

THE OUTGROWN LIMITATIONS OF UNIONISM.

Along the lines upon which it has so far developed, unionism has its limitation, and it is this: it is only remedial and not a cure for industrial wrongs. If organization in all departments of labor was so perfect that no employer dared dispute the demands of his employee; if wages all along the line were leveled up to such a standard of justice that no employer received more than current rates of interest on his investment and fair remuneration for superintendence, the ideal work of unionism would be accomplished. Any further advance in wages, if general, would only increase the cost of production and living in that ratio, and an advance that was not general, would, under the circumstances supposed work injustice to the trades not in advance of wages.

Such a perfect state of organization could not be maintained without a yearly expense of millions of money, and an incalculable degree of intellectual energy in educational work, but if maintained it could not touch the most obnoxious of the robberies which wealth and power now do, and then could inflict upon producers. Great manufacturers could then combine as now, to limit their production in order to enhance the price of their products; carrying companies and other monopolies could and would put the advance in wages upon the public in the form of increased charges, they could still buy legislatures and landlords, could still speculate in land, and then, as now, by keeping the price to the limit which the most able dare undertake to pay, force the great majority of working people to live as tenants and still entail upon us the evils of an irresponsible, homeless population, without local ties to encourage and strengthen character. The remedy for such evils as these must be legislative.

Unionism has won a thousand glorious victories, and will win more. Its rallying cry gathers under one banner the noblest hearted of those who toil; it lifts up the weak, supports the strong, rights the wronged and flings a grand defiance to the unjust and powerful, but without political harmony and actions it can cure nothing.

Its most formidable weapon, a strike is two-edged, and almost equally as destructive to friends as to foes. It is a species of war, and like all war, is unphilosophic and incalculably costly, and as a strike is like war, so unionism is like maintaining a standing army in time of peace. These things are true and like all truths can be evaded only on penalty of disaster.

There is many a hero in the ranks of unionism who has grown old in loving and devoted service in its cause, who is beginning to realize, that final victory can not be won without incorporating the idea of a political purpose; that it is not enough to be heroic, but that it is equally necessary to be philosophic and that unionism will not be that until it declares war upon the system of law which has developed the condition which makes its existence necessary.

By the counsel of many of the most able and disinterested of their leaders some of the most powerful and intelligent of our organizations have heretofore avoided the discussion of questions of a political nature; but for a few years past party ties have been rapidly weakening, under a growing conviction that if laboring men would make a back, either party would ride it. In addition to this, and in spite of any effort to limit its scope, unionism has been a great educational force, and a sun never rises that does not witness an advance in knowledge of economic questions along the whole army of the workers.

Evolutionary movement is ordinarily slow, but after years of imperceptible growth the century plant blooms in a night, or failing that, falls away into

decay. Is it not time for a similar development in unionism?

Political action will come sooner or later, our dream of industrial emancipation will fade into thin air, and when it does come it will move in the direction of the nationalization of those sources of wealth from which are drawn those immense fortunes which are used in corrupting legislatures, judges and public morals. It is much easier to say this and to understand that it carries with it the destruction of the polls of such crimes as class legislation, monopoly of the carrying trade, landlordism, usury and profit off the toil of another, than it is to define the exact method, but the exact method is the problem for which the conscience of the nineteenth century demands a solution under penalty of wage slavery for the masses, and laboring men who have set their ideal of manhood high, must address themselves to its solution.

Against such a line of legislation it is urged with great force that it would vastly increase governmental power and functions; but power in a government by the people is dangerous only when it is unchecked. When the people again feel that it is their government, the apathy which admits robbery will pass away. No one can doubt this who contrasts the honest administration given in the affairs of our great international union with the corruption of the public administration. But if this were not true, under favorable conditions, a public conscience would again develop, for the mass of men are now dishonest because of unjust industrial conditions; but, again, if this should fail, may we not as well trust ourselves with the government under fair conditions, as to continue to trust, under present laws, in the men who have so long despoiled us?—S. W. Harmon in Machine Wood Worker.

THE PARSON AND THE LABORER.

The Rev. Arnold D. Taylor (G.S.M.) rector of a parish in South Devonshire, has a short but outspoken article on "Hodge and his Parson" in the Nineteen Century for March. In Devon, the average wages are less than ten shillings per week, employment being very uncertain, especially in winter. For a married man with a family of five or six children, the amount available per head per meal (no allowance being made for beer or tobacco) is three farthings! While the rector does not agree with Mrs. Batson's summary statement that "Our laborer hates his employer, he hates his squire, but above all he hates his parson"—he admits that "there is a great feeling of dislike for the parson in some country places," and he states some of the causes.

"In a great number, I should say in the vast majority of country parishes, the squire, the parson, and the large farmers form a 'ring' which controls all parochial affairs, so that no outsider has a chance even of knowing what goes on, much less of exerting any real influence on the management of those affairs. This 'ring' practically is the vestry. Who ever heard of laborers coming to the vestry meetings and expressing their view of affairs? If they did come, what would be the good? Who would listen to them? And the parson is ex officio chairman of the vestry. He is the leader, in Hodge's eye, of this exclusive ring, and perhaps Hodge thinks he is mainly responsible for its existence. Hodge may be unjust in this. But who can wonder at his suspicions, when he never sees the parson insisting on having the laborers' side heard, or arranging the vestry meetings so that they can attend. The sooner the vestry is replaced by a council of some kind, in which Hodge shall find himself on an equality in voting power with any other inhabitant of the village, and the chairman of which shall not be the parson, unless

he is freely elected to that post, the better for everyone."

"Again, who is generally the leader of the Primrose League in a parish, or at least one of its most active agents? The parson, or more often, perhaps, his wife. Hodge knows what the Primrose League is, very well, and its objects. He knows it exists to keep him in his state of bondage, if it were possible so to do. Is it not pretty certain that every gift from one who is an active member of that League, or who is in open sympathy with it, is suspected? How can Hodge feel, and would he not be a hypocrite if he expressed any gratitude for such gifts?"

"Then, again, does not Hodge remember the use made in schools and confirmation class of the Church Catechism? Is not that generally used to enforce on him that it is his duty to remain in the position in which he was born, and to look to and obey the parson and the squire, and everyone in the place who is better off than himself? Yes, he remembers well enough. I believe that that teaching is a gross perversion of the words of the Catechism. The men who drew up the Catechism meant 'shall,' and not 'has,' when they wrote 'that state of life into which it shall please God to call me:' they meant 'betters' when they wrote 'betters,' and not 'those who are better off than myself.' But whether I am right or wrong about this, Hodge knows and remembers the use which is made of this 'further instruction' which the Church declares to be necessary for her full membership.

"The truth is that all that the parson does is tainted in Hodge's nostrils. Hodge sees in all that is done for him only sops to keep him quiet, and if possible contented, where, and as, he is. He thinks that parsons are very "deep customers" who hide under an appearance of sheepish—no, not sheepish, but lamb-like—innocence and charity a determination at all costs to keep things as they are, to oppose all reform, and especially to oppose all efforts on the part of Hodge himself to obtain a voice in the management of parish affairs, a share in the land of his own country, or in its increasing prosperity. Hodge wants more independence."

"Complaints are made that none but the old and feeble remain in our villages. Why is this? It is because town life is more interesting and progressive. Supply the elements of interest and progress to villages and they will not then be emptied. Bagehot has pointed out how in the past a progressive freedom has grown only with public discussion. This element must be given to village life, or rather, as our furthest ancestors on English soil would say, must be given back to it. In how many villages, even as things now stand, are the elections of churchwarden or overseer or parish representative in the diocesan conference carried out in the evening, when working men can attend? . . . What these men meet is not charity, but justice; not tidy footpaths and gabled roofs, but manhood; and manhood can only come to us by having a man's work to do. And a freeman's true educative work is not to cheer his squire's name at a harvest home, even though he be a good squire, so much as to learn independence through a share in the responsibilities of Government."—From "A Social Policy for Churchmen" in the Economic Review.

GIVE US BREAD.

"Give us bread or give us blood!" "Let us work for we are starving! Our little ones cry with hunger!" Give us living wages for honest toil!" Thousands of frenzied, gaunt rioters in Berlin are raising these first two piteous cries to heaven, among the palatial homes where plenty is so lavish that it runs over and becomes waste; even against the doors of the emperor's pal-

ace the hungry mob surged with all the desperation of despair; nearer home, in Indianapolis, the wires tell the story of more toilers, goaded to savagery by the gain-all-and-grind-down policy of wealthy corporations, threatening bloodshed because their demand for an honest day's pay for an honest day's work is denied. All over the world, in city, town and mining hamlet are other men toiling away, perhaps still, but nursing wrongs in their hearts that need but the slightest touch to spring into a flame of devouring wrath that shall sweep the world with a bitter vengeful recompense for long years of endurance. And who is to blame? While corporations make from 1,000 to 10,000 per cent. on the capital invested, and grudge the man to whose muscle and brains these profits are largely due, the wages to keep a comfortable roof over his head, while a favored few waste thousands wantonly for a few hours amusement, and at their very doors Lazarus, worn out with hard work, cruelty and starvation, dies, vainly faltering his awful woe to thin, unhearing ears, so long will mobs and riots prevail; so long will the social fabric rest on a seething volcano, ready to spread ruin and desolation at any moment. This is a crisis in the world's affairs when the hundred-millionaire must change his heart and his ways. The cry of little children for bread, the tear of the homeless wanderer, the sullen look of utter discouragement in the eye of the toil-worn laborer, all cry to heaven for relief. And it will surely come, for never to such scenes, as are being enacted in various parts of the civilized world to-day, is the eye of heaven blind.—Cincinnati Post.

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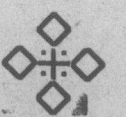
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