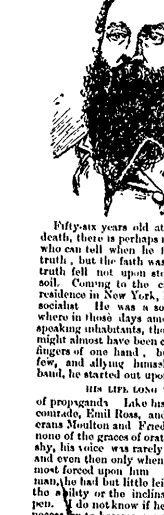
ONE MAN'S WORK.

HENRY W. BROWN THE PIONEER SOCIALIST OF BOSTON

What One Sincere, Self-Sacrificing Worker can Accomplish A Grand Example for Social Reformers.

Written for the Advocate by R. P.

A young man has gone out from us. To-day his friends may have looked their last upon one, who in his life-time to the utmost did that which he deemed to be his duty. He did his duty. No nobler words can be written over his memory. And, few are the men of whom they can be written truthfully, but of none more truthfully than of our friend and comrade, Henry W. Brown, who died suddenly in Boston on Sunday the 10th instant



Fifty-six years old at the time of his death, there is perhaps no one living now who can tell when he first received the truth, but the faith was in him, and the truth fell not upon stony or unfruitful soil. Coming to the city after a short residence in New York, he was already a socialist. He was a socialist in a city where in those days among its English-speaking inhabitants, those of a like faith might almost have been counted upon the fingers of one hand, but there were a few, and allying himself to that little band, he started out upon

HIS LIFE LONG MISSION

of propaganda. Like his old friend and comrade, Emil Ross, and unlike the veterans Moulton and Friede, he possessed none of the graces of oratory. Silent and shy, his voice was rarely heard in public, and even then only when speech was almost forced upon him. A hard-working man, he had but little leisure, if he had the ability or the inclination to use his pen. He did not know if he had the powers necessary to become a popular orator or writer. Indeed, I question if such talents would have been of any use to him in the early days of his mission. Socialism, at then in Boston, something too untried and unknown to have gained even a civil hearing. Indeed, the trouble was it would not have been given a hearing at all. Among the well-to-do people of the city it was associated with the failure of the Brook Farm community. It was a harmless delusion not entirely discreditable in long-haired young literary men, but harmless as it was, great as they were expected to leave it alone when the callow days of their apprenticeship were over, and they were confronted with the problem of how to merit the success which was expected of them. Among the working people the task was even more hopeless. Religion, or rather superstition, was more prevalent in those days, and superstition taught its devotees that socialists were all atheists and therefore people whom it were well to avoid. Indeed, it was supposed to be almost impossible that there could be any socialism at all in this country except among a few wild-eyed foreigners who rarely spoke English, and whose constant study was to find some method of overturning the sacred institutions of this country, and whose constant dream was to drown its dearly bought liberties in

A DELUGE OF BLOOD

Besides, the workingmen of the State were mostly Democrats, and their party was still in a weak minority it was supposed to be the duty of every honest man to put that party into a majority, when instantly all things desirable were to leap pen. At most, it seemed only possible for even the most radical of workingmen to forget so far his allegiance to his party as to vote now and then for some short-lived bogus labor reform, or Greenback side show attachment of the two older parties. Therefore, where the man of genius would have been met with the conspiracy of silence, and where even Wendell Phillips failed, it remained only for the mediocre man of action to see what he could do.

First, it was necessary that there should always be socialists, that the e socialists should gather together, that they should have some unity of action, that they should always be ready to form a nucleus around which an active band of converts might in time be collected. Broadly, they must delve into the earth deeply, they must lay the foundation stones in order that, come what might, the edifice yet to be built would not topple over of its own great weight. And this work, hard and laborious as it was, much as the workers might be stamed with the grime of the earth, this work Henry W. Brown and his noble band of comrades did, and did well. While they lived it could still be said that there were socialists, and that these socialists were men who were industrious, who were honest, who were temperate, who were not wild-eyed or long haired, who did not desire the destruction of the country, who were good citizens, who were abreast with the foremost upon every question of honest reform, who, though in advance of their fellows and did not refuse to march with them even though they did be continually called upon to halt. They were socialists, but they were also trade unionists, at a time when trade unionists were looked upon as the Ishmaelites of the world, and they were in fact trade unionists, and it was certain that sooner or later such men must

MEET WITH OPEN REWARD

But in the first Cincinnati Congress he was not himself a delegate, though a certain his own. He was in Hardly ever entered on his lips, and a field which he was peculiarly fitted to cultivate. It is now about eleven years since I had the pleasure of making his acquaintance. I was a delegate to the Boston Central Labor Union and upon entering that hall it seemed to me, side a short stocky built man with hair and beard of inky blackness seated before a table with a bundle of pamphlets and papers spread out upon it. That was Henry W. Brown. I looked at some of his papers as I generally do at anything printed, and was invited to make a purchase. I hesitated, because I saw that they contained things that I had been taught to distrust and dislike, but finally made a small purchase, more, I am afraid, because, being young, I feared lest he might think I was too poor or too stingy to purchase. Certainly what I bought I did not read. Others did the same, and some of them perhaps from other motives. The acquaintance thus formed continued, with an occasional purchase of what was sometimes read. That was his mission. He was there

TO SELL SOCIALIST WRITINGS,

and sell them he did, and at a time when you could walk the length and breadth of Boston and hear not a tone else of the kind for sale. Works which are now published and for sale at every news stand he saw there is profit in them, were either then not published at all, or published and sold at a loss. I think Henry W. Brown's sales were a loss to him, for he had constantly a number of papers left on his hands, and many of the books and pamphlets, especially in the early days, remained with him for months. But he never faltered, for the heart of the man was in his work. His labor as a cigar maker was but an incident in his career. He worked at it because naturally he was industrious, and because he must find food for himself and child. But this other was his proper work—that to which he had consecrated his life. He was a missionary who would bring the good tidings to all men. These writings were his Scriptures, in which for him all knowledge was contained. Wherever, then, there was a gathering of work people, there was he with his little bundle. Nothing dismayed him, neither scoffs nor jeers. To all he had that soft answer that turneth away wrath. In hail, or rain, or shine, standing in cold and draughty hallways, exposed to the sun in the sweltering days of August, he was never to be missed six nights in the week, and always on Sunday, wherever there was need of him there he was to be found. Indeed,

THERE WAS SOMETHING LATHETIC

in the fidelity of the man to his work. With what a smile would he greet you if happy you were a friend who would also be a customer. Or, if you were a stranger, how his eyes would follow you with a silent glance of invitation, his hands meanwhile unobtrusively placing and replacing the papers already for the sale placed.

It was in this way he set Bellamy's great book upon its travels into the world. To him more than to any other single man was due the extraordinary success of "Looking Backward." One of the first to discern its merits, he was the first to give a large order for it, he was the first to encourage a reluctant publisher to issue a cheaper edition, and he was the first to take hold of that edition in man fashion. But weakness came upon him. His life of labor began to tell. He was forced to give up his position as Organizer of the American Section, that child indeed of his labor. He was forced to give up his work of active propaganda, and he was forced at length to give up his selling of papers. But it was with cheerful compliance that he did so. Where once he had been hissed and scoffed through the streets he saw now his associates speaking to hundreds of orderly and intelligent people. He saw recruits coming in day by day. He saw

HIS LONG CHERISHED PROJECT

of a separate political party set on foot, and he had the pleasure of seeing the trimmers and skulkers of his day standing in its path, barking and spitting venom, vainly trying to stop its triumphant progress. It is but three weeks ago that I saw him seated upon a bench on the Common, and, though breathing with difficulty, smiling with delight as he saw Comrades Nugent Davis and Stahl selling hundreds of *The People* where he had with difficulty sold ten of its predecessors. Perhaps he then looked forward to get honorable years in the service, but it was not to be. Suddenly struck down, he met with the death the most to be desired. There were for him no lingering days of pain when death seemed more desirable than such a life, but to the last he was working in the old cause. He was found dying in the midst of a pile of *The People*, which he had received and was preparing for distribution. It was a simple and unpretentious close to his life, but it was admirably characteristic of the man

HE DIED DOING HIS DUTY

He is dead. But is the influence of the man dead with him? No; for as the warmth of the last year's summer sun may still be seen in the bloom of the apple that ripened under its genial rays, so will the influence of this good man be felt in the work of the comrades whom he left behind him. His soul still lives in the souls of his companions. And their work will be not a little aided by the example he has left behind. The memory of his deeds will be with us to teach us that it requires not great genius, great opportunities or great sacrifices in order to achieve great results for work attempted. For this man, without genius, without special opportunities, without living in hunger and misery, surely did accomplish great things. That which he attempted he performed and that which he performed he did only because he seemed to it the common ways of men because he attempted not anything too great for his powers, and because in all that he did was single hearted loyal to his fellow men just to himself and generous to others. Surely of such a man may we say that he has lived a happy life, that he was crowned by no vain regrets that he found it not possible for bitter mourn of the being, who, looking backward upon the visions that haunted him could cry

My life is wasted, and the deeds that I
Would take have are are unperformed by me.

The golden knight that I for off could see
And thought to reach do still beyond me he
My bark whose fleet I fondly thought to ride
Over undiscovered seas near shal on wreck lie;
My name the age chronicles neglect,
And I must soon unknown, unhonored, die

Ambition why wilt thou still visit those
Who have no fitting place to house thee in?

Why wilt thou tempt by saying "High they rose,
Man who naught possessed save will to win?

Why wilt thou come at all to those whose minds
Do but thou but to dwell with common kinds?

THE NEW UNIONISM.

OLD TRADE UNION METHODS PLAYED OUT.

Surplus Labor and Organization of Capital Have Altered the Situation. —Labor Must Own the Land and Machinery.

(From the New Nation)

No class of people should accept the idea of Nationalism quicker than the members of labor organizations. In the East the conditions of life for the average wage-workers are appalling. The tremendous stampede for bread is such that thousands are only too glad to accept employment at any terms. They care not what they eat of the fruits of their labor if the money is sufficient to buy the coarsest food and clothes and secure a shelter. The New York *Sun*, which has never been accused of partiality to the labor movement, says as the result of its investigations that there are 20,000 girls and women in that city whose wages are too small to support life, and who have three courses open to them, viz., a career of vice, charity or starvation. The same paper says there are 40,000 men in that city permanently unemployed. The situation and misery there, as also in Boston, are frightful. When the Chicago, Burlington & Quincey engineers, who belonged to one of the strongest organizations in the country, struck, they saw men coming up, as it were, from the ground to take their places. The capitalists now have the most powerful weapon that can be conceived of to beat down the most efficient trade union. Its name is

"SURPLUS LABOR."

The eight-hour movement might mitigate this evil if it is successful. But in order to secure the demand for eight hours the industrious must strike. Their places being thus left vacant, the horde of idle men will sweep down and fill them, the strike will be defeated. The number of men who are permanently out of work according to the statistics of Carroll D. Wright, the head of the national Bureau of Labor, is over 1,000,000. A careful analysis of these figures by a writer in the now defunct *Workmen's Advocate* of New York, shows that these figures, astonishing and pregnant with the hideous realities of starvation as they are, are too conservative, and the figures are nearer 2,000,000 than 1,000,000. Think of that number of men seeking work and unable to obtain it. No one with a sane mind can say that all these men are drunkards and loafers.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR,

composed of the great trades unions of not only the United States but also Canada, claims to have about 600,000 members. The Knights of Labor, whose membership is now largely in agricultural sections of this country and in Canada, in England and in Belgium claims to have 350,000. The other independent organizations like the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Firemen and Brakemen, as well as local unions in other cities, may have, all told, 100,000 more, making a round million.

Out of this million not more than one half will ever engage, in this country in a general strike to reduce the hours of labor.

For every one of this number who strikes for eight hours there will be four anxious to step into their places. Think of it—500,000 to strike and 2,000,000 ready to take their places.

The cause of this vast army of idlers who are supported in some way now by the people is the great increase in the wage saving or labor-eliminating machinery held by a few, thus controlling the avenues of employment. Immigration has aggravated the disease.

I do not intend to depreciate labor or organizations as any manner. I am proud of their efforts in the past and the work they have done in arousing the attention of the people. I believe that trades organizations are necessary until our competitive system is abolished.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PLANK

in the Knights of Labor platform declares for the substitution of the co-operative system in the place of the present wage system. The same averages which are being applied to the eight-hour movement if generalization of the machinery would be followed by a greater reduction of the hours of labor.

