,000 human beings within the sound of the City Hall bell who could not find work;" and Chas. A. Dana declared that "the whole tendency of industry is perpetually to disgrace the laborer, to grind him down and reduce his wages."

In the face of such conditions, the two urgent reforms were to *reduce hours and to raise wages.* Paupers could not buy goods and make business boom. Moneyless families could not "go West." A great landless, homeless and often workless mob was growing up in every factory city, and the national problem of the time was to make it a law-abiding, intelligent and prosperous part of the community.

To meet this necessity, trade unions were formed; and as they fought their way and became strong, business improved and was placed upon a more solid foundation. At first they had been for benevolent purposes only. It was illegal 100 years ago to combine for higher wages, and in 1785 the mechanics of New York were refused leave to form even a society for mutual benefit.

Gradually, as the Declaration of Independence came to be understood, the unions began to strike for better conditions. Again and again they struck, in spite of fines and imprisonment. In 1795 the Baltimore tailors demanded $1.80 per job and got it. Seven years later the New York sailors struck for $14 a month. They hired a band and marched up and down the streets. The ship-owners at once had the leader arrested and imprisoned until the strikers surrendered and agreed to work for $10 a month, as before.

About this time the pavers, who were working in Washington for the government, struck for 10 cents an hour, instead of 87 cents for an 11-hour day.

The Philadelphia shoemakers were an especially intelligent body of men, and they had forced wages up to $11.50 per week in 1806. The employers then had a batch of them arrested. They were declared "guilty of a combination to raise wages," and fined $8 each with costs.

These strikes, and others, though not always successful, encouraged the working people in all parts of the country. For the first time they realized the power of organization. By means of petitions, protests and strikes they cut down the hours of labor to 12 in many places and raised wages besides.

In 1836 they received a severe set-back, from which they did not recover for 15 years. A union of tailors in New York had struck for higher wages, and 21 of them were dragged before a judge named Edwards and fined a total of $1,150. The Supreme Court of New York then sat on the case, or rather on the tailors, and decided that trade unions were unlawful. This decision, combined with a period of hard times, killed unionism for a time; and *at once*

wages fell and hours were increased to 13 and 15 a day.

All those humble heroes who fought for the right to organize, and who suffered imprisonment and legalized robbery at the hands of the government, have been forgotten. I have searched through histories and biographies in vain for the name of any trade union leader prior to 1825. In every case they are lumped together as "shoemakers," "tailors," "carpenters," etc., as if they had no more right to individual names than so many cattle. The men of patriotic *words* have been remembered and the men of patriotic *actions* have been forgotten.

The first union of weavers in Fall River was organized by an Englishman and an Irishman. They were arrested for "conspiracy" and sent to jail for two years. The Englishman died in jail; but the Irishman served his term; and when he found himself blacklisted, he became a politician and was elected to Congress. The public opinion of the time allowed a man to go into politics and *talk* about the rights of Labor but it refused him permission to *do* anything to obtain those rights.

It is continually stated that strikes are nearly always failures, but the contrary is the truth. It is non-striking that fails. Carrol D. Wright's figures show that only about 40 per cent. of all strikes fail. The chances are nearly two to one in favor of the strikers.

In four years the carpenters have won 476 strikes out of 523, besides compromising 24. In their case a strike is a sure thing, as much as anything can be in a world of chances.

In Massachusetts, where there have been many strikes, wages average higher than in New Hampshire, where unions are few. In the eighteenth century, when only four strikes are recorded, wages were under 50 cents a day; while in the year 1886 alone there were 1,411 strikes, and wages averaged three times as much.

The fact is, that *every* strike succeeds, if it arises from a just cause. It creates public opinion in favor of the strikers and often helps to shape legislation. It was a lost strike that stirred up public sentiment in New Zealand so that the laboring classes captured the political power, and have held it ever since. It was a

lost strike that elected a shoemaker Mayor of Haverhill and put three others in the Council.

No one can tell how many cut-downs are prevented by the fear of a strike. As long as the workmen submitted and turned the other cheek, it was the employer who did all the striking; but when Labor learned to hit back, Capital at once became less pugnacious.

The success of trade unions in raising wages may be shown by the following facts: In 1850 the average factory wages were $247 a year; in 1890, $446. Wages in cotton factories in 1830 were 44 cents a day; in 1873, $1.49.

The bricklayers have one of the strongest unions in the world, with nearly $40,000 in their treasury at the present time. These are the steps by which they climbed: In 1776 they got 50 cents for 14 hours; in 1850, $1.75 for 12 hours; and in 1901, $4.80 for 8 hours. From 4 cents an hour to 60 cents an hour! Their share of national prosperity has been multiplied fifteen times in New York City by organization.

It is easily noticeable that wages are highest where unions are strongest. For instance, in the building trades, where unions are strong,

wages average $2.86 a day; while in groceries and the lumber trade, where unions are few and weak, wages average $1.65 and $1.40.

It must not be thought that wages are yet as high as they should be. In view of the wonderful productivity of our American skilled workers, it is a moderate statement to say that the minimum wage should be $5 for an 8-hour day. The attainment of this rate would do more to bring permanent prosperity than all the propositions ever thought of by politicians.

The capitalist is still charging the workers far too much for his services in directing and consolidating industry. Rent, interest and profits go to a very few people, and should be reduced; while wages go to the bulk of the nation, and must be increased, if prosperity is to be *national,* and not private. That is the whole social problem in a nutshell.

In 1890, the 4,700,000 factory workers got $2,283,000,000 for making goods that sold for $9,372,000,000. It can thus be seen that the charges for capital and superintendence were too high. In proportion to the product, the wage-worker got 6 per cent. less in 1890 than in 1850.

Labor is robbed by the dishonest device of watering stock, to the extent of millions a year. Philadelphia street-railways cost in actual cash $5,840,000; yet they are capitalized for $38,480,000. The railroad capitalists make their employees and the public pay interest on $32,000,000 which was never borrowed and never existed. What a hue and cry would be raised if the trade unions attempted to "water" Labor, and insisted on making the employer pay for six times as many workers as he had in his factory!

Political economists have pasted together many a pretty, tissue-paper theory of wages, but none of them have patterned after the facts. Ricardo's "wage-fund" was wholly imaginary; Walker's theory that production governs wages is nearer the truth, but still far from it; the "iron law" of Lassalle and Marx has less instances than exceptions, and is true only in a land of unorganized serfs; and Henry George's theory that wages depend upon access to land is not and never has been true; and it is unintelligible to-day among the working people of the large cities. If it were true, then wages would be higher in Russia than in New York.

The real "law of wages" depends on the grade of the workers themselves. *Workers get as much of their product as their combined, organized intelligence and courage deserve.* An intelligent union man may produce $6 worth a day, and get $5 of it; while a submissive Chinese gold-miner may find a nugget every day and get $2 a week for making his employer's fortune. Thus the "iron law" of wages can be hammered into shape on the anvil of unionism.

When the average worker is as intelligent in matters of self-interest as the average capitalist is to-day, he will get *all* the value of his product, less the cost of superintendence. The union may then hire the capitalist, instead of the capitalist hiring the union.

As against the foregoing record of trade unionism in raising wages, and thus distributing and promoting prosperity, let us look at the record of the *banks* during the same period. The banks are chosen because they are in every way capitalistic institutions, for which wage-workers are in no way responsible. We shall see what they have done for the harmony and

stability of commerce, and for the just distribution of wealth.

To begin with, it is plain that the banks have been the greatest disturbers of "confidence" in the business world. They have been either the creators of panics, or the agencies through which the panic-makers reached the general public. In this country and England there were *twelve great panics* during the 19th century,—in 1810, '15, '25, '36, '37, '47, '57, '66, '73, '84, '90, and '93.

So far as damage to business is concerned, a panic is to a strike what a dynamite gun is to a bow and arrow. A panic does not injure one employer or one trade, but the entire nation. It displaces the very foundations upon which commerce stands. It is like an earthquake which shakes down palace and cottage alike in one common wreck.

In 1814 nearly all the State banks outside of New England either suspended specie payment or failed altogether. From 1816 to 1820 the country was nearly ruined by the top-heavy financiering of reckless bankers. So rascally were the tactics employed by the banks that in

1829 a convention of workingmen called bankers "the greatest knaves, impostors and paupers of the age." It had been discovered that the bankers had promised to redeem $35,000,000 of paper with $4,000,000 of specie.

Nicholas Biddle, founder of the ill-famed U. S. Bank, cost this nation more during the thirties than all the strikes of that period. His gigantic scheme to corner cotton in 1837 ruined thousands. Biddle was the first great corruptionist that this country produced.

During the panic of '36, Albert Brisbane wrote, "Not a dozen men survived bankruptcy between Albany and Buffalo." And in the greater panic which followed a year later, 128 large concerns failed in ten days, and *all the banks in America suspended specie payment.*

The whole State of Indiana was brought to the edge of bankruptcy in 1853 by the banks. Out of 91 banks, 51 failed, and paid scarcely anything to creditors. It seems that the law, framed for capitalistic purposes, allowed a "financier" to start a bank *without any capital* except enough to pay for the printing of his bank-notes.

The same "law" prevailed in several other States. In Wisconsin a sharper would start his bank in a logging-camp or in some remote corner of the woods. As soon as his money was in circulation, it was as much as a man's life was worth to ask for specie payment. The only specie the bank would possess was powder and shot, and if the creditor did not leave in a hurry he was "paid off."

In Michigan also, banking and burglary amounted to the same thing, though more respectable devices were adopted than shot-guns. Boxes filled with glass or old iron, with a layer of silver on top, were their only assets; and the same "assets" often did duty for several banks.

So disastrous was the work done by the banks in Iowa that *banking was made a penal offence,* punishable by $1,000 fine and one year in jail. This law was not repealed until 1857.

In Nebraska thousands of industrious farmers, merchants and mechanics were ruined by Savings Banks. The very name is yet an epithet of distrust and contempt, such are the memories of rascality connected with those institutions.

In the panic of '73, 19 banks smashed in a single day. St. Louis alone had to suffer the collapse of 25 banks before the crisis was over, and was nearly ruined.

In the panic of '84, 111 bank failures brought $240,000,000 worth of poverty and misery to the nation. This is three times as much loss as the Pullman strike is *asserted* to have caused. The estimates of losses caused by strikes is invariably too large, as a strike does not destroy business, but only postpones it.

In the panic of '93, 141 national banks suspended in three months and 415 private banks, trust companies, etc., collapsed. The total national loss caused by that panic can never be computed. For months millions of men and women were out of employment, and the destitution in the great cities will never be forgotten by those who saw it.

Without counting the national banks, there were 1,234 bank failures from 1864 to 1896, with liabilities of $220,629,988. And from 1863 to 1882, 87 national banks smashed, with a total loss to depositors of $7,000,000.

Allowing that the private banks pay 50 cents

on the dollar, there is thus a loss *every week day* of over $11,000 from broken banks. This is the direct loss in actual cash, but the far greater loss is in the lack of security and stability which these unreliable banks cause.

A general feeling of apprehension, most fatal to business, is created by our lack of confidence in our banks. The slightest rumor often sends us flying for our money. Some time ago, a man dropped dead from heart disease in front of a Troy bank; a crowd collected at once, and the rumor of a run on the bank brought every depositor to its doors. In a few hours the bank was bankrupt.

A business man gave me a unique view of the utility of banks recently. He said, "You see, our financiering is so reckless that every depositor is compelled to pull out his money and invest it in some enterprise, because he can't trust it very long in these rotten banks." The same argument, however, applies to the firebug, who makes business good for the building trades.

In brief, no "agitator" has done as much to disturb business as the banker. Considered as

a criminal, no one is more difficult to convict, or more likely to be pardoned. An average of ten bank-wreckers are set free every year, on all manner of flimsy pretexts.

In almost every State, there are a few banks whose history has been spotless and honorable; and it has been common for *every* banker to throw the cloak of their good name over his misdeeds. If a banker embezzles, it is generally spoken of as a misfortune or an unlucky accident, while if a striker breaks the slightest city ordinance, it is regarded as just what might be expected.

My object has been to show that as a general rule the trade union not only prevents lawlessness but promotes prosperity by advancing wages and making employment more secure; while the banker, considering him as a type of the capitalistic, anti-trade union class, has decreased prosperity and added greatly to the normal risks of business. The trade union distributes prosperity where it is most needed; but the bank has been the agency by which prosperity has been concentrated where it was least needed.

The legitimate capitalist makes the greatest

mistake of his life in fighting trade unions instead of co-operating with them against financial schemers, political blackmailers and monopolists. It is to the employer's interest to have intelligent and contented workmen; but it is not to his interest to have a system of financial and political parasitism, such as exists today.

National disasters are not caused by the strikes of trade unionists, but by the wars of the politicians, the panics of the bankers and the "corners" of monopolists. Ninety years ago, American shipping was swept from the seas, not by a strike among the sailors, but by a foolish embargo devised by the "statesmen" of the time.

The great strike of the English engineers in '97 was said by all capitalistic papers in that country to be a national calamity; yet who would say it cost England a fraction as much as the politicians' war in South Africa, which has cost 35,000 men dead or disabled, and $720,000,000?

Every honest business man owes a large debt to trade unions, though very few make any

effort to pay it. No doubt nine out of ten have been unaware of their obligation. Wherever business is dull or money is scarce, there is some other cause for it than the endeavors of organized workmen to raise wages. Many a town has been ruined by the schemes of financiers or the greed of employers, but very few, if any, by the unions.

Business depends on buyers, and buyers must *get* money before they can spend it. This is the main condition of prosperity, which professors and capitalists alike have ignored. Poorly paid workers buy very little, and machines buy nothing at all. Automatic machinery, owned by a few capitalists, is one of the greatest destroyers of business, if no provision is made for the displaced workers.

The prosperity of the middle classes, and, in the last analysis, of *all* classes, depends upon high wages. The druggist, the merchant, the doctor, the actor, etc., are less prosperous when the workingman has less money. Business is sustained, not by the occasional purchase of a luxury, but by the steady, everyday purchase of high-class necessities.

Suppose every American worker were to become as cheap and ox-like as the poor creatures who are brought from Hungary to work in the coal mines, what would become of our manufacturers? A writer who inspected the coal mines in 1884 describes the *women* who were then employed at the coke ovens. Clothed only in short chemise and cowhide boots, and some of them naked from the knees down and from the waist up, these grimy Amazons toiled all day long, hauling the hot coke out of the ovens and forking it into freight cars. Those who had babies brought them to the coal yard and laid them in a wheelbarrow or on the sooty ground. No more unhuman creatures could be imagined, as they labored in the sweltering heat like the stokers of Hades, with their streeling black hair caught between their teeth. Nine of these people, men and women, lived in two small rooms, and their store-bill for a month was only $27, or ten cents a day each. How much would such citizens as these help business?

In a city like Fall River, for instance, where the manufacturers have been especially greedy

and tyrannical, how many pianos, typewriters and silk dresses are sold in proportion to the population? Is it not true that the trade of the city is mainly in pork, flour and cheap ready-made clothing?

The story of the Fall River manufacturers is a tale of shame. It is a history of embezzling treasurers, ten per cent. cut-downs following twenty per cent. dividends, and the importation of all manner of cheap workers. At present the weavers' wages range from $3 to $9.50 a week, and still the remorseless process of reduction continues.

It is this suicidal folly on the part of capitalists that ruins business. If an employer cannot be compelled by his workmen to pay good wages, he should be compelled by *other capitalists* to do so. It is an evidence of self-destructive short-sightedness on the part of employers that they are, as Adam Smith said, "always and everywhere in a sort of combination not to raise the wages of labor."

The history of ancient and modern nations shows that the basis of national prosperity is the condition of the working people. What

was called the "Golden Age" in the history of Greece was that period when trade unions were strongest. Those magnificent buildings and statues, whose fragments we treasure up in our museums, were made during a time when Greece was honey-combed with unionism.

The same was even more noticeably true of Rome. The real prosperity and glory of the Roman Empire was based upon the management of its industry by trade unions, not upon the achievements of its soldiers. When the unions were strong, Rome was strong; and when they were destroyed, Rome crumbled into ruins.

In Rome the army got the medals, but the unions did the work. The union leaders were the captains of industry. They undertook the building of roads, the collection of taxes, and the proper distribution of work, food and clothing. For instance, as De Cassagnac tells us, the butchers' union collected the rent in hogs in Brutium and Samnium; the bakers received the rent in grain; the wine-makers received it in grapes; the sailors and wagoners transported it;

and all the tribute of Rome's colonies was deposited in the trade union warehouses.

The unions became so strong that the Roman politicians and militarists became afraid of them, and gradually, by a series of attacks upon their property and rights, broke up their organizations. This threw industry into chaos and disorder; and in spite of the eloquence of politicians and the valor of armies, Rome plunged into bankruptcy and decay.

English history tells the same story. The Elizabethan period, when genius and daring were at their height, was a result of the Peasants' Rebellion and the breaking up of feudalism. England was never so happy as then, says J. Thorold Rogers.

Thus it has been proved, I hope, that the welfare of trade unions means the welfare of the nation; that the unsettling of business is due less to strikes than to panics and reckless financiers; and that the trade union has been the main agency by which the benefits of American civilization have been distributed among the people.

CHAPTER IV.

HIGH-PRICED LABOR AND COMMERCIAL SUPREMACY.

AS long as civilization lasts, commercial supremacy will be won by the nation that has the cleverest workers. Mere bigness counts no longer in the struggle for foreign trade. It is the country whose average man is the *brainiest* that will control the commerce of the world.

This truth has been recognized as a practical rule of action by the trade unions, but not by the majority of employers. Again and again a pitched battle has been fought between trade unions and capitalists, because the latter have tried to displace intelligent American workers with the most stupid and servile laborers of Europe, Asia and Africa.

In 1869 C. F. Sampson, a shoe manufacturer of North Adams, imported 130 Chinamen to take the places of American workers in his factory. He had tried unsuccessfully to prevent his men from

forming a union, and in a fit of rage sent for the Chinese.

The white workers had received $3 a day, but the Chinese were content with one-third as much. The whole 130 Chinese herded together in a sort of barracks, without beds or any furniture except long benches and tables of uncovered pine boards. Their food was pork, potatoes and rice, served in a tin platter for every six people. Each man was provided with a bowl, out of which he both ate his food and drank his tea. All their clothes were imported from China, and the greater part of the $6 a week that each received was sent back home.

For over seven years Sampson defied public sentiment and kept his factory open; and then he was compelled to abandon his shameful and unpatriotic undertaking, and send the Chinese out of town. The experiment was a thorough failure. The quality of the shoes went down at once and made the disposal of them very difficult. Inefficient work and waste drove the foremen frantic and cut down the profits.

At this same time, instigated by the example of Sampson, a cutlery firm in Beaver Falls imported 300 Chinese to take the places of union workmen.

This change reduced wages from $4.50 a day to 80 cents, and lengthened the working day to 11 hours. Yet the firm was in a few years entirely ruined, as they deserved to be. In spite of the great difference in wages and hours, the business soon had the balance on the wrong side of the ledger. Both North Adams and Beaver Falls were seriously injured in business by these experiments, and no Eastern manufacturer has imported Chinese since then.

The Geary law, which prevented the repetition of this Asiatic slave trade, expires on May 5, 1902, and the Mobile *Register* is now demanding that it shall not be re-enacted. "What we need," says this bat-like journal, "is a million active Chinese in the South to wake the negro population into activity."

It would be more correct to state that what Alabama needs is *a higher type of worker,* black and white. A State that repeals its child-labor law; that puts 1,200 little tots to work in its factories, and that produces the largest percentage (18 per cent.) of illiterate native whites in the Union, does not need to import ignorance from China. The domestic article is sufficient.

From time to time the capitalistic patron saint

of some Chinese Sunday School attempts to get his yellow converts out of their laundries into the factories, but so far without success. A mission school in New York is now trying to establish trade schools, "where Chinamen would be taught the use of machinery in the various manufacturing industries." Trade union leaders are called "un-Christian" and "unbrotherly" because they oppose these endeavors, but they know too much history and too much economics to favor such scuttling tactics.

Recently the Sugar Trust increased its issue of stock by fifteen millions, for the purpose of starting sugar refineries in Porto Rico. This is a direct stab at our national business interests, as the Trust aims to produce by cheap foreign labor and to sell, *free of duty,* its product at high American prices. None of our "statesmen" have taken any step to prevent this injury to business. The trade union alone has seen the danger, and the President of the A. F. of L. has already visited Porto Rico and taken steps to organize unions and raise wages to the American level.

Capitalists of the small-brained type can never be taught that labor cannot be both cheap and effi-

cient. The cheap slave works like a cheap slave and always will. You can no more hire a reliable, skilled and intelligent man for $6 a week than you can buy a 2:10 trotter for $100. Elbert Hubbard's wail about the "slipshod assistance, foolish inattention, dowdy indifference and half-hearted work" of employees ("Message to Garcia") merely shows that employers get what they pay for, and no more.

Even snails, so Professor Yung has discovered, will grow to twice their size if you keep them in a barrel instead of a tomato-can. And so the efficiency of the worker depends upon the standard of living that his wages allow him to have. The shorter his workday, the less he drinks and the more he reads.

The capitalist alone cannot make a business succeed. This has been tried in China lately, and in Spain centuries ago, and always without success. The monopolist's dream of running factories with machinery and monkeys is a delusion as well as a nightmare. The experiment of this country with cheap negro labor—the most costly and disastrous mistake it has ever made, should forever prevent even the suggestion of such a policy in the future.

We shall now review the part played by our clever workingmen in the upbuilding of American commerce. This is a subject to which none of our historians have done justice. The facts which I have collected have been gleaned from all manner of old chronicles and biographies, and are still far from complete. The average history is like the "Society Column" in the daily papers, which calmly informs us that "Everybody is out of town," when a handful of social parasites have gone to Newport and Europe.

The first skilled workers who came to America were glass-workers. In 1609 a body of them began work at Jamestown, Va., and made beads, trinkets, etc., which were traded to the Indians for food and furs. Very little capital was needed to start a glass-works, so it may be said truly that American industry was founded by skilled labor, and not by capital.

The second industry, other than farming, was shipbuilding. In 1614 the first ship, the "Restless," was built at New York. The colony was short of money and the patriotic ship-workers took their pay in corn, at the rate of 50 cents a day, because of the great need of a ship at that time.

They put the public interest ahead of their own; otherwise they might have taken up land and checkmated the Astors. Altogether, 389 vessels were built before the Revolution, with an average of 52 tons.

The first martyrs of American industry were 150 ironworkers and their families, who were massacred by Indians in 1622 at Falling River, Va. They had erected smelting furnaces in 1619, the first on the continent since the days of the Mound-Builders. For three years they toiled for their fellow-colonists, and then a host of painted savages sprang upon them from the woods and left not one of them alive. We do not know the names of these men and women—there is nowhere any monument or inscription to their memory—our poets have written of the Indians, but not of them. They were only sooty, wage-working mechanics, and our lesser poets and courtier-historians have not seen the humanity and the heroism underneath the soot and sweat.

The first iron and brass founder was Joseph Jenks, of Braintree, Mass. His clever work was the pride of the colony, and he was regarded by the Indians with superstitious fear.

The whaling trade, afterwards so profitable, was started by Chris. Hassey, a Nantucket fisherman, in 1712. He discovered a whale not far from shore and succeeded after a daring struggle in harpooning it and hauling it to land. The first vessel bearing the Stars and Stripes that entered a British port was a Nantucket whaler loaded with oil.

So rapid was our industrial development, that at the close of the Revolution our manufactures were worth about $20,000,000. And the progress was due, not to an especially capable brand of capitalists, but to an especially clever brand of workers.

The mechanics of those days were not only bright and inventive, but they were patriotic as well. John Fitch, a Connecticut workingman, invented and built a steamboat in 1785. Spain offered him a large sum of money for the monopoly of his invention, but Fitch replied: "If there be any glory and profit in my invention, my countrymen shall have the whole of it." At this time he was being badly treated by American legislators, who refused him charters or financial assistance. Capitalists also had refused to give him any help and he was

very poor; yet he nobly refused to sell his invention to a foreign power.

It is usual for Fulton to receive the credit which is properly due to Fitch, of constructing the first steamboat. The fact is that Fitch ran a successful steamboat 22 years before Fulton's "Clermont." Fulton's fame is owing partly to his unquestioned ability as an inventor, but still more to his partnership with Chancellor Livingstone, one of the aristocrats of the time. If merit and priority alone were considered, the name of John Fitch would replace that of Robert Fulton in the New York Hall of Fame. It should also be mentioned that Elijah Ormsbee, a Rhode Island mechanic, built a steamboat and ran it on the Hudson 18 years before Fulton's boat.

In 1789 a mechanic named Cox built a bridge over the Charles River in Boston. This bridge was constructed with such unusual skill that its fame reached Europe. Cox was sent for to build one like it at Londonderry, Ireland, across the river Foyle. He went over and built the bridge with American workmen and American timber; and the young Republic was very proud of his success. This was *the beginning of our com-*

mercial supremacy. It was the first demand in Europe for the better skilled labor of America. Cox, the bridge-builder, got the first order.

The factory system began in America in 1790, and the first scientific, graded factory in the world was built at Waltham in 1814. Samuel Slater, the "father of American manufactures," built the first cotton factory for Rhode Island manufacturers in 1790. Slater was one of the most capable and remarkable men of his day. He had been bound out as an apprentice in an English factory at the age of 14. England had passed a law against the exportation of machinery to America, with severe penalties attached. Slater looked upon this prohibitory law as an injustice, and at once made up his mind to defeat its purpose. He, therefore, worked in the English cotton factory until he was familiar with every part of the machinery, and then bought a steerage ticket for New York. From memory alone he constructed a complete factory, a wonderful triumph of mechanical genius, and thus laid the foundation of an industry which today brings us in $25,000,000 a year from our foreign trade alone.

Oliver Evans, a Delaware mechanic, invented

the steam flour mill, saw mill, steam dredge, "Cornish boiler" and a number of other things; yet his life was a long struggle with poverty. He lacked the money-getting instinct, and consequently had the products of his genius constantly stolen by capitalists. The struggle for bread hampered Evans greatly in his mechanical experiments, and he died poor in 1819.

The first coal in America was discovered by a poor squatter named Philip Gunter, who was intelligent enough to know its value. When he found it, he was out in the mountains with his rifle to get food for his hungry family. He stumbled upon a piece of coal, and carried it with him when next he went to town. The Philadelphia capitalists at once organized mining companies, but Gunter never received a dollar of benefit for his discovery. He had as much knowledge and enterprise as the capitalists, but he had no money, and so lost the chance of making his grandson the president of the Coal Trust.

Thomas Leiper, a Boston quarryman, was the first man in America to use parallel rails and flanged wheels. He built a track from the dock to his quarry, and proved that a horse could pull an

immensely greater load in this way. Leiper was not aware of the importance of his experiment; he did not know (any more than most historians do) that his wooden track meant more to the country than all the debates and decisions of Congress during his lifetime.

Baldwin, the first successful locomotive builder, was a Philadelphia mechanic. The capitalists for whom he made his first engine cheated him out of $500 on the price of it, and he nearly gave up the business in disgust. His partner, Asa Whitney, was a blacksmith, and became famous as the perfecter of car wheels.

Elias Howe, the inventor of the sewing machine, and Walter Hunt, who invented a successful sewing machine fourteen years before Howe, but failed to take out a patent, were both poor mechanics. The "enterprising" capitalists of their day allowed them to be handicapped with poverty and to spend years in the vain endeavor to get their inventions on the market. Howe at last made a fortune, but he was forced into the courts so often to defend his patents that the lawyers got all his money and he died poor.

James Rumsey, inventor of steam engines, was a

Maryland machinist; and McKay, inventor of shoe machinery, was a Lawrence mechanic. And so we might continue the list, if more proof were needed of the inventiveness of the American workman.

The progress of American industry has amply proved that "the high price of labor stimulates the invention of labor-saving machinery." Inventions were not numerous till 1849, when 1,067 patents were issued. In 1860, 3,329 were granted, and in 1867, when workingmen were well organized, the number of patents jumped to 13,026. The increase continued, parallel with the increase in wages, until 1890, when 26,292 patents were made out.

In 1800, when wages were 50 cents a day, a dozen pigeon-holes were big enough to hold all the records of the Patent Office and one clerk did all the work. To-day the Patent Office is an enormous building, containing hundreds of thousands of models.

It is as easily proved as that two and two make four that low-wage countries produce few inventors. Here, for instance, is the comparative list of inventions for 1899:

United States	650,123
England	278,129

Belgium	154,155
Germany	126,114
Austria	82,933
Italy	49,990
Spain	22,314

So far as the intelligence, freedom and prosperity of the working people are concerned, the above nations might be rated as they stand—the United States first and Spain last. It is worth noticing that the greatest inventor in the world, Edison, who has 727 patents issued in his name, was a Michigan train-boy, and that he was several times discharged, when a wage-worker, by "enterprising" capitalists, because he "tinkered around" too much.

It is continually forgotten that nine-tenths of our ablest business and professional men received their early training in a workingman's home. Even our world-beating financiers and consolidators did not drop from Heaven, as some editors seem to think. The men who are born millionaires invariably amount to nothing. All the real greatness of America has been due to the ability of workingmen's children, ever since the days of Franklin, the son of a candle-maker.

The important factor in commerce to-day is

neither labor nor capital, as such, but *brains.* I do not mean the "brains" of the Wall Street manipulator any more than I mean the "brains" of the counterfeiter and bank sneak. Neither do I mean the "brains" of the monopolist, who merely piles million upon million. *The brute force of capital is not brains.* The sort of intelligence upon which commercial greatness depends is that of the inventor, the skilled mechanic, the clerk or farmer or merchant who mixes thought with *useful* work.

Centuries ago, when labor was nothing but muscle, it took 30,000 men 11 years to dig a canal through a mountain 3,000 yards across, in the reign of the Roman Emperor Claudius. To build one of the pyramids required the labor of 100,000 men for 20 years. But in our time numbers count for nothing—one expert is worth hundreds of drudges. One man to-day gives a steam engine a drink of water and a mouthful of coal and performs as much work as 125 workers of the last century.

The American workingman has become the most valuable producer of wealth the world has ever seen. All that our machinery does must be credited to him, because it was he who invented the ma-

chinery. In China, the carpenters work with axe, saw and knife, as their fathers did 3,000 years ago; in America, patents have been taken out for over 8,000 different wood-working machines.

No foreign country can touch us in productive ability. Mulhall says: "An ordinary farm-hand in the United States raises as much grain as three in England, four in France, five in Germany, or six in Austria." Edward Atkinson says: "Four men can produce enough wheat for 1,000 people; one cotton weaver can make enough cotton for 250, and one shoemaker can make the shoes for 1,000." In India, one American factory worker displaces seven natives; and in the South it has been found that three whites could do the work of five negroes.

In 1830, one weaver ran 25 spindles, and in 1890 he ran 65. When an English silk throwster was told that in American silk mills the speed of machinery had been increased from 5,000 to 7,500 revolutions a minute, he said: "If our machinery were made to go so fast all our girls would run away." To-day in America there are mills that go at the rate of 15,000 a minute.

In Germany a blacksmith makes 20 beam-hangers a day; in America a machine makes 700 beam-

hangers a day. In Adam Smith's day one pin-maker made 4,800 pins a day; to-day one pin-maker makes 1,500,000 pins a day.

These facts show that wages are no longer the main item in a business. Where the product is so great, a 50 per cent. increase of wages would mean a very slight increase in price of product. Wages, relatively, *never were so low* as in America to-day.

The cost of printing cotton is half a cent a yard in England and one-twentieth of a cent here. The Massachusetts factory worker gets 27 per cent. of what he produces, while the unorganized South Carolina worker only gets 19 per cent.; but the Massachusetts man produces in a year $715 *more* than the other for his employer. This shows the folly of comparing wages without comparing workers.

Shoemakers in Austria get $7 a week, while in Lynn they get $12; but the labor cost of shoes is more than twice as much in Austria as in Lynn (71 per cent. and 35 per cent.).

Nailmakers in England get $3 a week, and in this country $30. The English worker seems to be the cheapest until you discover that he only

produces 200 pounds of nails a week, while the American turns out 5,500 pounds. At the English rate, the American nailmaker's wages should be $82.50 a week.

In Germany a weaver tends two looms for $5 a week; in America he tends eight looms, but only receives $8 instead of $20. Dr. Schulze-Gaevernitz says that a German weaver produces 466 yards of cotton a week at a cost of 6 mills a yard; an English weaver produces 706 yards costing 5½ mills, and an American produces 1,200 yards at a cost of half a mill.

In 1830 the capitalists predicted that higher wages would curtail production and ruin business; yet in 1860, when wages were very much higher, the factories produced nine times as much goods as in 1830, and our foreign trade was three times as large as in 1848.

It is not stupid, brute-force labor that produces wealth and adds value to raw material. There is, perhaps, no better illustration of this than in the manufacture of iron into salable articles. A chunk of iron ore worth 75 cents may be made into bar iron worth $5; horse-shoes worth $10; table-knives worth $180; needles worth $6,800; shirt

buttons, $29,480; watch springs worth $400,000; and pallet arbors worth $2,500,000. The first three or four values could be produced by slave labor, but the last three or four can be created only by free, independent and highly-paid workmen.

Even farming is not to-day a matter of good soil, but of intelligent farming. The rich land of the South yields only a fraction of what is obtained from the poor land of the New England States. J. Schoenhof, in his convincing book on "The Economy of High Wages," has prepared the following comparisons:

Income Per Acre.

	Asparagus.	Peas.	Beets.	Cabbage.	Cucumbers.	Watermelons.	Spinach.	Tomatoes.
New England....	$216	$130	$200	$183	$2,000	$100	$175	$300
S. Atlantic States.	93	57	95	113	175	83	70	94

Labor Expense Per Acre.

	Asparagus.	Beets.	Tomatoes.	Watermelons.	Cucumbers.
New England....	$34	$75	$75	$24	$137
S. Atlantic States.	21	12	22	7	7

Thus we see that while labor costs more in New England, the net income is more than twice as much. Climatic conditions must not be blamed for the contrast, as, for instance, there is one brainy farmer in Savannah who has only 120 acres, yet who has made as high as $25,000 (gross income)

from his land in one year by the employment of skilled labor and scientific methods.

In labor and machinery, the best is always the cheapest. A century or more ago the stage coach fare was 6 cents a mile, and the stage went 30 miles a day; to-day the fare is less than 3 cents a mile, and we can go 800 miles a day. China and Africa are the most expensive countries in the world to travel in, although everything is cheap.

Adam Smith correctly said: "The work done by slaves is in the end the dearest of any." "Half a man's worth is taken away from him on the day when he becomes a slave," said a Greek poet. The high-priced worker requires less superintendence, a shorter apprenticeship, is less wasteful, more inventive and can be trusted with more intricate machinery.

If American workers had not developed into *high-class specialists,* swift and accurate, the enormous plants which make our manufactures known throughout the world would never have been invented and could not be operated. Where, outside of America, will you find a paper mill like that at Rumford Falls, Me., which turns out every day a strip of paper 144 feet wide and 150 miles long—

a total weight of 35 tons? It is now only 20 hours from the tree, out of which the paper is made, to the newspaper in the hands of the newsboy.

Where else will you find steel works like the plant at Bethlehem, Pa., where a 14,000-ton hydraulic press-forge handles a 125-ton mass of iron as if it were a pound of putty? Where else are there locomotives that can haul in one load the wheat crop of fourteen square miles of land—a train of cars a mile in length, at a speed of ten miles an hour? And where else are there wheat fields 144 miles square, like the one in the San Joaquin Valley, Cal., reaped by a steam harvester and thresher, which automatically cuts, threshes, cleans and bags the grain at the rate of three bags a minute?

Is it any wonder that we produce more wheat than Russia, Germany, Austria, Egypt, Great Britain and Canada combined, when we cultivate our fields with 50-horse-power steam plows that plow, harrow and sow 16 furrows at once?

Is it any wonder that European publishers come to New York as apprentices when our Hoe octuple press can print, cut, paste, fold and count 96,000 8-page papers an hour, consuming a strip of paper

50 miles in length? This wonderful machine contains 16,000 parts, yet is as delicately adjusted as a lady's watch.

There are 7,000 linotype machines in the world, and 5,000 of them are in the United States. This machine is the most ingenious piece of practical mechanism ever made, and it is entirely the work of a Baltimore inventor. From a fairly wide knowledge of American compositors, I can safely say that there could not be collected, from all the countries of Europe, a more intelligent body of workers than the 5,000 men who operate the linotypes in our printing offices. It is very generally the case that the man who sets up a news story for a daily paper has more brains than the man who wrote it.

All the above figures and instances show why America has become the department store of the world. Our foreign trade has increased in spite of the tariff walls erected by politicians. To-day the balance of trade is in our favor $664,900,000 a year, or over two millions a day. The total amount of our exports was over 1,487 millions last year.

In the international struggle for trade England, France and Germany have been left far behind.

All three have the balance of trade against them. If it were not for the interest on bonds which we pay to foreign bankers, which is the fault of our "statesmen," and the millions sent abroad to support European dukes who have married American heiresses, the net balance on our side would be enormous.

Last year we exported $2,000,000 worth of typewriters; $1,000,000 worth of bicycles and $4,000,000 worth of sewing machines. Two out of every three sewing machines manufactured are made in this country. Our kodaks and stem-winding watches are everywhere. England and Germany combined cannot equal our output of steel.

The new Trans-Siberian railway is being built with American material; and the Crown Prince of Japan has hired American engineers to build him an earthquake-proof steel palace, to cost $3,000,000. Before long our builders will be taking orders for sky-scrapers all over the globe.

In a conversation with the Italian and Japanese Consuls in New York, both informed me that trade in their countries was changing from England and Germany to this country. Even our old

enemy, Spain, was obliged recently to place an order in this country for 600 railway carriages.

I do not mention these commercial triumphs in any boastful sense, but simply to show that *a low-wage country cannot compete with a high-wage country.* I rejoice to see Europe undersold and outrivaled by America, because the workers of this country represent skill as against muscle, and because there is a fraction more of liberty and justice and equal rights on this side of the Atlantic. If the time comes when some social revolution should elevate the workers of England, Germany or France above the workers of America, then our commercial supremacy will be lost.

The struggle for wealth among nations is not decided by accident. In the end it is the fittest that survives. As Carlyle says: "The heaviest will reach the centre." At first America became rich because of the quantity of her goods, but from now onwards she must depend more upon their *quality.* And so you have the argument of this chapter in a few words—commercial supremacy depends upon high-grade goods; high-grade goods depend upon high-grade workers; and high-grade

workers must be developed by the highest possible pay and the fewest possible hours of labor.

The Age of Brute Force has gone forever, and the Age of Thought has arrived. To-day it is the thinkers, the inventors, the constructors who are fit to survive. In the presence of such forces as steam, compressed air and electricity human strength counts for nothing. One consumptive, with a Gatling gun, can defeat a regiment of pugilists; and one skilled mechanic, in an American workshop, can do more to enrich his nation than a hundred hand-labor artisans.

In short, American labor is not mere labor; it is *Brains*, and must be paid for as such. Even for those who have no higher purpose than to maintain our commercial supremacy, the most important work to be done is not to beat down our skilled workers to the dollar-a-day, non-union level, but to raise *all* our people to the highest possible standard of intelligence and prosperity.

CHAPTER V.

TRADE UNIONS AS THE PIONEERS OF SOCIAL REFORM.

ALMOST every humanitarian measure adopted during the 19th century was first publicly proposed in a trade union. And all our present ideals of a more perfect economic system, of a just, co-operative method of producing and distributing wealth, were first appreciated and welcomed by labor organizations.

In the investigation of this subject, the first fact which we cannot escape is that this republic, in its early days, was on a lower level than the Russia of to-day, so far as the treatment of working people was concerned. The most barbarous cruelties were inflicted upon those whose only crime was poverty; and most of the horrors of Siberia were in full swing in every one of the thirteen States.

In 1789 the treadmill was always going; the pillory and stocks were never empty; the branding-iron was seldom cold; and the whipping-

post was always crimsoned with fresh blood. If a man without political influence imitated the bankers of those days, and manufactured paper money, he was not only imprisoned but had his ears cut off. If a starving bookkeeper robbed a rich farmer's hen house of a hatful of eggs, he was hanged.

The terrible law of imprisonment for debt was not repealed until 1831,—48 years after the War of Independence. In New York, in 1816, the debtors' jail held 1,984 prisoners, nearly all for sums under $25. In two years and three months Boston imprisoned 3,492 for debt, 2,000 of them having been arrested for debts under $20, and 430 of them being women. This brought distress to over 10,000 people. One Boston worker was confined in jail for 30 years, for a trifling indebtedness.

During every panic, or after a failure of the crops, the jails were packed like egg-boxes with men and women whose only wrong-doing was that of being unfortunate. Every poor person was in constant danger of imprisonment. The New York jail was built to hold 300, but again and again 700 were jammed into its filthy

cells. Sometimes so many were arrested that old prisoners were set free to make room for the new ones. In 1796, Jefferson writes, in a letter to a friend, "The bankruptcies in Philadelphia continue; and the prison is full of the most reputable merchants."

The man who owed *one cent* could be thrown in jail, if his creditor had a grudge against him. One woman in Boston, a widow, was dragged to jail away from two children under two years of age, because she owed $3.60. And in the debtors' prison neither food nor clothes were supplied by the State. Murderers and burglars were fed and clothed, but the man or woman who owed one sacred cent had to depend upon friends or charitable societies for their bread.

As to the jails in which these martyrs of property were locked, no words can describe their hellishness. They were as bad as the prison-pens of Siberia, or the debtors' prison pictured by Hogarth. In some of them the death-rate rose as high as it was in the dungeons described by Howard, which were regarded as the disgrace of Europe.

In Washington the jail contained 16 small

cells, 8 by 8, which frequently held from 5 to 7 people each. As late as 1825 Washington had the worst code and one of the foulest jails in the republic. Thirty crimes were punishable with death.

The Newgate prison in East Granby, Conn., was another "Black Hole of Calcutta." It was an abandoned copper-mine, entered by a ladder that reached down the shaft. In wooden stalls, fouler than those of a stable, from 30 to 100 prisoners were confined. They were *chained by the neck to a beam overhead and chained by the ankle to iron bars in the ground!* There was no light except what came down the shaft. Dampness oozed from the roof and trickled in drops of disease upon the poor wretches beneath. All manner of vermin tortured them by day and by night and their clothes rotted off their backs.

And this unspeakable dungeon was in pious, Puritanical, Blue-Law Connecticut! It was not a temporary place of confinement, but was in 1790 adopted as *a regular State prison,* and continued in use until 1827. Altogether, it was in use *fifty-four years.*

This savage instance of "man's inhumanity to man" cannot be blamed upon the customs of the times, because in 1780 all underground prisons were abolished in France by the King. The Connecticut dungeon remained in use for 38 years after the destruction of the Paris Bastile.

Several other jails were almost as inhuman, though not underground. Many were without windows and had cells four feet from floor to ceiling. There were no chairs, tables or beds; and no care was taken to separate the sexes. In the Western States, where there were no jails, the debtor was made the *slave* of the creditor for a term of years, not to exceed seven.

This law of imprisonment for debt punished the unfortunate, not the criminal classes. Some of the noblest American citizens were its victims. Thurlow Weed's father, an honest, industrious carter, was imprisoned for debt, not because he had borrowed money, but because his horse went lame and his employer failed to pay him. Horace Grecley's father, a hard-working farmer, was sold up for debt and had

to take to the woods to escape being imprisoned.

Goodyear, the inventor of rubber-making, became a bankrupt, and escaped the debtors' prison in this country only to be confined in the one at Paris. It was while he was in the French prison that Goodyear received the "Cross of the Legion of Honor" for his valuable inventions.

Robert Morris, the Philadelphia banker who financed the Revolutionary War, lending it at one time $1,400,000, was finally ruined by land speculation, and spent the last three and a half years of his life *in jail for debt.* Even more shocking than this, was the case of Thomas Jefferson. He, too, in his old age, saw the debtors' prison open to receive him; and his last days were embittered and reduced by the law which he had permitted to remain in force.

When Jefferson was 79, a State Governor whom he had backed to the extent of $30,000 became a bankrupt. For three years Jefferson managed to pay the interest on the debt, but his land had depreciated from $75 to $15 an acre, and he found himself unable to meet the obliga-

tion. A subscription of nine or ten thousand dollars was collected for him, and just before his death he was preparing to sell by lottery all his possessions. In a letter written eight days before he died he expressed his fears that he would have "not even a log hut" to put his head into or a plot of ground in which his body might be laid.

No protest against this ruinous law of imprisonment for debt, as far as I can find, came from the colleges, the churches, the politicians or the capitalists. In the trade union meetings indignant speeches were made, but the wage-worker had no influence, and nothing was done. At last, in the first Labor paper—"The Workingman's Advocate," published in 1825, twelve demands were printed on the front page, and among them were these,—(1.) No imprisonment for debt; (2.) No laws for the collection of debts; (3.) A general bankruptcy law. These demands attracted public attention and in 1831 the imprisonment-for-debt law was repealed.

Quite equal to imprisonment for debt is the misery which it caused, was the law relating to "bound servants" or "redemptioners." The "re-

demptioners" were poor Europeans who, in return for a passage to America, allowed the ship captain or agent to sell them for a term of 3 to 8 years to American employers.

They received nothing for their work but their board, clothes and lodging, and a "freedom suit" when their term of slavery was ended. The price paid was generally $100 for a grown man or woman and $40 for a child. If the "redemptioner" broke any of the "laws" that related to him, the penalty was a lengthening of his term, so that many found themselves enslaved for life.

This system was in full force in 1800, and it was attended with many revolting cruelties. Ship-captains brutally separated husbands from wives, parents from children, etc. Thousands of children were *kidnapped* in the streets of British cities, and men and women were seized by press-gangs, and sold in Virginia as slaves. Masters were permitted to use the lash on these "bound servants," and even when death was caused by excessive punishment, it was an impossibility to convict the master.

When an employer could obtain for $100 a

workman's labor for seven years, it may be imagined that the free worker was not in a position to demand fair wages; and there was bitter resentment against the "redemptioner" system among the working people. As the unions increased in strength, this opposition became stronger, and public sentiment at last condemned the practice.

The workers found, however, that slavery dies hard. It evolved from chattel slavery to the "redemptioner" system, and from that into apprenticeship. Long terms of apprenticeship were required by capitalists, which in their last few years practically amounted to slavery.

This system continued until comparatively recent times. Chas. Sotheran served five years' apprenticeship to a printer, without wages or clothes, and paid $500 for the privilege. Peter Cooper served an apprenticeship at coach-making for four years, but received $25 a year and board. It was common for an apprentice of two years' standing to be obliged to do the work of a skilled workman, without receiving any pay for his labor. This and other abuses

have now been very generally abolished by the vigorous resistance of organized labor.

The average laborer 100 years ago had fewer comforts and less consideration than a horse or dog has to-day. There was no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Wage-workers. The laborer lived in a house of unpainted boards; he had sand on the floor instead of carpet, and his dishes were made of pewter instead of china. If he had fresh meat once a week he thought himself lucky. A good share of his wages was paid in rum and gin; then, when he got drunk, his employer had him arrested.

In 1779 the bricklayers of New Jersey were worked 14 hours, and housed worse than the pigs which at that time roamed freely through the streets of every American city. A young man named Michael Menton wrote a letter to a paper, describing their condition; and, although all his charges were found to be true, he was arrested for libel and sentenced to 60 days in jail. To speak a word in defence of wage-workers was thus rated as a crime in Revolutionary times.

The first American factories were governed

by the most oppressive regulations. The workers were taxed to support churches, and fined if habitually absent from religious worship. The factory windows were nailed down, for fear the operatives might look outside and waste time. Proper ventilation was unknown. Worst of all, it has been clearly proved that in some factories *women and children were thrashed with a cowhide* if the overseer caught them snatching a moment's rest. One 11-year-old girl had her leg broken by a "billet of wood" hurled at her by a savage foreman.

There is no record of any foreman being arrested or reprimanded for cruelties to the people who worked under him. The latter were entirely at his mercy, and no measure was taken to protect them until trade unions became strong enough to act. The first real factory law was not passed until 1866, and then only in one State,—Massachusetts.

All sorts of vexatious restrictions were placed upon working people. As late as 1825 every city carter was forbidden to ride in his own cart, unless he was very old or lame. He

was obliged to walk at the horse's head, as the old English custom had been.

All manner of preposterous Blue Laws interfered with personal liberty and recreation. While religious service was being held, all traffic was stopped by a chain that reached across the street from the church door. If some workingman who was in hard straits to provide food for his family was caught fishing on Sunday, some capitalistic Deacon had him sent to jail for it.

As for the paupers and immigrants, the brutality with which they were treated by public officials had no legal or humanitarian restraints. Up to forty years ago in some States the paupers were auctioned off from the courthouse steps to the bidder who would take charge of them at the lowest figure.

The cruelties practiced on the immigrants at Castle Garden were almost unbelievable. No country ever received its prospective citizens with less hospitality. Bogus railway tickets were sold to them; money-changers robbed them of their little hoard of savings; children were stolen and sold as servants; young girls

were enticed to disorderly houses; and every crime that lust and rascality could devise was committed upon the helpless foreigners who had hoped to find in America a land of liberty, equality and justice.

It was against the "law" to catch a trout on Sunday or to ride in your own cart; but there was no attempt to rescue immigrants from the gang of human wolves that sprang upon them and snatched away the few dollars they had saved to start life with in the New World. The unionists protested against these abuses, but could do nothing until Thurlow Weed, in 1850, lent his assistance, and succeeded in checking or modifying the worst of the evils.

Thousands of working people were driven by such barbarities into the Western wilderness. There they lived in the dense forests, preferring Indians and wild-cats to public officials. Scattered along the banks of the rivers could be seen the "half-face camps" of the settlers,—three-sided log-cabins with quilts of deerskin hung up on the fourth side, and a roof made of saplings and bark. Even here they were not safe from the capitalists, and hundreds of fami-

lies of these squatters were driven off their farms by U. S. troops, because the land had been sold to some speculator for ten cents an acre.

In spite of the conditions which I have been describing, no social reform was proposed by any Legislature or by Congress. In 1809, Wm. Duane, of Philadelphia, stated that "in 27 years there was scarcely a public improvement in Pennsylvania that was due to the Legislature." There was no free education, no promotion of navigation, no building of roads or canals. Legislators represented only their own families and their friends. No labor legislation of any kind was passed in America until 1834; and in 1845, when the Massachusetts Legislature was asked to vote for an 11-hour law, it declared that such a law "would close the gate of every mill in the State."

The first American programme of social reform appeared in the "Workingman's Advocate," a labor paper published in New York in 1825. Its twelve demands were as follows:

(1) Right of every man to the soil. (2) No monopolies. (3) Freedom of public lands.

(4) Homesteads made inalienable. (5) No laws for the collection of debts. (6) A general bankrupt law. (7) Give laborer a lien on his work for his wages. (8) No imprisonment for debt. (9) Equal rights for women. (10) No chattel slavery, nor wage slavery. (11) No man to own more than 160 acres. (12) Mails to run on Sunday.

These moderate demands were called "shocking" by the clergy and propertied classes, says McMaster. The paper that dared to print them was called an anarchistic sheet, and in a few years was compelled to suspend publication. Yet to-day two-thirds of these demands are commonplace facts, and the rest are regarded as legitimate social ideals. If *all* these demands had been adopted by the nation at the time, no one can compute how much misery and bankruptcy and poverty would have been prevented.

The Homestead Law, enacted in 1862, has been called "one of the most beneficent and successful laws ever passed." By its provisions any present or prospective citizen can get a farm of 80 or 160 acres for a payment of five or ten dollars, receiving a title after five years' oc-

cupation. It has been the means of settling millions of acres in the Western States.

"Vote yourself a farm," said the labor papers 75 years ago; and they were scoffed at by the press and the colleges and the business men's clubs. The labor papers refused to be sneered into silence, and to-day unanimous public opinion declares that they were right.

With regard to the great question of Socialism, which every thoughtful citizen in America and Europe is to-day considering, the American wage-worker was among the first to foresee it. All histories of the Socialist movement give the credit to certain French and German philosophers as being the first pioneers of collectivism; but the fact is that in 1829, Thomas Skidmore, a New Yorker, wrote a book advocating the collective ownership of the means of production and distribution. "All men should live on their own labor," said he. "We want the right to life, liberty and *property*."

Here there is the main principle of Socialism, although the word "Socialist" was not used until 1835, when Robert Owen first made it popular. When Skidmore's book was printed, Karl Marx

was only 11 years old; Lassalle and Liebknecht were little children learning to walk; and Bebel was unborn. Even Fourier, the profound French thinker, who is generally said to be the first of socialistic writers, did not publish his book on "The New Industrial World" until 1829, the same year as Skidmore's book appeared.

Thus Socialism is not in any sense a German or French product. It was put forward as a *common-sense business proposition* in America at the same time that it was being spoken of as an imaginative social ideal in France, and long before it was elaborated into a cast-iron economic philosophy in Germany. It may also be said that the consolidation of industry which is the foundation and necessity of Socialism, is as yet no more than a theory or political platform in Europe, while it is in the United States the most conspicuous fact. But, as Kipling says, "that is another story."

It was the wage-workers in this country who first made known the existence of a social problem in the young republic. The wealthy classes believed that the Revolution had settled every

problem and that further reform was unnecessary and dangerous.

As early as 1831, a Labor Convention held in Boston made the following wise and statesmanlike diagnosis of the social conditions of that time:

"These social evils arise from an illiberal opinion of the worth and rights of the laboring classes; an unjust estimation of their moral and intellectual powers; an unwise misapprehension of the effects which would result from the cultivation of their minds and the improvement of their condition; and an avaricious propensity to avail of their laborious services at the lowest possible rate of wages for which they can be induced to work."

You will search in vain among the partisan debates of Congress of that period for as clear an appreciation of social and industrial tendencies as is contained in the above resolution written by the trade unionists of New England. The newspapers at that time gave no more than a few lines to the Labor Convention, while their front pages were full of excited screeds about a "compromise tariff," "Nullification," the U. S.

Bank charter, and other insignificant capitalistic matters, of importance only to five per cent. of the population. The trade unions alone grasped the larger question of the relation between Capital and Labor.

A generation later, when the panic of '57 had reduced thousands of families to beggary, it was the labor unions alone that recognized the trouble as social and not individual. In 1858 the machinists formed their first national union in Philadelphia, and in their Constitution appears the following clear statement of the trouble: "In consequence of the smallness of the number representing capital, their comparative independence and power, their ample leisure to study their own interests, their prompt co-operation, together with the aid of legislation, and last, but not least, the culpable negligence of the working classes themselves, it has come to pass that notwithstanding their joint production is amply sufficient to furnish both parties with the necessaries, comforts and luxuries of life, yet the fact is indisputable that while the former enjoy more than their share, the latter are correspondingly depressed." Nothing

so wise as this on the industrial question was said in Congress in 1858.

In '59 the Molders formed a national union, and Wm. H. Sylvis, its president, in his opening address, said: "Year after year the capital of the country becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of the few. The great question to-day is this,—what position are we, the mechanics of America, to hold in society? Are we to receive an equivalent for our labor, or must we be forced to bow the suppliant knee to wealth?"

Thus, during the fierce wrangle between North and South, the one clear voice that rises above the shrieks of the partisans is that of this forgotten molder. Congress was compromising with the slaveholders and tinkering with the tariff; the churches were wrangling over baptism; the colleges were discussing Homer's birthplace; the Supreme Court was deciding that runaway slaves must be refused food and shelter; while this Labor Convention was announcing social and economic laws, and prescribing for social evils with a wisdom that few possess even at the present day.

It was another Workingman's Convention, held at Baltimore in '66, that first pointed out the evils of overcrowded tenements. Since that time sanitary and building laws have been improved so that in New York alone it is estimated that 35,000 lives are saved every year.

This Baltimore Convention was also the first to undertake the defence of underpaid women and girls who were unorganized. A resolution was passed pledging assistance to "the sewing women and daughters of toil of the United States." This assistance has been so ably given that to-day the men and women in the Garment Makers' Union have shortened their hours of labor to 59 a week, besides greatly increasing their wages from what they were in 1866.

In '67, Wm. H. Sylvis, the talented molder whom we have quoted, first proposed a National Labor Bureau. The suggestion was received with derision and enabled several professional humorists to make a few dollars ridiculing it. But two years later Massachusetts established a Bureau of Statistics of Labor,—the first of the kind in the history of the world. Thirty States followed suit, and in '84 the National Depart-

ment of Labor was formed, which has since given us dozens of volumes of invaluable statistics and sociological information.

The whole civilized world has now followed our lead in this line, including Austria and Russia. It is admitted by all statesmen that a Bureau of Labor is an indispensable part of a government's machinery; but it is not remembered that the idea sprang from the brain of a trade unionist molder. Others, less worthy, have reaped all the glory and the profit.

In 1880, the Greenback-Labor Party, which was a federation of trade unionists and farmers, outlined a social reform programme which is today very generally endorsed. It demanded that all money be issued and controlled by the government; that bonds be paid off; that an 8-hour law be passed; that truck stores be abolished and Chinese labor excluded; that factories be inspected and child labor stopped; that an income tax law be enacted; that monopolies be checked and railways compelled to be honest and impartial.

The presidential candidates of the Greenback-Labor Party were Peter Cooper, General

Weaver and Ben Butler,—three men to whom America has reason to point with pride. In '79 it polled over 1,000,000 votes and sent 14 men to Congress; but its greatest work was in calling attention to the evils of our industrial and financial system.

Following it, in '87, came the Union Labor Party, which went several steps further, and declared for government ownership of railroads and telegraphs, woman suffrage, and payment of the national debt. It was the pioneer of the Populist Party, which has done most of all to point out the widening gap between the producers and the appropriators of wealth.

To describe all the various reforms that have been inaugurated by organized labor bodies would require an entire book. To give an idea of the labor legislation which has been *first thought out in trade unions* and then forced through stupid or corrupt Legislatures, the following instances may be mentioned:

Fire-escapes on factories;

Inspectors of factories;

Protection from dangerous machinery;

Abolition of child labor;

Ten-hour day;
Ventilation in all workshops;
Seats for women where possible;
Weekly payment of wages;
Two outlets to mines;
Protected wages of wives from attachment;
Industrial and evening schools;
Special railroad rates for wage-workers;
Boards of Arbitration;
Abolished truck stores;
Guaranteed worker's wages by lien;
Australian ballot.

Neither have I space to do more than call attention to the extent of the benevolent work done by trade unions. The Bricklayers' Union alone has in 10 years spent over $1,500,000 for benevolent purposes. The Carpenters' Union pays a death benefit of $250, and $50 in case a member's wife dies, besides the usual out-of-work and disability benefit.

The Cigar-Makers who have had as much as $500,000 in their treasury at one time, pay a death benefit of $300 on the death of a member of 10 years' standing, as well as an out-of-work benefit of $3 a week. These indefatigable

unionists have spent over $1,000,000 in advertising their "blue label."

The New York Typographical Union, "Big Six," has shown the State how the problem of the unemployed may be solved. It purchased 166 acres of good land near Bound Brook, N. J., and placed 50 of its unemployed or disabled men upon it. This trade union colony proved very successful for several years, enabling worn-out compositors to regain their health and at the same time to feel that they were doing something towards their own support.

This enterprising union also maintains the "Childs-Drexel Home" at Colorado Springs, for sick or infirm members. This property is now valued at about $150,000, and is sustained by a monthly tax of five cents per member. From 90 to 100 worn-out printers are cared for in this "Home," and a large percentage are restored to health.

The amount of money raised by unionists to help their fellows who are on strike cannot be ascertained, but it is not uncommon for a union to assess itself 50 cents a week per member, for the assistance, very likely, of workingmen in

some distant city. Not infrequently money is sent to help strikers in Europe, if the winning of the strike is thought to be important to the labor movement. Trade union money is now being spent to organize and educate the workers of Porto Rico.

Nothing shows more clearly the progressive and humanitarian spirit of trade unions than their obliteration of all national and religious prejudices. The Glassworkers' Union, for instance, says in its preamble that its purpose is "to extend our Federation to all sections of the globe, until our membership shall embrace every man engaged in our trade." The first coal miners' circular said, "Let there be no English, no Irish, no Germans, Scotch or Welsh. This is our country and we are brethren." The motto of the Seamen's Union is "The Brotherhood of the Sea."

It was the labor organizations that took the first step towards forgetting the hatreds of the Civil War. In 1885 the veterans of both the Union and Confederate armies, who were members of the Knights of Labor, formed an organization called "The Gray and the Blue."

Their motto was a very impressive one,—"Capital divided; Labor unites us."

In 1846, when the churches were, as the Abolitionists said, "the bulwarks of American slavery;" when Garrison and Thompson and Pillsbury were being mobbed by college students; and when the slaveholders were masters of Congress and the courts of law, a Labor Convention at Lynn passed this courageous resolution, "We wish to secure to our 3,000,000 brethren and sisters groaning in chains on the Southern plantations the same rights and privileges for which we are contending ourselves."

In '86 the Knights of Labor organization was attacked by the whole Southern press because a colored delegate was selected to be the chairman at a Richmond Convention. Trade unions have always been the opponents of race prejudices, and their work at the present time in the Southern States comes nearer to solving the great negro problem than the efforts of any other organization.

"I am for my own pocket all the time," said a New York politician. "The public be damned," said one of the Vanderbilts who

helped to do a good deal of the damning. Such are the sentiments of the men who put money above men. Contrast with these utterances the mottoes of the trade unions, which put men above money. "For me; for thee; for all," was the motto of the first labor paper in America. "Raise yourselves, not by depressing others, but by acting with them," said Broadhurst, the English labor organizer. "The condition of one part of our class cannot be improved permanently unless all are improved together," said the Industrial Federation in '74. "An injury to one is the concern of all," said the Knights of Labor. "Each for all and all for each," says the Boot and Shoe Workers' Union.

These sentiments are not mere words, like the consecration hymns at a revival meeting. The unions have discovered a *new economic law.* They have found out that co-operation is better than competition,—and not the co-operation of as *few* as possible, which the Monopolists believe in, but the co-operation of as *many* as possible. This is the bed-rock upon which our social structure must be built, if it would escape the fate of Spain, Rome, Babylon and Persia.

And it is the unionists who have first dug down to it and made it known to the world.

The trade union is the only organization in the world to which the phrase, "the Brotherhood of Man," has a real and practical meaning. Everywhere else it means loyalty to "my own gang," or else mere poetry and gush.

This was brought to my notice very forcibly several years ago, when I was asked to address a newly formed union of Irish and Armenian morocco-dressers in Lynn. Two years before, the manufacturers had imported the Armenians to take the places of the Irish. There had been a number of street fights, and a great deal of bad feeling between the two races. But the labor organizer went to work and finally succeeded in undoing the mischief done by the manufacturers. Knives and clubs were put aside, and the two classes of workers, so widely different in national history, language and traditions, were welded together into a brotherly co-operation. There on the membership book the name of Hagob Bogiabodjen was sandwiched in between Tim Sexton and Matt Doolan; and a partnership was formed between

an oppressed race of Europe and an oppressed race of Asia, for mutual protection and advantage. Such is the work of the labor organizer; nothing more essentially American could be conceived.

Trade unions have been unjustly condemned for demanding the restriction of immigration and for excluding the Chinese, as the Geary law did in '82. The object in doing so was not to wall off the United States from the rest of the world, but to prevent people from coming here faster than they can be Americanized. Since 1789, 18,000,000 immigrants have landed upon our shores. Four-fifths of these have been unskilled laborers, accustomed to do rough work for low wages. There has been no department of government set apart to instruct these newcomers in the knowledge of industry and democracy, and the labor organizations have had to grapple almost single-handed with this gigantic task. The Americanizing process has been left altogether to the trade unions and the public schools.

The thoughtful labor leader is opposed to having indigestible lumps of foreigners in this country. He does not wish the machinery of self-govern-

ment to be clogged up any more than it is; but he looks forward to a time when our democracy shall be so thorough and so solid that all barriers against immigrants may be thrown down.

Thus, the story of American organized labor shows that again and again the trade unions undertake some task *which the community as a whole ought to do;* and in spite of the greatest opposition they persevere in the good work until the government or the middle classes take up the matter, complete the long-delayed work, and receive all the credit.

J. E. Thorold Rogers, English M. P., has proven that English progress is due, not to the aristocracy, statesmen, lawyers or clergy, but to the great body of working people, who have stubbornly resisted oppression and organized to obtain better conditions. It has been my purpose in this chapter to show that the same has been true in the development of American civilization. All the rough work of progress has been done by trade unions and similar radical bodies that had the hardihood to stand by a truth when it was new and unpopular.

Sentimentalists and young people who are passing through the "historical novel" stage can never

be expected to recognize the heroic and chivalrous side of the Labor Movement. The rough and ready ways of a trade union debate, in a dingy hall four flights up, would shock their romantic notions of "Truth" and "Progress." In the "historical novel," falsely so-called, the hero is never an unshaved mechanic in blouse and overalls, who eats pie with his knife and isn't a specialist on grammar. Yet the really heroic pioneer work of civilization is generally done by just such men. Especially has this been the case in America.

Not long since I took a little nine-year-old girl through a piano factory to let her see how musical instruments were constructed. The whole process seemed to be a disappointment to her, and on reaching her home her first words were: "Oh, mamma, it wasn't a bit like a piano factory; we didn't hear any music at all." It had not occurred to her mind that pianos were made by sawing, filing, hammering, chiseling, etc., or that the pianomakers were rough, common workingmen such as she saw on the streets every day.

The same illusion that the child had about pianos thousands of grown-up people have about progress. They do not recognize a social reform while it is

in the making. When it is a finished product—all polished and varnished and ready for use—they prize it highly; but they know nothing about the trade union factory where it was invented and built.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TRADE UNION IS THE INEVITABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT.

THE history of America, like that of England, began in feudalism. The 105 colonists who landed at Jamestown in 1607 were divided into 52 "gentlemen," 7 "tradesmen," and 46 "laborers." They were governed by *Lord* Delaware, and chaperoned by *Sir* Thomas Gates, *Sir* Thomas Dale and *Sir* George Somers.

Feudalism was at that time decaying in England. The workers were beginning to realize their value and to demand political rights. Consequently, a number of noblemen got together ship-loads of "laborers," obtained land-grants in America, and came across, not to establish democracy, but to re-establish feudalism. They came to America for the same reason that manufacturers go to Alabama—for the sake of securing cheaper and more subservient labor. The charters which these "Lords" and "Sirs" secured were feudalistic in the extreme,

and put the "laborers" completely in the power of their aristocratic escorts.

The Common Law of England, which had grown up in a monarchical country, was brought bodily to the new colonies, and has ever since been an obstacle to American progress. Politics in every State was a struggle between two "Sirs" or "Lords." In New York, as late as 1770, it was a battle between the Church of England faction, led by the De Lancey family, and the Presbyterian faction, led by the Livingstone family. As for the workingmen, they were merely two packs of dogs, who fought each other whenever their masters quarrelled.

This feudalistic state of things, it is very important to remember, *was not changed by the Revolution.* As I have shown in the third chapter, the Revolution did not mean ten cents a week more in wages for any workingman in America. It was altogether a middle-class affair. The royal land-grants were not abolished, as they should have been. The methods of ownership and employment were not in any sense improved. The separation from England did not imply, as our historians

lead us to believe, that domestic abuses and tyrannies were abolished or even mitigated.

The Revolution made America a *nominal* Republic; but the work of making her a *real* Republic—political and industrial, had to be taken up years afterwards by organized labor, and is as yet very far from completion. The Declaration of Independence was the foundation; the Labor Movement is the superstructure; and the Brotherhood of Man will be the finished edifice.

In 1776 historians admit that New York was cursed with aristocracy and family feuds. The city was governed by a *family* clique, which is worse than a political clique. The British system of manorial grants had created a land aristocracy, which split up into two fierce factions. The middle classes suffered severely, but did not dare to side with the working people, for business and social reasons. The combination of the "truck-store" system and the law of imprisonment for debt put the worker in the grasp of his employer and tied him to one spot as effectually as if he had been chained. The truck system kept him always in debt to his employer, and the threat of imprisonment prevented him from running away.

With few exceptions, the "fathers" of the Republic were by no means desirous of bettering the wage-worker's condition. In 1784 Governor John Jay, of New York, grumbled that "the wages of mechanics and laborers are very extravagant," though the average wages at the time amounted to fifty cents a day. Jefferson tells us that the topic of conversation at a large dinner party given by President John Adams was "the enormous price of labor." President Adams declared that he had hired men ten years before for $50 a year and board, while now he was obliged to pay the "enormous" sum of $150 a year.

Thus, in spite of their recent declaration to the world that "all men are created equal, with certain inalienable rights," etc., we find the founders of the Republic utterly oblivious of the fact that workingmen have an "inalienable right" to fair wages and a decent human life. It was certainly a strange and incongruous spectacle to see the signers of the Declaration of Independence, after they had banquetted on all the rarest delicacies that the President's larder could supply, lament that their fellow-citizens could not be persuaded to toil 14 hours a day for one dollar a week.

Human equality, in the opportunities of industry, was then, as it is to-day, a theory and ideal rather than a condition. In 1789 every seventh man was a slave; and thousands of bond-servants, men, women and children, were practically enslaved.

No man could vote who did not own property, pay taxes, etc. In many States religious qualifications existed. Some States forbade the election of any man to be Governor who was not both pious and rich. In one State, for instance, the Governor was obliged to be the owner of 500 acres, and in another he was to be possessed of at least $50,000. Senators, Representatives, etc., were required to be property owners.

In the towns, the workers wore a distinctive dress—yellow leather breeches, a blouse of coarse, home-made material, heavy leathern clogs with wooden heels and brass buckles, a rusty felt hat turned up at the corners, and a leathern apron. In the farming districts, a very large proportion of the settlers were practically outlaws. Thousands had fled from the towns to escape imprisonment for debt. Others were bond-servants who had run away from tyrannical masters. They possessed no

title to their land that would be recognized in any law court. The soil which they had reclaimed from the wilderness by years of the most unremitting labor, and the tiny log-houses in which they reared their families, were declared by the law to be the property of some aristocrat in Boston or New York, because of certain preposterous land-grants issued by some English King or Queen. In every State these "squatters" were hunted by sheriffs and militia as if they were brigands or wolves. In New York State, among the Catskills and Adirondacks, many a battle was fought between the sheriff's posse and the "Anti-Renters," the latter being frequently disguised as Indians.

Liberty, in those early days, was largely a matter of cockades, parades, speeches and politics. It meant nothing definite in dollars and cents. In 1786 a pamphlet was circulated in New York called "Thoughts for the Rulers of the Free"—a very appropriate title. Carrol D. Wright says of the wage-workers who lived one hundred years ago: "Could they have foreseen the circumstances and the environment of the workingmen of the present day, they would have considered that the

dream of the social philosophers of their day was to be realized."

It must not be thought that I am attaching any special blame to the statesmen and captains of industry of those early times. My aim is merely to show that they did *their* work, *not ours;* and that this Republic is a growth which only *began* at that time and has been developing ever since. A century ago, a democratic Republic was "a new thing under the sun." To the "wisdom" of Europe, Asia and Africa it was foolishness; and the courageous young nation was obliged to set out as uncharted as was Columbus in that most daring of all voyages.

It was a long time before America "found herself." For a generation or two there was little national feeling. Local interests alone were considered; and Congress was reviled and despised in a manner which is to-day almost incredible. There were few legal restrictions in the way of unprincipled financiers and sharpers; and scheme after scheme to start "banks," float "companies," operate lotteries, or boom land was launched upon the credulous public. In 1790 some of "the principal characters of America" got up a land scheme

which robbed 500 French mechanics of both their money and their lives. A city named Gallipolis was laid out on paper, on the Ohio River, and sold to the Frenchmen by this "respectable" syndicate. When the unfortunate purchasers reached the spot, which had been described by the agent as a paradise, they found it to be a dense wilderness, inhabited only by Indians and wild animals. After prolonging a most miserable existence for several years, they dropped off with fever and starvation, while the syndicate paid a handsome dividend.

Trade and manufactures were not regarded as "respectable" by those who first settled America. So far as social standing was concerned the capitalist of those days was where the mechanic is today. Agriculture was the only permissible occupation for "gentlemen" in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even Jefferson shared the prejudices against manufactures and said he would rather see the American people all farmers and sailors than capitalists and mechanics. All manufacturing industries were obstructed for many years by the influential land owners, who dictated public opinion. Several times, when skilled workers were sent from England, they were made to

cut down trees and pull up stumps, instead of being given a chance to work at their trades.

The colonies, especially those in the South, were ruled by an aristocracy of birth of the most despotic and pernicious kind. As McMaster says: "Nowhere was social rank so clearly defined as in Virginia." Racing, hunting, duelling, gambling and drinking were the occupations of Southern "gentlemen." The old European prejudice against those who were "in trade" was to be found in every American community. An amusing instance of this is told by one of Benjamin Franklin's biographers. It is said that when Franklin was courting the young lady who afterwards became his wife his future mother-in-law objected strongly to her daughter marrying a mere printer. "Besides," said the old lady, "there are two printing offices already in the country, and I don't believe there is room for a third."

The separation between the United States and England did not by any means abolish the objectionable features of colonialism in the thirteen colonies. It did not solve any social or economic problem. To quote again from McMaster: "No person could, in 1803, look over our country with-

out beholding on every hand the lingering remains of monarchy, of aristocracy, of class rule. *Very little of what would now be called democracy existed.*" The American nation as it stands to-day, with all it possesses of equal rights and opportunities, with all there is of fair play in industry and politics, was not created by the military skirmishes of 1776. It was developed by the patient and heroic labors of thousands of social reformers and unionists, whose biographies have not been written and whose very names have been forgotten.

Since this country was first settled, it has had 170 years of monarchy and only 126 years of political democracy. It must therefore be expected that the old feudalistic influences would be hard to eradicate, springing up again and again under the form of chattel slavery and monopoly, and endangering our Republic to-day with an even greater show of force than they displayed fifty years ago.

Immediately after the Revolution, the struggle was not between Labor and Capital, but between Commerce and Parasitism. On the one hand were the worker and the capitalist, and on the other were the politician, the land owner and the financier. A

dozen times the young Republic was nearly killed by political and financial malpractice. Stupid laws were passed, putting obstacles in the way of trade. The most disastrous of these laws, to give one instance out of many, was the embargo of 1807. It forbade any American ship to sail to foreign ports, and compelled every captain to furnish bonds to twice the value of his cargo. As might have been expected, this law ruined American shipping. It threw 100,000 men out of work for more than a year and transformed hundreds of them into law-breakers. The loss in wages was $36,000,000. Thousands of small tradesmen were bankrupted, and notices of sheriffs' sales were on every bill-board. At one time the New York jails contained 1,300 prisoners, arrested for debt, who had been ruined by the embargo. The grass grew into lawns around every American dock, and the sea-ports looked as though they had been swept by a plague. This national disaster, let it be remembered, was not caused by a strike or any sort of labor trouble, but by the obstinate and unteachable folly of the high office-holders of the nation.

There seems to be no record of any protest against this embargo from labor unions, but to

belong to a union at that time was a criminal offense, and the opinions of individual workingmen have never been considered as of sufficient importance to be recorded. There is not the slightest doubt that the few men who dared to publicly denounce the embargo were called "hired agitators" and threatened with tar and feathers.

Gradually, as commerce increased, the Capitalist fought his way up in the social scale and left his former companion, the Workingman, behind. The aristocracy of birth gave way to an aristocracy of wealth, and the Labor Movement began to exhibit a few feeble signs of life.

At first, so "un-American" was the America of those days, the trade unionist was regarded as a criminal, an enemy of society, similar in guilt to the counterfeiter and incendiary. A Philadelphia judge, in 1806, when sentencing a number of shoemakers who had been intelligent enough to form a union, delivered himself of the following opinion, which was used as a precedent for a long period: "A combination of workmen to raise their wages may be considered in a two-fold point of view—one is to benefit themselves, the other is to injure those who do not join their society. *The law con-*

demns both." Thus, according to this Quaker Dogberry, it was contrary to the law for a wage-worker to endeavor to better his condition. All the gospel of self-help, announced so vigorously by Franklin, was not supposed by the "law" to apply to "common workingmen."

There was no such thing as "equality before the law." Equality merely meant that one man's dollar was as good as another's. For instance, in 1791, when hundreds of lotteries were being run by capitalists and even by State governments, two New York workingmen, a blacksmith named William Thornton and a chairmaker named Gabriel Leggett, were fined $2,920 for starting two private lotteries.

The "Rights of Labor" was regarded as either a fad of humanitarians or as the revolutionary creed of a few foreign agitators. When Thurlow Weed, who was a member of the New York Typographical Union, secured its incorporation in 1818 at Albany, he was severely rebuked for asking for incorporation for a body of "mere mechanics." Even Weed himself, 23 years later, when he had risen to be a man of national reputation, referred to unions as "formidable and mischievous."

"How is it that all classes except the laboring class are heard in the Legislatures?" asked a Delaware trade union in 1829. Two years later Stephen Simpson, of Philadelphia, wrote: "The children of toil are as much shunned in society as if they were leprous convicts just emerged from loathsome cells."

The law, the press and the church, as well as the thousand direct agencies of capital, were combined against those who suggested the combination of wage-workers. In 1834 all the trade unions in Boston gave a dinner and found no place open to them except Faneuil Hall. Twenty-two societies refused to rent their halls to such "dangerous organizations." The following year, at a meeting of rich Boston merchants, $20,000 was subscribed to drive the Shipbuilders' Union to submission or starvation.

The first crop of American capitalists was, generally speaking, much more autocratic and intolerant than the capitalists of to-day. De Tocqueville noticed this in 1831, and said: "The manufacturing aristocracy which is growing up under our eyes is one of the harshest which ever existed

in the world. The friends of democracy should keep their eyes anxiously fixed in this direction."

The factories at that time were industrial Infernos. The employers and foremen were absolutely unrestricted by law in the methods which they adopted to force every ounce of strength out of their employees. There was no labor legislation and public sentiment was all on the side of the capitalist. The newspapers of the day denied that any social wrongs existed. "Our social system is as clean and smiling as it will be while the earth lasts," said the New York *Aurora.*

Even as late as the sixties all labor gatherings were denounced by the press in the most outrageous language. A meeting of unionists would be called "a gathering of the rag-tag and bob-tail." "The worst element was out last night to hear a kid-gloved, oily-tongued, sleek-faced demagogue hold forth in an incendiary, blood-curdling speech on the rights of the horny-handed workingman." So said a newspaper in reporting an address of T. V. Powderly. Years afterwards, when the same gentleman had ceased to be a labor organizer and had become Chief Commissioner of Immigration,

his speeches were reported in quite a different manner.

Labor lecturers were called "Molly Maguires," "anarchists," "incendiaries," "blood-and-thunder spouters," "hungry-looking loafers," "sinister-faced wretches," "blatherskites," etc. In nearly every instance the chairman of the meeting would be discharged the following day. Spies spotted those who applauded and reported them to their employers. Yet all the demands of those pioneer trade unionists are to-day recognized as indispensable requisites in a free country, and not in the slightest degree dangerous to our government, our industry or our best institutions.

As for political equality, it was no more a fact than the paper city of the land agent. Factory workers were marched to the polls like herds of cattle, with a foreman at the head and another in the rear. There is a tradition to the effect that in 1724 the ship-calkers of Boston formed a "Calkers' Club" and obtained a great influence in politics. The father of Samuel Adams was a member of this club; and it is said that the famous "Tea Party" was planned and executed by the "Calkers' Club." But while this is probably true, it must not be

taken to represent the average political status of the wage-workers.

There is no record of workingmen appearing in politics for their own interests until 1829. In that year there was a "Mechanics' Ticket" in New York, and *Ebenezer Ford* got 6,166 votes and was elected to the Assembly. He was the first workingman in America who was elected to represent the interests of his class, and his name should never be forgotten by trade unionists.

Thus nearly two generations elapsed between the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the real commencement of American democracy. Strictly speaking, the Republic did not begin to take shape until 1829, when the main body of its citizens began to realize that they were part of it. Before that time it was a Republic only in the same sense as Athens and Sparta were, where a handful of equal aristocrats ruled a mob of unresisting slaves.

The "Mechanics' Ticket" created a spasm of terror among the property-holders of New England. It was nicknamed the "Infidels' Ticket," and preached against from the pulpits. The old and always preposterous lie about the workers

wanting to "divide up" the wealth of the rich was served up with the usual variations in the newspapers. Petitions were sent to the Legislature asking it to unseat Ebenezer Ford, not because he was illegally elected, but because he represented the working people and not the capitalists. The orators of the Fourth of July celebrations declared that "anarchy was at hand," that "the world had turned upside down," and that "the forces of misrule and rebellion were combining."

The next year the workingmen formed a ticket in Albany and carried four wards out of five. The same thing occurred in Troy, with a smaller majority. A State Convention was held at Syracuse, and Ezekiel Williams was nominated for Governor, receiving 3,000 votes. This movement was called "Workeyism" by the press, and all who voted for the ticket were ridiculed as "Workies." So far as can be ascertained, few of any wealth or influence were connected with the origin of the "Mechanics' Ticket" or other labor parties of the time. Most of the professors, statesmen, capitalists and professional men regarded this political endeavor of the wage-workers as an act of dangerous and reprehensible impudence.

But, in spite of all manner of obstacles, the labor organizations continued to grow. In 1868 the National Labor Union had 640,000 members, but allowed itself to be disrupted by party politics. In 1869 the Knights of Labor was formed by Uriah S. Stevens and eight of his friends. It was obliged for nine or ten years to be a secret society. Its name was not mentioned to the public, but was indicated by five stars, like this, * * * * *. Although it demanded no more than that wage-workers might be allowed to "share in the gains and honors of advancing civilization," it was denounced in the most unjustifiable manner. Many people really believed that labor leaders were demons with horns and hoofs.

