

the officers of the trades' unions at Donaldson's Hall, in this city, on May 18, where defensive measures were outlined to protect the trades' unions and to secure harmony with the Knights of Labor. A committee attended the special session of the Knights' General Assembly, at Cleveland, on May 26, and after several days' waiting, marked by long and animated discussions in the General Assembly on trade-union issues, no definite assurances were obtained, and no action was taken. The trades' union committee a second time met the Knights of Labor Executive Board, at the Bingham House, in this city, on September 26, and secured promises that definite action would be taken at the Richmond General Assembly, which would lead to harmony between the two organizations.

The trades unions objected to the admission to the Knights of Labor of members who had been suspended, expelled, or rejected for cause by their own organization; they opposed the formation of Knights of Labor assemblies in trades already thoroughly organized in trades' unions, and complained of the use of Knights of Labor trade-marks or labels, in competition with their own labels, notably so in the case of the Cigar-Makers' International Union. At the Richmond General Assembly, the trades' union chiefs presented a mass of grievances, showing where their local unions had been tampered with by Knights of Labor organizers, where movements had been made to disrupt them, and where, in cases where such disruption could not be effected, antagonistic organizations were formed by the Knights. The General Assembly, however, instead of removing these alleged evils or giving satisfactory redress to the trades' union element, administered to the Federation a slap in the face, as the latter understood it, by passing a resolution compelling the members of Cigar Makers' International Union connected with the Knights of Labor, to withdraw from the order.

The call for the St. Louis Convention of the Federation was then abrogated, and a circular was issued designating Columbus, Ohio, as the place of meeting on December 8. At the same time all organizations not already affiliated with the Federation, were urged to attend a trades' union convention to be held in the same place on the following day. After four days' joint sessions of the bodies, the old Federation of trades' and labor unions was dissolved, and the American Federation of Labor—the result of long thought, mature brains, and arduous toil—was born to the world.

Twenty-five national organizations were blended in it, with an aggregate membership of 316,469 workmen. A plan of permanent organization was adopted, very simple in its details, and an executive

council of five members and chief officers were elected. Resolutions were passed, favoring the early adoption of the eight-hour rule, demanding of Congress the passage of a compulsory indenture law, and condemning the Pinkertons' Preventive Patrol, and the Coal and Iron Police. After much deliberation, a constitution was agreed upon, in which the main objects of the great organization were stated to be "the encouragement of formation of local unions, and the closer federation of such societies, through central trade and labor unions in every city, with the further combination of these bodies into State, territorial, and provincial organizations, to secure legislation in the interests of the working masses; the establishment of national and international trades' unions, based upon a strict recognition of the autonomy of each trade, and the promotion and advancement of such bodies; and the aiding and encouragement of the labor press of America."

The revenue of the Federation is derived from a per capita tax of one-quarter of a cent per month for each member in good standing.

It will be seen that the Federation is essentially democratic in principle, and that, unlike its rival, the Knights of Labor, its affairs are conducted in the most frugal and economical manner possible. The second session was held in Baltimore, December 13, 1887.

The American Federation of Labor is numerically the strongest labor organization in the world, even surpassing the Knights of Labor, possessing, as it does, an aggregate membership of 618,000, while that of the Knights is set down officially at 535,000.

Within the period during which the Knights have been retrograding, as far as numbers are concerned, the American Federation, since its formation at Columbus, Ohio, on December 8, 1886, has been noiselessly and rapidly gaining strength and importance.

Since its first inception, following the traditions of the open trades' unions, it has not affected secrecy, and at the same time it has not courted notoriety. Its component parts, previously organized in different form, have given to the world nearly all the ideas that have since been found useful or valuable in other labor organizations, and the brilliant success which has attended this the first years of its existence, bears portent of great achievement in the future. Its roster of national and international trades' unions contains such influential and diverse organizations as these: Bakers' National Union, International Boiler Makers' Union, Cabinet Makers' National Union, Beer Brewers' National Union, International Boatmen's Union, National Union of Coopers, German American Typographers, Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners,