

BE A KICKER

By Roscoe A. Fillmore

We are informed that the Standard Oil Company, the "Octopus," as it has been called by the popular muck-rakers, has been found to be a "combination in restraint of trade" and must dissolve. I suppose you, my reader, remember that twenty-nine million dollar fine, don't you? Have you heard anything about its being paid lately? Judge Landis and a few others became celebrities through that affair and then it was decided that the Standard Oil crowd were all good fellows and couldn't afford to pay such a fine anyhow and the matter stands just about there now.

Did you ever hear the story of the young fellow who inherited his grandfather's farm? Well here goes. The old gent died and John succeeded him as proprietor of the old homestead. Among the many relics of grand-dad's day was an old grindstone. This set in a corner of the tool shed and was so placed that every time one turned the crank his knuckles struck the wall. John was turning the stone one day and the air in the immediate vicinity was rendered decidedly sulphurous by the terror of his remarks. His knuckles were skinned and bleeding freely. A friend in passing heard the unseemly racket and started to investigate. He found John still swearing and turning the stone at each revolution of which his knuckles came violently in contact with the wall. Of course each time his hand struck a few more black marks were added by the book keeper up above. The friend looked on in amazement for a moment and then burst out with "You mutt; why don't you move the stone so you won't bark your knuckles?" John looked aghast for a moment. When he had recovered himself he said disgustedly "That stone set there all grand-dad's life. It was good enough for him and what was good enough for grand-dad is good enough for me. You're a bloomin' agitator. Git out."

Now that is just about the position taken by these trust busting Don Quixotes. That is those of them who are not worthy of mention. The fellows who are really trying to smash the trusts are like John. They want to go back to what "was good enough for Grand-dad." They say "these monopolies are bad for the country. We will smash them and go back to the old little-business methods of our grandfathers. Back to the democracy of Jefferson etc." So they pass laws against monopolies, combinations and trusts. Yet these same legislators would be shocked if it was suggested that a law be passed making the present school system illegal and compelling the country to go back to the days when each man hired his own teacher and the family kitchen was the only school room. They would be shocked if it was suggested that each person should build a road of his own. Or suppose we were compelled by law to go out and smash every labor-saving device that was introduced. In the latter part of the eighteenth century men did this in spite of law. What would you think of a law-making body that would pass such laws as these?

Well, the legislatures of this and every other country are continually making a big noise over this question. "Restrict the monopolies," "Bust the trusts" are familiar to all of us as election red-herings. And when one becomes conversant with economies he finds that these howls are but calls to ignorance as were the cries "smash the machine" a century ago. Those chaps did break up a few machines at that time but the trust busters cannot point to a single monopoly that they have even embarrassed. The machines that were broken were replaced, improved from time to time and are today the causes for the growth of the monopolies. The fellows who tried to destroy them are forgotten or remembered only as fools. They bucked against Progress and became lost.

Now we have twentieth century machine breakers, fellows who should know better but do not. They should know that the same economic laws that compelled them to unite and build roads, bridges and school-houses also compelled business men to get together and form combinations to protect their business and increase the profits.

The trust is a huge, intricate, labor-saving machine. The greatest machine on earth. It is one of the signs of Progress and yet mightier machines. It eliminates waste and makes it possible for commodities to be produced cheaper. It bears the same relation to the business machine of the days of Jefferson as does the Lusitania to the dugout of the primeval savage. Suppose the trusts could be broken up. What would happen? Society would have to pass through the same stages as we have passed through in the past

century and the ultimate result would be another harvest of trusts. Pleasant looking prospect surely!

We Socialists have the only solution of the trust problem. We consider it one of the milestones on the road to our goal—emancipation, freedom. When we read a new merger we say—"good, just that much nearer the next milestone—the co-operative commonwealth." For, fellow-worker there is another milestone in sight. Daily we are drawing a little nearer and a little nearer to it. Every merger is a step, every strike, every disrupted union merely steps, and the post draws ever nearer.

We will reach that milestone presently when the industries have all been trustified and the trusts merged into one gigantic trust. We will then step in and by using our ballots intelligently as members of the working class take the trusts. We will make them the common property of all useful persons. They being the instruments used by the capitalists in robbing us that robbery will cease, and consequently poverty will disappear for it is but the product of the robbing of labor. As the trusts will be our own common property, employment will then be as free to us all as is the use of the common highway today. Unemployment and its consequent miseries will be things of the past.

All this can be done by our class, the workers. When we have quit tinkering with Liberals and Tories and struck out for ourselves and our class. When we send a good strong majority of our own men to parliament and watch them good and sharp to keep them straight we will see these changes made. If we do not do this we will, sooner or later, starve. Better strike good and hard fellow workers while you are fairly well fed and in good form. You can hit harder and have lots of satisfaction too. Be a kicker, Brother!

The Women's Club of Montreal are preparing a "white list" of grocers, butchers, etc., who take pains to see that their goods are in proper condition before placing them on sale. This is what may be called a reform move. No doubt the plute apologists will hail this move as a wonderful example of the goodness of capitalism and the absolute folly of trying to improve the system when "white lists" are prepared to show people where to trade. But the white list is being prepared for up-town stores. You see the down town purchasers and the East end purchasers, who are the workers, can eat rotten food without warning. The Women's Club are composed of up-town women and so it is the up-town section which is to have the "white list." The ladies trade in the up-town stores and do not want to eat rotten food. Moreover there is no "white list" of stores selling good food cheap. Such a list is impossible under capitalism. The up-town ladies can afford to pay high prices for good food. The Women's Club are not preparing a "black list" of the sellers of rotten food. The preparation of such a list would mean libel suits. So the ladies content themselves with the white list of stores that will sell pure food and charge fancy prices for the same, prices beyond the poor man's pocket. This Women's Club with its activities simply show that the workers have nothing to gain from the reform activities of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie are out for reforms that will make themselves more comfortable and healthy without hurting their incomes which are stolen from the labor of the proletariat.

Capitalism puts a man on the stock exchange and tells him, "Go ahead and make money." The men go ahead and make money by buying up all the wheat or cotton or oil and then making the people pay dear for what was purchased cheap. Then the foolish people who howl against Socialism raise a great howl about the iniquity of a Patten or a Rockefeller. The dear, foolish people cannot see that capitalism will inevitably produce capitalist results.

Some of the American papers wonder how it was that the stock market did not show any feverishness before the delivery of Taft's last message. The answer is easy. Taft is the puppet of the Wall Street crowd. They need not worry about what their puppet is going to do when they have their fingers on the strings which make him jump.

O'Brien wants seven million dollars for the O'Brien mine. Under capitalism silver is used as a medium of exchange and the raw silver is given away to a few men to hold up humanity for the use of it. Under Socialism, when the time value labor check will be the standard of value and the medium of exchange and the silver shall be socially owned, the multimillionaire silver mine owner will disappear along with the rent collector and the wheat king.

INTERNATIONALISM

A sense of solidarity is growing among the workpeople of all civilized countries, and across frontiers and over oceans, is being extended the hand of friendship. Trades-unionists all over the world lend their moral and sometimes financial support to their fellow trades-unionists wherever they might be fighting for more favorable conditions. Not long ago British colliers sent £2000 across the channel to aid 200,000 German coal miners who had gone on strike for higher wages. The Belgians at the same time declared a sympathetic strike. Organized labor everywhere stands opposed to war. When the governments of Norway and Sweden were getting noisy over the separation question, a mass meeting of 30,000 citizens of Christiania issued a proclamation to the people of Sweden, saying that the workmen of Norway would never lift up the sword against their fellow-workers in Sweden. In his address to the American Federation of Labor congress held at Pittsburgh, November, 1905, President Gompers said:

"Organized labor stands for peace, industrial as well as international, carping critics to the contrary notwithstanding. We want international peace. All mankind yearns for it; humanity demands it."

Whatever attitude we take toward the Social-Democratic party now entering the political arena of this and every other country, we must pay tribute to it for its efforts to promote international brotherhood. Socialists everywhere stand for arbitration and the abolition of war. The Socialist ideal is a world ideal, the ideal of uniting all the peoples of the earth into one great co-operative commonwealth. The Socialist movement is avowedly international, and boasts a strength of eight million voters. And is growing fast. We cannot leave it out of our calculations. It is undeniably the most revolutionary movement of history. Its emblem is a globe, across which are clasped two hands in token of brotherhood. Its slogan is "Workingmen of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains, and you have a world to gain." And the workingmen, the intelligent workingmen of the world, are uniting, and under the teaching of Socialists are seeking entrance into legislative halls wherein to achieve the triumph of labor. Shrewdly enough, they refuse to allow wars to divide their ranks. In the French Chamber of Deputies and the German Reichstag the Socialists have persistently urged arbitration as the exclusive means of settling international disputes. When France and Germany were snarling ominously over the Moroccan question, and war between the two countries seemed imminent, the Social-Democrats of Germany, whose voting strength exceeds three million, sent greetings to their fellow-workers in France, and said that the Kaiser and the President could fight a duel if they chose, but that the workingmen of Germany would never again spill the blood of their brother-workers in France. This is the spirit which is prevailing the workingmen of Europe and America, and it is a spirit which might well fill the hearts of our trading and professional classes.

—W. R. Shier in the New Age, N. Y., official organ of the New York Free Masonry.

Competition is Lawlessness

Competition is not law, but lawless. Carried to its logical outcome, it is anarchy, or the absence of law. Man is a moral spiritual and social being, not dominated by animal law. There can be no such thing as a harmonized society with any competitive element in it and Christianity is impossible. Every man owes the world his life, and must live to have a life to give. In competitive conditions no character, but cunning survives. The gospel of success is the great insanity or modern materialism, absorbing the best brain, thought and life of the race; we have been feeding our children to this great Moloch of success, but it results in warping the intellect and making moral idiots. We are coming to a higher evolution, in which the law of mutual service shall be the law of our life. Any attempt to build society on a competitive foundation is fundamentally anarchical. The idea of brotherhood has come to stay, and will not back down at the bidding of politicians, monopolists or theologians. The years behind us are but getting together.—George D. Herron.

Here is a pungent truth, briefly said: The great herds of mankind have been educated to starve, fighting each other, rather than co-operate, helping each other to live in peace, plenty and happiness.

TO NEW SUBSCRIBERS

All subs received up to Monday night go in this week's issue. Those received after, will go on next week. This is unavoidable as subs must be entered and put in type in a systematic manner.

What any part of the people can do, all of them co-operating can do better. There is no reason, except selfishness, for private ownership of progress.

Socialism is bound to come through confiscation. How can the workers get all they earn if they agree to still pay big revenues to the parasites?

If a wage slave suffers from parasite bugs on his physical body he keeps quiet about it. If he suffers from a parasite lot of bosses he is proud of the fact.

Commercial crises do not come from over production but under-consumption. Underconsumption is due to the fact that the bosses take four-fifths of what the workers earn away from them.

Paid in Advance

Every copy of Cotton's Weekly is paid for before it leaves this office. If you get Cotton's through the mail with a colored address label on it, numbered, your subscription has been paid by some friend who wishes you to look into the truths of Socialism. You need not hesitate to take Cotton's from the post office as no bill will be rendered, and the paper will be promptly discontinued when the subscription expires.

The Stone of Ignorance

I would feel very bad if no one found fault with what I write, for it would indicate that I wrote nothing worth of printing. People are never taught anything by people who tell them only that which they knew and agreed with. The greatest teachers of the earth have met with the greatest opposition. When some one yells out in vain or terror at what I say I am reminded of the following from Oliver Wendell Holmes "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

"Did you ever in walking the fields, come across a large flat stone, which has lain, nobody knows how long, just where you found it, with the grass forming a little hedge, as it were, close to the edges,—and have you not in obedience to a kind of feeling that told you it had been lying there long enough, insinuated your foot or your finger under its edge and turned it over as a housewife turns a cake, when she says to herself, 'It's done brown enough by this time? What an odd revelation, and what an unforeseen and unpleasant surprise to a small community, the very existence of which you had not suspected until the sudden dismay and scattering among its members produced by your turning the old stone over! Blades of grass flattened down, colorless, matted together, as if they had been bleached and ironed; hideous crawling creatures, some of them coleopterous or horny-shelled,—turtle-bugs one wants to call them; some of them softer, but cunningly spread out and compressed like Levine watches; (Nature never loses a crack or a crevice, mind you, or a joint in a tavern bedstead, but she always has one of her flat-pattern, live timekeepers to slide into it); black glossy crickets, with their long filaments sticking out like the whips of four-horse stage coaches; motionless, slug-like creatures, larvae, perhaps more horrible in their pulpy stiltiness than even in the infernal wriggle of maturity! But no sooner is the stone turned and the wholesome light of day let upon this compressed and blinded community of creeping things, than all of them enjoy the luxury of legs and some of them have a good many—rush round wildly, butting each other and everything in their way, and end in a general stampede for underground retreats from the region poisoned by sunshine. Next year you will find the grass growing tall and green where the stone lay; the ground-bird builds her nest where the beetle had his hole; the dandelion and the buttercup are growing there, and the broad fans of insect-angels open and shut over their golden disks, as the rhythmic waves of blissful consciousness pulsate through their glorified being."

"The grass is human nature borne down and bleached of all its color by it. The shapes that are found beneath are crafty beings that thrive in darkness, and the weaker organisms kept helpless by it. He who turns the stone over is whosoever puts the staff of truth to the old lying incubus, no matter whether he do it with a serious face or a laughing one. The next year stands for the coming time. Then shall nature which has lain bleached and broken rise in its full stature and notice hues in the sunshine. Then shall God's minstrels build their nests in the hearts of new-born humanity. Then shall beauty—Divinity taking outlines and color—light upon the souls of men as the butterfly, image of the beautiful spirit rising from the dust, soars from the shell that held a poor grub, which would never have found wings had not the stone been lifted."

"You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it. Every real thought on every subject knocks the wind out of somebody or back. As soon as his breath comes back, he very probably begins to expand it in hard words. These are the best evidence a man can have that he has said something it was time to say. Dr. Johnson was disappointed in the effect of one of his pamphlets. 'I think I have not been attacked enough for it,' he said; 'attack is the reaction I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds.'"

GIVING WORK

I have been hearing the phrase from the labor-thieves, "But we give work," until I am sick unto death of it. A man who sits down and does nothing but cuts coupons, says, "But see the work I am giving to men on my big house." A woman who rents farms and makes the poor beggars of tenant farmers sweat to pay her the rentals says, "But see the work I give to my gardener and cook and housemaid."

These parasites never give work. They rob the workers and then compel other workers to slave for them. A labor thief parliament and a labor thief legislature sit year after year and make laws for the benefit of the men who want to see labor robbed of its product. Capitalist minded judges sit in capitalist courts in capitalist judgement on men who cannot live according to capitalist laws. Capitalist police enforce capitalist laws and the whole of Canadian industrial life is torn by the capitalist system of robbery and exploitation.

In the midst of the turmoil the cruel and greedy and the innately selfish look about them for their own profit. They cannot be blamed because self preservation is the first law of nature. These men look around as to where they can get a good big hunk of unearned riches. If they are cute enough to bribe a parliament or steal a mine, or to find out when a mine is to be stolen and get in on the ground floor—if they are cute enough for this, then they get rich. Their parliament will make laws whereby the workers are robbed and the product goes into the hands of the idlers.

The robber, with his riches plundered from the blood and bone and sweat of workingmen, employs other workers and makes them sweat and strive and bend their backs to heavy tasks that the robber may live at ease.

Then the robber, living in ease, watching the toiling slaves under his eyes, pats himself on the back and says he is giving work to the workless. If there ever was a capitalist hypocrisy this is one.

The moral is plain for the workingmen. When the capitalist can live at ease without work, or when with work, they can spread themselves abroad and get much stolen labor products, the capitalists are not going to change that system. It is up to the working classes to get busy and elect their fellow men into power. The wage slaves must organize to throw off the parasites which fasten upon and bleed the useful workers.

SOCIALIST PARTY PRINCIPLES

WILL R. SHIER.

Do you believe that those things on which the people in common depend for employment should be by the people in common be owned? In other words do you believe that the mines, the forests, the land, the waterfalls, the railways, the departmental stores, the foundries, the telegraphs, the telephones, the banks, the factories, the steamships, the lumber-mills, in short, the whole machinery of production, should be owned and democratically managed in the interests of those who toil?

Yes? Then you accept one of the cardinal tenets of the socialist party. Now, do you also recognize that the interests of capital and labor are antagonistic, that employers and employees are in unreconcilable conflict with each other? And do you side with the workers against the exploiters?

Yes? Then you accept a second tenet of the socialist party, the doctrine of the class struggle.

Furthermore, do you realize the necessity of the workers gaining control of the law-making and the law-enforcing powers, such as the legislative chambers, the courts, the police and the militia through a party of their own. And in support of such a party are you prepared to pledge yourself not to support in any way any political organization outside its pale, not to contribute to its campaign funds, not to vote for its candidates, not to influence others in its behalf?

Yes? Then you accept the third great requirement of the socialist party platform and pledge. You are a thorough going social-democrat and qualified to become a member of the S. P. of C. Your place is in the party, not outside of it. Your help, your work, your ideas, your dues are needed to advance the cause of the working class emancipation.

"Oh, but" you say, "what is the use of me joining the party. I am not competent to take an active part in its propaganda and organization work."

My friend, you are mistaken, you can have given the matter no thought. There is lots of work you can do.

You can help do the routine work of the party by filling some office or other.

You can help distribute literature, sell books at propaganda and business meetings and canvass subscriptions to Socialist papers.

You can serve on committees. If you sing or play a musical instrument, you can take part in party entertainments and help enliven party gatherings.

If you cannot speak in public, you

may possibly learn. Others have done so! Why not you?

There are various tasks you can be set to do, once you are inside the organization.

Join the party of your class. Help build it up. It is meant to leave all the work to others. We want fighters in this movement, not spectators.

The Bees and the Drones

"I tell you, my friends," said a big wasp at the busy bees' convention, "I'm sick and tired of listening to those disgruntled, discontented, dissatisfied, demagogic bees who are continually howling against the drones. Why, my friends, if it wasn't for the drones, you'd starve to death! The trouble is, you haven't half enough drones in the hive; that's the reason you can't get rid of this omnipresent overproduction which causes hard times." (Great applause.)

"Now, let us reason together," said the wasp. "It's as simple as a, b, c. The more drones you have, the more honey is eaten. The more honey is eaten, the more work you have producing the honey. Do you follow me? And work is what you're always looking for, isn't it? (Vociferous applause.)"

"Now, my friends, I repeat, let us reason together, continued the wasp. "Let us suppose you didn't have a single drone in the hive, what would you do with all your honey, I'd like to know?"

(A voice: "Why, eat it ourselves, of course!") Cries of "Order! Police."

"And if you didn't have drones," continued the wasp, after the commotion had subsided, who'd support your churches and seminaries? Who'd endow your hospitals and libraries? Who'd subsidize your college and newspapers? Who'd contribute to your soup-houses and foreign missions, I'd like to know? Why, my friends, if you didn't have drones, you wouldn't have anyone to be kind to you and give you charity! You wouldn't have—"

(A voice: "We wouldn't need charity if we didn't have drones!") Meeting breaks up in confusion.)

Who Are the Intellectuals

Within the Socialist Party of late we have heard much about the "intellectuals." Indeed, they are a bone of contention on all sides. Some maintain that they should not be allowed to join the organization. Others think they should, but advise that they be given no seats on important committees or positions as editors and organizers. Still others urge that they have as much right in the party as anyone who subscribes to its platform and pledge, and that if they are more competent to fill office than others, we should not curtail their field of usefulness.

Now, how is one to tell whether such and such a comrade is an "intellectual" or not. There are "two ways, firstly, by his vocation, secondly, by his point-of-view."

Professional people who join the movement are commonly called "intellectuals." Likewise with merchants, employers of labor and the well-to-do. These people throw their forces on the side of the rising proletariat, not because their material interests so dictate, but because they regard socialism as a worthy ideal, or because they consider its philosophy to be correct, or because they are disgusted with capitalism and its brutalities. But wage-workers may also espouse the socialist cause from artistic, scientific, philosophical and humanitarian considerations rather than from a desire for more material comforts. And these too are "intellectuals."

W. R. S.

Society Wrong

Society is the aggregate of human association. It makes by law or custom certain regulations, according to its ideas of right, to govern the relations its members shall bear to each other. The different laws of different countries represent the different ideas of right that prevail. But the structure of society must be wrong or the following paragraphs would have no meaning:

Society spends millions annually to punish murderers, yet will not spend a dollar to surround men with conditions that they have no desire to murder.

Society spends millions to punish crimes against property, but not a dollar to create conditions that would prevent the incentive to such crimes.

Society spends billions in war to kill people and destroy their property, yet all the time claiming to protect life and property. And it never spends a dollar to assist people to live and build up a country.

Society creates conditions that force millions of its members out of work, and then punish them for having no visible means of support.

Society creates conditions by which it is robbed annually of billions by a few of its members in the distribution and adulteration of the products of society, and yet will not invest a dollar in distributing its own products to its own members. Society creates money, and in the same breath declares it the root of all evil, and never makes an effort to protect itself from the evil.

If society, as at present constituted, does anything right, except wrong, I fail to see how or wherein. It is a mess of incongruities, contradictions. It fails to grasp any meaning to right and justice.—EX.

Industrially, I divide mankind into two great classes—wealth makers and wealth takers. A farmer, a mechanic, a laborer, is a wealth maker. A millionaire, a usurer, a capitalist, is a wealth taker. A tramp is a wealth taker on a small scale. He begs for what he gets; the other fellow simply takes it without begging.—J. A. Edgerton.