"We must show ourselves mightier than the difficulties confronting us," said Uriah Stevens, and the K. of L. soon made good his words. By 1887 there were 1,000,000 members in the organization, and for the first time the wage-workers began to realize the omnipotence of an organized protest against unfair conditions. The K. of L. admitted all classes except lawyers, gamblers, stock brokers, bankers and liquor sellers, who were held to be especially dangerous to the interests of working

people. It demanded, in 1874, nineteen definite political and industrial reforms, *eleven of which have since been put in operation with most beneficial results.*

In 1886 labor organizations boomed as never before. It was the great labor year. All legal restrictions had been removed. The last conspiracy laws were repealed in New York in 1870, in Pennsylvania in 1872, and in Maryland in 1884. France had abolished them in 1864 and Germany in 1867. Massachusetts was the pioneer State in this matter; as early as 1842 several shoemakers were arraigned under the conspiracy laws, but they won their case.

The main point to be remembered, in what we have been recording, is that American workingmen had to struggle and protest for 75 years before they were recognized as equal citizens of the Republic—before they were allowed the simple right of combination for mutual benefit. Hundreds of them were arrested, fined and imprisoned for doing what every capitalist and professional man was allowed to do with perfect freedom. The right of organization for self-protection, now possessed by all our wage-earners was achieved by the perse-

verance and heroism of the first trade unionists, and not by the War of Independence or any action on the part of Congress.

The unions were not allowed to struggle unassisted. All the noblest men and women in American history were on their side, while the influences against them were mainly caused by foreign-born prejudices and customs. It was the old battle between feudalism and democracy transplanted to a continent which was nominally conquered by the latter.

The fathers of the Republic were true to democracy as they understood it. They could not be expected to legislate for the conditions that exist to-day in the business world. When George Washington visited the little cloth factory at Hartford in 1789 and ordered from it his inauguration suit of broadcloth, he could never have foreseen the enormous factories of the present time.

Jefferson was perhaps the most far-sighted man of his generation. Again and again he warned his countrymen against the political and industrial parasitism which was noticeable after the Revolution as well as before. In his last letter, written ten days before his death, Jefferson said: "The

mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them." No one saw as clearly as Jefferson the cumbersome and non-representative nature of government as it then existed. "Congress wastes day after day on the most unimportant questions," said he. "But how can it be otherwise when the people send 150 lawyers, whose trade is to question everything, yield nothing and talk by the hour?"

While it may be too much to say that Jefferson, Franklin, Samuel Adams and the other statesmen of the Revolutionary period were in favor of absolutely equal rights for wage-workers, it is certainly very clear that they pushed the country in that direction. Their sympathies were with the poor, the wronged and the unfortunate. They did not toady to the rich nor hope to marry their daughters to the titled dummies of European courts. Their economic creed was that the earner of wealth should also be its owner; and they imagined that they had established the Republic on such a basis that the industrious would become prosperous and the idle would suffer the penalties of indolence.

Some of the men who fought against the ex-

actions of England believed that their victory would mean the abolition of all feudalistic customs in the new country. In 1844 some young mechanics were explaining to an old Revolutionary soldier, 80 years of age, the doctrine which is best known to-day under the name of "Single Tax." "That's right," said the old veteran. "My children, there were many of us that wanted that as soon as the war was over, and that was the time it should have been done. We thought we were fighting for free land, but when everything was settled up we found ourselves paying as much rent and taxation as ever." This shows what was the real "Spirit of '76." The account is taken from a New York newspaper published in 1844.

The noble Lafayette lent us his services because he believed that American Independence would benefit *the average man*, and not merely the employing and professional classes. It is related of him that when standing with a friend on his housetop he said: "Before the French Revolution all the land and all the houses in sight were mine. Now I possess only a few hundred acres, but I rejoice in the diminution, since the happiness of others is thereby increased."

The group of men and women who first made New England known to the world as a literary centre sympathized with the efforts of the working people to obtain equal social and industrial rights. For instance, Edward Everett, W. E. Channing and Horace Mann spoke in favor of the Workingmen's Party of 1830. "The Harbinger," which represented the most radical thought of the time in the line of social reconstruction, contained articles from such writers as Hawthorne, Whittier, Brisbane, Alcott, Lowell, Godwin, J. F. Clarke, Brownson, Thoreau, Greeley, Parker, G. W. Curtis, Margaret Fuller, Higginson, Dana, Longfellow and Emerson. Where, in the whole length of American history, will you find a nobler group than this?

In 1845 the New England Workingmen's Association was formed; and among its charter members were Charles A. Dana, Wendell Phillips, Albert Brisbane, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Parker and George Ripley—six of the cleverest men this country has produced.

Just as the most radical poems of Shelley, Burns and Whitman are being left out in the modern "respectable" editions of their works, so in like

manner the literary critics have covered up that part of the careers of our famous thinkers and poets which was connected with the Labor Movement. This verse, for example, is being cut out of Longfellow's poems, being no doubt too much like the utterance of a "labor agitator":

"There is a poor blind Samson in this land,
Shorn of his strength and bound in bonds of steel;
Who may in some grim revel raise his hand
And shake the pillars of this Commonweal."

It is being forgotten that Emerson was a social reformer as well as the father of transcendentalism, yet on a number of occasions he protested against oppression and misgovernment. He wrote a vigorous letter to President Van Buren pointing out the unfairness with which the Cherokee Indians had been treated. He lectured in favor of John Brown and the Kansas farmers, and was always punctual in his attendance at town meetings. The word "agitator" did not prevent him from sympathizing with the Fourierists and labor leaders of his time. "I honor the lofty ideals of the Socialists," said he on one occasion while addressing a most conservative audience.

The first editorial that Thurlow Weed wrote

was one in defense of a poor sick Irish lad, who was not receiving proper medical attention. The doctors had Weed arrested for libel, and although the victim had to have his leg amputated because of their ignorance, the young editor was severely reprimanded by the court.

Parke Godwin, who for fifty years was the editor of the *New York Evening Post,* said in 1844: "I have solemnly thought that every moment of my time not given to the consideration of this question of Social Reform was time thrown away—was unfaithfulness to my fellow-man."

All the great Abolitionist leaders advocated better conditions for wage-workers, and lent a hand to the young trade union movement of their time. Charles Sumner said: "The true pride of America is in her middle and poorer classes—in their general health and happiness and freedom from poverty; in their facilities for being educated; and in the opportunities open to them of rising in the scale." The last time he left Boston for Washington he said to Wendell Phillips: "I have just one thing more to do for the negro—to carry the Civil Rights Bill; and then I shall take up the *labor question.*"

Wendell Phillips, as is well known, gave his entire attention, after 1865, to the betterment of social conditions. "The Labor Movement is my *only hope for democracy,*" said he; "the only question left, since the emancipation of the negro, is the labor question." At one time he was asked to draft a platform for a State Labor Party and cheerfully consented, sending the organizers a most socialistic production. Its opening sentence stated that "Labor, the creator of wealth, is entitled to the wealth it creates."

When Garrison was told of the overworked and underpaid condition of the factory workers of New England, he said: "It is very bad; it is horrible; that will be the next question that will come up."

Whittier, the Quaker poet, was on one occasion the spokesman of a body of strikers. In Amesbury, not far from Whittier's home, a company called the "Salisbury Corporation" ran a cotton mill. It had been the custom to allow the weavers to eat luncheon at 5 p. m., as the working day was 14 hours long; but in 1852 a new agent was appointed, who at once stopped the luncheon privilege and compelled the weavers to continue their work until dark. Very naturally they struck

against such treatment, and asked Whittier to draw up a statement of their side of the case. He did so and wrote a long plea in their behalf, the last paragraph of which was as follows:

"The citizens of this village, hitherto justly proud of the reputation of its manufacturing establishments, showing as they did that humanity and liberality toward the operative is the best economy for the capitalist, have rejoiced in the high character of the men and women employed; and it would be a matter of serious regret on the part of all classes of our citizens if the present policy is persisted in and those whose industry and good conduct have enlarged the dividends and established the honorable reputation of the Salisbury Corporation, are driven elsewhere for labor, and their places supplied by a vagrant and unsettled class."

What finally happened was exactly what Whittier foresaw. The company stubbornly refused to yield or arbitrate, and the striking weavers gradually moved out of town. A low grade of workers, cheap, unreliable and inefficient, took their places. The whole character of the industrial population

was changed, real estate depreciated, and the company was in financial difficulties for years.

And so this list might be continued through many more pages, showing that the men of whom the American nation is most proud have been in favor of every form of organized self-help among wage-workers. More than that, the influence of our institutions is inevitably on the side of resistance to degrading conditions. No matter how low, how servile, how abject an immigrant may be when he lands upon our shores, he learns to raise his head, to straighten his backbone and to demand the fair treatment which is due to one human being from another. Let a man breathe our air, read our newspapers and attend our public meetings for two or three years, and he is a human chattel no longer. Such is the normal effect of our free institutions—a result to which we should point with patriotic pride.

"The ambition of my work-girls never goes beyond fifteen shillings a week," said an English manufacturer to an American visitor. This simple fact accounts for English decadence in manufactures and commerce. It also accounts for our commercial supremacy; for as long as the world lasts

a nation of intelligent free-spirited workers can outdo a nation of drudges who are stupidly contented with less than human rights.

As De Tocqueville noticed in 1831, democracy teaches the worker to "conceive a more lofty opinion of his rights, of his future, of himself, and prompts him to strive to dispose of his labor at a higher rate." There is as much difference between one of our typical workingmen and a terrorized European laborer as there is between one of Sousa's dashing, open-air marches and the wailing, quavering minor notes of a Russian labor-song.

In Europe and Asia and Africa human equality is a theory, a poem, a dream. In the United States it is at least a half-accomplished fact. Never, at any time or in any country, was it as near accomplishment as it is here and now. In antiquity the brotherhood of man was unknown. Homer, Plato and Aristotle believed that there always must be masters and slaves. Even the abstract idea of a Republic like ours was too large for the Greek and Roman mind. It is the peculiar glory of America that here democracy is being worked out not in the study and lecture room, but in the factory and

shop. A more perfect liberty than was ever dreamed of in Europe is to-day being forged and hammered into shape on the rough anvils of the Labor Movement.

The Western States deserve a large share of the credit for saving the East from European influences. The shadow of feudalism grew lighter and almost invisible as it approached the Mississippi River. The West has been to the nation at all times the experiment station of democracy. It demonstrated for the first time to the world the ability of the average man. Mechanics became judges and good judges. Laborers became Congressmen, and proved as capable as any of the aristocratic Jays or Van Rensselaers. The actual producer of wealth was ranked higher than the mere middleman or banker or financial expert. Abraham Lincoln spoke the opinion of the whole West when he said: "Labor is prior to and above capital and deserves a much higher consideration."

Thus, to sum up, the trade unions, with all their faults and very frequent mistakes in policy, represent the healthiest influence of the nation. It was to obtain what they are now demanding that the Republic was founded. They spring from the

sturdy independence and free-spiritedness of our wage-workers.

"Trade unions are the bulwarks of modern democracies," said W. E. Gladstone. We shall find this to be especially true in our cosmopolitan country, where a comprehensive, assimilative organization is indispensable to protect the rights of the great pay-envelope class. I do not hesitate to say that the American Federation of Labor will some day practically replace the whole political structure as it now exists. Government is destined to become less and less the ruling of persons and more and more the management of production and distribution.

As the foolish and foreign contempt for manual labor decreases, the professional classes will cooperate with the trade unions in securing municipal and State reforms. The Doctors' Union, the Ministers' Union, the Merchants' Union, etc., will send delegates to the Central Federated Union; and thus a truly representative body will be formed, which will tend gradually to supersede the non-representative conventions of lawyers and lobbyists that we call Legislatures and Congresses and Senates. This, however, is as yet but a social ideal

—a road house on the way to the perfected America of which Whitman was the prophet—the land of happy comrades whose "inseparable cities have their arms about each other's necks."

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROMOTION OF MORALITY AND EDUCATION BY TRADE UNIONS.

TWO thousand years ago, all the college professors and philosophers and capitalists declared that laborers had no souls. Even Plato said that the slave had only a "half-soul."

Consequently, slaves were barred from religious services. All the "consolations of religion" were put beyond their reach, and the only moral instruction they received came from their own organizations. The early trade union was half a church. Its meetings were opened with a short prayer, and images of Minerva and Ceres were generally to be found in the halls where the slaves assembled.

To-day it is universally acknowledged in theory that workingmen have souls; but as a matter of fact the only moral instruction that thousands of

them receive comes from their trade unions. As a rule, workingmen do not go to church, not because they are more immoral than those who do, but because of a series of social and economic reasons for which there is no space in this book. The tremendous task of giving *practical* moral instruction to the wage-earning masses of our great cities is left almost entirely to the trade union organizers and editors.

When a workingman arrives in a city in which he has no acquaintances, he goes at once, not to a priest or minister, but to the headquarters of his union. He presents his card and finds himself at once among friends. He is told where to hire a room, where to look for work, and anything else he may need to know about trade conditions. All this is done for him, not as a charity or a moral duty, but as a right to which he is entitled as a unionist in good standing. He finds himself treated like a man and a brother, and he can sit down in the union hall and read the newspaper, or join in a game of cards or checkers, and feel as much at home as if he had lived in the town all his life.

Of the 80,000 criminals in this country, fewer

come from the ranks of trade unionists than from the professional classes. More bank tellers have forged or absconded than trade union treasurers. The record of our banks contains at least twice as many instances of fraud as does the record of the American Labor Movement.

The trade unionist has none of the characteristics of the criminal class. He has more ingrained honesty and self-respect than any other sort of man. It is the very essence of his creed to live by his own efforts and not by any sort of parasitism, legal or illegal. No man costs the State less than the unionist, and no one does as much for the enriching of the State, in proportion to what he receives.

In respect to the moral instruction of wage-workers, the unions have succeeded where the churches and law-courts failed. One hundred or even fifty years ago, when unions were weak, the standard of morality was very much lower than it is to-day. Thurlow Weed said that one-quarter of all the printers he knew were drunkards and one-half were regular drinkers.

Unions have always promoted temperance. "Stop your cursed drinking!" was the advice given

on all occasions by a noted labor organizer. In the Glass-Workers' Union, any member losing work through drink is fined one dollar. In the Bricklayers' Union, a member who attends a meeting in an intoxicated condition is fined one dollar, and five dollars if he attends a funeral while under the influence of liquor. Some unions have gone so far as to impose a fine for profanity; how many capitalists' clubs have done likewise?

The unions provide the only place, besides the saloons, were the wage-worker can go in his working clothes and spend an hour or two among friends. The moral results of this are very great and should not be forgotten. If unions are to be broken up, as the monopolists are demanding, what will the latter give the wage-worker in the place of his union hall?

The whole policy of the Labor Movement exemplifies a higher type of morality than that preached by any creed. It is largely the practical fulfillment of the precept, "Love your neighbor as yourself." The unionist leader is continually endeavoring to *level up* the mass of working people. He seeks out the worst-paid trades and labors to bring them up in line with the others. He speaks for

those who are too ignorant or too degraded to speak for themselves. What can be more essentially Christ-like than this?

When Alabama, at the dictation of the cotton manufacturers, repealed its child-labor law, and put hundreds of little tots into its unhealthy factories, it was the A. F. of L., not the Foreign Missionary Boards or Church Conventions, that sent a special woman organizer, at great expense, up and down the State, to have the law re-enacted.

From a national point of view, nothing can be more injurious to a country than child-labor. By it the coming generation is mortgaged to Ignorance. The child-labor of the early English factories stunted and blemished the working people to a degree of degeneracy from which they have not even yet recovered. And in this country there is many a man and woman, now grown past the opportunities of childhood, who bitterly regrets that the years which should have been spent in school were drudged away in a factory.

"My father carried me on his back to work in the mines when I was eight years old, and I have been working there ever since," said a Pennsylvania coal miner. In 1845 a nine-year-old girl in

Lowell said to a lady who was studying our factory system: "I go to work in the morning when it is too dark to see, and I don't stop in the evening till it is too dark to see; and yet I can't make enough money to keep mamma and the baby."

The most effectual protest against this theft of childhood has been made by the labor organizations. They alone have stubbornly refused to listen to the callous plea of the employer and politician that "Capital will be driven out of the State." Their answer has been: "If capital cannot thrive without enslaving our children, then in the name of Humanity let it leave the State, and good riddance."

The ethical teachers of the future will recognize a fact to which modern moralists are inexcusably blind—the fact that the trade unions have been the pioneers of a *social* morality, far higher than the individualistic creeds of the present day. The unionist is less concerned about personal faults and frailties than he is with the affairs of the city, the State or the nation. He does not seek the welfare of himself, his relatives and his friends only, but the welfare of all wage-

workers and his own fellow-craftsmen in particular.

The chivalry, the moral heroism, the statesmanlike altruism of *sympathetic strikes* are as yet too high for the merely professional or academic moralist to appreciate. Among all the various classes of people in our motley civilization, who but the trained labor unionists have ever voluntarily sacrificed their employment and faced the terrible agencies of Hunger and Cold, not to benefit themselves, but to help the wage-workers of some distant city? Is not a sympathetic strike the most notable product of that sense of solidarity or brotherhood which it is the aim of all systems of morality to develop? Am I claiming too much to state that it is an evidence of the arrival, after centuries of expectation, of the religion of deed, instead of the religion of creed?

To pass to the subject of education, we shall find that organized labor has fought most persistently against the monopolizing of knowledge by a few. Just as against the Trust the trade union motto is "Distribute prosperity," so against the exclusiveness and pedantry of colleges its motto is "Distribute knowledge."

A close study of early American history shows that the "little red schoolhouse" was by no means so universal as we have been led to suppose. In colonial days the British governors were strongly opposed to educating the working people or their children. Sir William Berkeley, Governor of Virginia, said: "I thank God there are no free schools or printing houses in Virginia; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world."

At first, when the unions demanded free education, the ruling classes tried to compromise by giving them "pauper schools," which were only for the very poor. These were started in Pennsylvania in 1818, but were very wisely opposed by the workingmen, who continued to antagonize them until the public schools were established.

Some striking stories are told in the chronicles of those times of the heroic struggles of the poorer people to educate themselves and their children. Thurlow Weed, for instance, when but a lad in his teens, wrapped pieces of old carpet around his feet, having neither shoes nor stockings, and walked several miles through the snow to borrow a "History of the French Revolution." Enough cases of

this kind could be collected to fill a larger book than this, showing that our public school and public library systems were not a gift from the wealthy and educated to the working classes, but rather arose in response to the persistent demand of the latter for equal educational advantages.

When the trade unions of Boston built a hall in 1836 as their general meeting-place and headquarters, the first use they made of it was to arrange a course of lectures on political economy, education, phrenology, corporations, history, machinery, etc. It seems to be the most sensible and comprehensive lecture course ever delivered up to that date. Yet the unionists had been compelled to build their hall through the refusal of every society in Boston to rent its hall for trade union purposes.

By 1845 labor organizations began to establish libraries and reading-rooms. In the Boston Laborers' Union the members were assessed $2 a year for the library, and cheerfully paid it. The Baltimore Bricklayers' Union has spent over $1,000 on their library, and at present tax themselves $1 a year to maintain it. In Detroit there is a poor mechanic who has "nosed around old bookstores" and collected a library of over 300 volumes. It is safe

to state that the books in these Labor Libraries have been selected, not for the sake of the binding, or the edition, or any other reason which degrades authorship and literature, but for the sake of the information and ideas which the books contained. Hundreds of trade union papers and magazines are to-day being most ably edited.

Labor organizers were among the first to advocate the kindergarten and the school of technology, long before both became the popular institutions which they are to-day. Unions have not, up to the present time, favored "manual training" schools or "trade" schools, because there has been good reason to believe that these schools would not be managed by efficient teachers or be of any practical benefit to the industrial world. Workingmen have always championed the practical, as against the academic, in matters of education; and thus, because they have opposed the projects of theorists, have sometimes been unjustly abused as obstructionists.

One of our most progressive and fair-minded educators, Professor R. T. Ely, has had the courage to state that "Trade unions are among the foremost of our educational agencies, ranking next to

our churches and public schools in their influence upon the culture of the masses." J. E. Thorold Rogers, an English historian and member of Parliament, says, "The English trade unionists include in their numbers the most intelligent, conscientious and valuable of the workingmen."

One of the most emphatic tributes ever given to trade unions was that made by Potter Palmer, of Chicago. "For ten years," said he, "I made as desperate a fight against organized labor as was ever made by mortal man. It cost me considerably more than a million dollars to learn that there is no labor so *skilled,* so *intelligent,* so *faithful,* as that which is governed by an organization whose officials are well-balanced, level-headed men. . . . I now employ none but organized labor, and never have the least trouble, each believing that the one has no right to oppress the other."

Another testimony to the educational effect of trade unions comes to us from a Pennsylvania writer. He says: "You would be surprised to note the effect of the eight-hour day upon the coal miners. In many places they are organizing libraries, taking a greater interest in public ques-

tions, and their family life has been improved and sweetened."

Organization gives workingmen a feeling of responsibility out of which a higher morality and intelligence naturally develops. The frenzied, fanatical "social reformer" may persuade a rabble to applaud his unworkable propositions, but an audience of experienced unionists, if it gave him a hearing at all, would listen in incredulous silence. In 1829 the unions in New York strongly repudiated the free love and communism advocated by the enthusiasts of that time. At present, the most bitter and scurrilous enemies that organized labor has are the revolutionary Marxian Socialists, who have for years been pouring out a torrent of abuse upon what they call the "pure and simple" trade unions, because the latter refused to listen to their hare-brained schemes.

The trade unionist believes in evolution, not revolution. He knows that the only way to hasten the "happy time a-coming" is by education and organization—by slow, steady, persevering work. He cannot be deceived by the delusion that a new social system can be built up in a night, like Aladdin's palace, by some political "Presto, change"

hocus-pocus. He has found out how hard it is to teach thousands of wage-workers the easy A, B, C of unionism, and how impossible to make them understand the plans and specifications of an ideal co-operative Commonwealth.

It is true that the unions in many States have again and again been deceived into supporting little vest-pocket "Labor Parties," or "Socialist Parties," organized by a handful of well-meaning theorists or self-interested schemers. But the average union has grown very suspicious of all such projects, and is apt to weigh them, not by their theories, but by their practical and educational results.

It must be remembered that the Labor Movement has constantly fluttering around it a swarm of cranks of all sorts—good, bad and indifferent. They hover about like gulls around a steamer, some being really anxious and able to give assistance, but most of them having no other object than to pick up crumbs. Every inventor of a new social system runs with it to the trade unions, and loudly denounces their "stupidity" if they do not at once abandon their ideas and adopt his. Every young visionary or minister-out-of-a-job who has read

two or three Socialist pamphlets and knows nothing at all of the history and development of the Labor Movement, invariably offers his "services" to the trade unions. If his offer is accepted, in nine cases out of ten, he becomes the propagandist of some small, one-idea reform, generally impracticable, and makes a tangle which often requires years to unravel. If his offer is refused, then he is very strenuous in pointing out how slow and ineffective is the work of the "mere trade unions."

The work done by unions in cooling hot-heads and repressing extremists has never been fully recognized. The professor, writing upon industrial questions in his quiet study, knows nothing whatever of the under-currents, swirling eddies and sand-banks which lie in the course of the trade union Secretary. The latter has to deal with all sorts and conditions of men and women, not in the abstract, but face to face. He must take people as he finds them, and deal with them in a way to strengthen the union which has elected him to protect its interests.

The term "social engineer" has been invented by Josiah Strong to describe his own work in the "Social Service League," but it could be applied much

more appropriately to the Presidents and Secretaries of the great trade unions which number tens of thousands of members. The work they do is not exhibition work. Their chief aim is not the preparation of a self-praising annual report or the conversion of benevolent millionaires. It is not play-work, but the *real* work of the world—that of guiding and instructing and elevating the armies of workers upon whom civilization depends for its permanence. It is the largest and highest sort of educational work—the preparation of ourselves and our institutions for a new and more equitable social order, in which the two pernicious extremes of poverty and monopoly will be as far as possible outgrown.

Civilization in America has been high or low in proportion to the estimate set upon labor. It has been highest where wages were highest and hours of labor fewest. The lowest mark of social development has been, and is to-day, in those Southern States that suffered from the twin curses of aristocracy and slavery. The barbarism of some of these States has been until very recently almost incredible. The "amusements" of the planters were cock-fights, drinking bouts and family feuds, in

which gouging, biting off ears, shooting in the back, and unmentionable mutilations, were regarded as fair and "honorable."

These atrocities, and the inexcusable illiteracy of these States, sprang inevitably from the low value placed upon labor. Such conditions cannot be changed by colleges, by churches, or by legislation. The only hope for the South in its recent commendable endeavors to attain the prosperity and general high standing of other parts of the Union is in the thorough organization of its workers, black and white, into trade unions. No matter how much the old "blue-blooded" families may splutter and protest, *organized self-help* is the only remedy for Southern illiteracy and stagnation.

The trade union is the one practical means by which the *mass* of workers can be reached and educated. It recognizes the great truth that the average man is not a genius and cannot hope to live on rent, profits or interest. It legislates for the mass, and not for the two or three smart individuals who do not need any help. It does not mock the struggling millions by the delusive consolation that "there is plenty of room at the top." If everyone could get to the top, then there would be no top;

so as a *social* consolation this hackneyed precept is worthless.

The trade union does not say to the worker, "Be smart, and some day you'll be a capitalist." It aims to elevate the mechanic as a mechanic, and the carpenter as a carpenter, and the weaver as a weaver, etc. It is the only protection which the average many have against the oppressions of the exceptional few. Its aim is to level up the low places in our civilization, not to add to the height of the mountains, that are already far too high for any useful purpose. Thus, in its work, the union elevates the whole industrial structure.

Mr. Schwab, the highest paid "company's man" in the Steel Trust, has publicly advised all trade unionists to abandon their unions and strike out for themselves. He is about as disinterested in the matter as those Wall street brokers who advise the public to sell off its real estate and speculate in margins. But the great body of our working people have developed, ethically and intellectually, beyond such suicidal, individualistic advice. They know that the fact that a few may climb does not lessen the misery of those who are left below. They know that because Jean de Reszke receives

$5,000 for a song, it would not be wise for every European peasant to leave his farm and study grand opera. In the Roman Empire, the sailors and the bakers had the most powerful unions, and whenever they demanded higher wages their leaders were made Senators and Knights to make them contented. In this way the workers were continually deceived, and never obtained their requests for better conditions.

Catherine the Great had been a peasant girl, but that did not benefit the peasant women of Russia. Galerius was a swineherd and Diocletian was a slave, but that did not help the peasantry of Rome. Horace was a farmer's son, but that did not alleviate the condition of the Roman farmers. Andrew Jackson was the son of a poor farm laborer, but his election to the Presidency did not raise wages among farm laborers. Every generation of Americans has contained hundreds of such cases of *individual* self-help, and yet the *social* problem is almost as far from being solved as ever.

In short, no trade is ever helped by the individuals who rise out of it, but by those who remain in it, and by means of organization elevate the whole body of its workers to a higher plane. No words

can describe the respect which I feel for those trade union leaders who have put aside opportunities for personal enrichment, who have refused to become lawyers and doctors and preachers and insurance agents, and who endure all manner of abuse and fault-finding, not only from the capitalistic classes, but from the men whom they are endeavoring to serve.

Like that masterly tribune of the people, John Burns, who, at a time when he was the most influential man in London, was living on $10 a week in a cheap tenement, so, with scarcely an exception, the men who have built up the American Federation of Labor, and who to-day watch over its interests, are poor and propertyless men, receiving less for a year's salary than many a stock-broker makes in a day.

As I have shown in these pages, not only has every historian inexcusably ignored the labors and achievements of the earlier trade unionists, but the present generation as well is ignorant of the magnitude and statesmanlike efficiency of their work. It is in the hope that this ignorance may be lessened and more correct and adequate opinions formed of the American Labor Movement, that this little volume is presented to the public.