

Reform Forces in The Cities.

(From the Special Correspondence of The Voice.)

The "Reform Forces" of Boston are so varied and so interwoven it is hard to present them both briefly and accurately. Every form, phase and variety of reform is represented in the city. Nor is any one society or cause here in much ascendancy over the other.

At 3 Clark street are the headquarters of the American Woman Suffrage Association, from whence their paper, The Woman's Journal, goes out to all the world, and where Lucy Stone, Henry B. Blackwell and Mrs. Alice Stone Blackwell are almost constantly to be found, and Mrs. Mary A. Livermore also, whenever she is not away on lecture tours. Across the common, at 184 Boyston street, are the headquarters of the First Nationalist Club, where their secretary, Capt. E. S. Huntington, is in attendance, and a few faithful followers of Edward Bellamy are usually to be found. The First Nationalist Club has the honor of being the parent club, and yet it is not so large as the Second Nationalist Club, because having started The Nationalist magazine and hiring expensive rooms its dues and fees became too heavy for most of its members to carry. The second Nationalist Club, which has no club rooms, but meets every Sunday night at 3 Boylston place, is, therefore, really the active Nationalist club of the city. With its president, Mr. H. R. Legate, it is this club that has been so energetic and so successful in circulating petitions for Nationalist bills and bringing pressure to support them in hearings at the State House.

The headquarters of the somewhat akin Christian Socialist movement are at 812 Washington street, in the newly established Wendell Phillips Union. Here The Dawn, the organ of Christian Socialism, is published, and perhaps no reform journal in the land has a pleasanter office and reception room. Rev. W. D. P. Bliss, the editor and secretary of the society, lives in the building and is to be seen here in his "den," when he is not away on a lecture tour. The Wendell Phillips Union is also the headquarters of the Wendell Phillips Association, a society engaged in raising funds to erect a large building, a sort of Cooper Institute, as a memorial to Boston's great reformer. Until it can have this larger building it has hired this Wendell Phillips Union. Mr. Latham, secretary, also lives here with Mr. Bliss and his family, and six or seven other friends of reform, making it a sort of residence or settlement for people engaged in reform work. The front rooms are used for public services, the quiet rooms in the rear for living purposes. Various societies have their meetings here, the Vegetarian Society, the Heredity Society, Medical Liberty Society, as well as various organizations or clubs of workmen, making the building to some extent what it has been called, "The City Hall of Boston that is to be." Here on Sunday afternoons the Brotherhood of the Carpenter meets, having a religious service and sermon, usually by Rev. Mr. Bliss, its president, with a supper at the close of the service, symbolic of brotherhood, and after the service a conference, where workers of all schools of thought come together and compare their ideas. At 4 o'clock, before the service, there is a celebration of Holy Communion in the Episcopal form, to which all churchmen are invited. One room in the Union is used as a chapel, and is always open for prayer. The visitor in Boston on a Sunday who would get an idea of the social movement in the city cannot do better than to visit the Union on Sunday afternoon, and the Nationalist Club on Sunday evening.

A little way further down on Washington street is the Wells Memorial, a

club house for workmen, founded mainly by Robert Treat Paine, and the centre of the co-operative banks that have been so successful in and around Boston, also of various workmen's loan associations, libraries, etc. Here, too, the various trades and labor organizations meet more than in any other one place, because the building contains more halls.

There are supposed to be in Boston well over 32,000 men connected with labor organizations. Of these some 5,000 are in the Knights of Labor, and 27,000 in various trades unions more or less affiliated. The feeling, unfortunately, runs very high between the Knights of Labor and the Federation. Mr. Bishop, the editor of the Knights of Labor paper in Boston, with his followers, bitterly attacks Frank K. Foster, the editor of the trades union paper, The Labor Leader, and Mr. Foster returns the compliment, while George E. McNeill, the veteran labor leader of the unions is denounced by the knights, and their leaders are scouted by the trades union men. The two, however, unite for certain purposes. They come together to some extent in the Central Labor Union, which meets on Sunday, to lead in matters affecting all labor interests, and they often agree to sustain the same legislation at the State house. Massachusetts leads all the States in legislating on labor questions, and this is largely owing to the strong influence of organized labor in Boston, no small part of it being due to the constant and valuable work of George E. McNeill.

Much interest is taken through the city on labor matters, all of the papers giving much space to labor news. Labor Day is one of Boston's greatest holidays, sometimes 10,000 men, it is claimed, appearing in the labor procession.

Besides these societies of organized labor the Socialists have three societies here, one German, one Hebrew and one American. They are not very large, but are very active, and in municipal and state politics usually nominate independent candidates, and poll nearly as large a vote as the more general People's Party. There is also a small but vigorous Single Tax organization with such as William Lloyd Garrison, Hamlin Garland, E. M. White, and other well known men in its ranks. Every Sunday morning there meets the Question Club, which is practically a Single Tax association, organized for debate and especially to ask believers in Protection uncomfortable questions through the press.

Many clergymen of Boston take an active and aggressive part in social problems. Rev. Louis A. Banks, of the Methodist Church in South Boston, has now an almost national reputation by his effective sermons on the sweating system, and other similar addresses and studies gathered into two books, "The People's Christ," and "White Slaves," Dr. Edward Everett Hale, the pastor of Christian Social Reform, is still ready with a good strong word for every new good work. Rev. W. D. P. Bliss is the founder of Christian Socialism in this country. Rev. P. W. Sprague, of the Episcopal Church; Rev. Francis Bellamy, Rev. Dr. Moxom, of the Baptist Church; Revs. Nehemiah Boynton and Dickinson, of the Congregational Church, with Rabbi Schindler and Joseph Cok are others who should be mentioned in this connection as interested in social movements on different lines.

The latest social movement in Boston is the Andover House, an undenominational house, but mainly supported by friends of Andover Seminary, as an effort to be the Toynbee Hall of Boston, and although just started, gives promise of success. Its head is the Rev. R. A. Woods, who was recently sent by Andover Seminary to study social work in England, and who has embodied his impressions in his unusually suggestive book, "English Social Movements," and more recently in one of the articles on social work,

now coming out in The Century magazine.

We can only refer to the Women's Industrial Union, Mr. Paine's Homes for Workingmen in Roxbury, Barnard Memorial with its industrial classes, the wood yards, that give a little relief work to the unemployed, various homes for children, women and all classes and conditions of men. Boston's Directory of Charities comprises nearly 200 closely printed pages, but more and more men are feeling that we need justice and not charity, and of such radical social reform we are proud of being more and more the very Hub.

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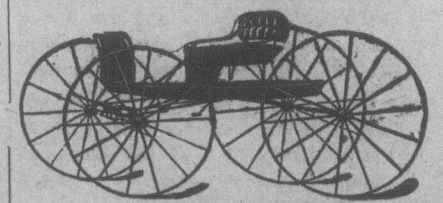
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