The methods set for obtaining eight hours are wrong. In the home and birthplace of trades unions England the trade unionists in the proportion of eight to one by vote, forced in act of Parliament establishing eight hours by law. In fact, a bill has been introduced to that effect by Mr. Cunninghame Graham who is a socialist. Surely, the idea of the nationalization of industry

The trade unionists then oppose striking for eight hours on the ground that there is no much surplus labor. But eight hour movement is only a palliative measure. Strikes for more wages are only transitory in their results. The possession of the two factors of production

LAND AND MACHINERY

by a few is the cause of the distress. Any movement which deals only with effects and overlooks the cause is an American because delusion in Yankee shrewdness and common sense.

John Stuart Mill, the eminent economist, in his autobiography made use of the following astonishing words: "I believe that the society of the future must possess the land and capital in common and use them for the benefit of the whole people. Capital is only another name for the machinery which produces wealth. If the organized wage-workers of this country would concentrate their energies on the broad question of nationalizing the industries which carries with it the doctrine of the brotherhood of humanity they would find an easier and more profitable task than simply demanding orthodox Labor measures. Why? Because it is easier to change into a new system than to patch up an old one, decayed and rottening to its fall. The great middle class and the farmers are attracted to this nationalist movement and are coming into it rapidly. It interests the middle class who see their little businesses being swept out and who ordinarily pay little attention to so called labor measures. It is only the interests of the few money millionaires which are attacked. Already the moral sentiment of the people of America is opposed to the many millionaires as voiced by Mr. Howells, who said some time ago, "I feel that the burden of proof is on them to prove the justness of their possessions." That sentiment is almost ready to leap into action. When it does the natural monopolies and the machinery will pass into the hands of the people. The machinery, the result of wages retained from the producers and the brains of poor inventors, once in the hands of the people, it will not be a question of eight hours but possibly six hours a day.

A DISTINCTION WITH A DIFFERENCE

Much misconception would be avoided in the discussion of the social problem if writers would bear clearly in mind the distinction between individualism and individuality. Under the industrial commonwealth individualism will be abolished, but individuality will be intensified. Under the competitive system individuality is an impossibility for nine-tenths of mankind. They are condemned to a life of monotonous, wearisome drudgery, and the imperious necessity which compels them to surrender their own wills and inclinations and conform to the dictates of the task-master driving away the whole of their waking hours. They have neither time nor opportunity to cultivate their higher natures or develop the intellectual faculties. The tendency of the rush and grind of modern industrial and business life is to convert men into machines, and this applies nearly as much to the trading and professional classes as to the workingmen. The special pleaders for individualism and what they are pleased to call "liberty" forget how very small a margin of time is left by the demands of business or of labor for the exercise of that freedom of choice as to the mode of developing the individual. How few there are who can really choose their studies, recreations, companionship, place of residence, etc., as a matter of preference. The supreme consideration of getting a livelihood or getting on in the world, as the case may be, forces most into a very narrow rut of routine and completely suppresses anything like individuality or the free development and exercise of personal tastes. Under a just and systematic all this would be changed. The individual would be free to pursue every direction, with the single exception of that of personal accumulation of wealth. The individualism which means the enrichment of a few at the expense of the mass of society would be a thing of the past. But individuality would be developed as it never was before. Set free from long hours of hopeless drudgery, with the opportunity of devoting most of the day to self-cultivation and rational enjoyment, men who otherwise would have lived and died after a round of animal like existence, living merely to work, eat and sleep, would become conscious of their faculties and purposes. They would be men instead of machines. The suppression of individualism will render this individuality a possibility for the toiling and overdriven masses.

Journal of the K. of L.

PERHAPS the time will come when a gun will be regarded as a mere relic of barbarism as the instrument used by the cannibals to scoop out the marrow from the bones of his captives is now regarded by many people as a symbol of savagery. *It can yet.*

He is very prudent, a dog is. He never makes it his business to inquire whether you are in the right or in the wrong, never bothers as to whether you are going up or down life's ladder, never asks whether you are rich or poor, silly or wise, sinner or saint. You are his pal. That is enough for him, and come luck or misfortune, good repute or bad, honor or shame, he is going to stick to you, to comfort you, guard you, give his life for you, if need be, foolish, brainless, soulless dog.—*J. K. Jerome.*

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