

KING'S CONVERSION

(By Rev. Charles Stelzle.)

There was always a half cynical smile on his lips. The upper part of his face never seemed to laugh. The wrinkles were up and down instead of across. His chief asset was his tongue. He could talk. But most of the things that he said might have been unspoken. He did not hesitate to sacrifice his friends in his bitterness. He could say enough cutting things in a day to make a dozen men feel all ripped up for a week. Naturally, he, therefore, had few friends. No man felt like getting very close to him in confidence. There was nothing sacred to him. Religion, home, women, morality—all suffered at his hands.

We wondered what he did with himself when he was away from the shop. There seemed for him to be no deep interest in anything. He was a literal anarchist—alone, unsocial a law unto himself. Of course he did not throw bombs. He apparently did not take enough interest in life to become excited about anything. But during the days of a certain week there came a new expression into his face. Gradually the story of the change became known.

For years there had been in his home an invalid—a seven year old daughter. He had been caring for her most tenderly, carrying her about and nursing her better than could have been done by a trained servant. Just across the hall in the tenement in which he lived, there was another family in which there was a daughter of the same age as his own, but strong, hearty and well. Her laughter and singing cut him deeply, because his own child never laughed and sang that way. Her romping on the streets and in the back yard simply goaded him to frenzy. Why could not his little girl do these things? These thoughts had made him bitter, cynical, and almost cruel to others, while he devoted himself more fully than ever to his helpless sick one.

But one day the cause of his unhappiness became very ill. He could hear her moaning in the night, as she suffered the tortures of a frightful disease. He could not sleep. For nearly a week this was continued. In desperation he finally knocked at the door of his neighbor and found the father of the sick child almost sinking with fatigue, yet trying to minister to the constant needs of the invalid. The mother had been worn out and had fallen down during the day. In the most embarrassed way he offered his services as nurse. He had never before spoken to the father, almost joyfully he began his duties. The years of training that had been his in caring for his own child now served him to advantage. He seemed to know just what to do. Soon the sick one fell asleep, but he watched till daylight. For three nights he performed this service, getting just a few hours sleep. Towards the dawning of the last morning the child passed away in his own arms. As he tenderly laid the body down upon the bed, there seemed to go with the departed spirit all the bitterness of his own soul. The rasp had already left his voice. The hardened look upon his face had gradually softened. His eyes had lost their unnatural coldness.

And these things the boys had noticed. He was no longer 'smart' in his speech. The spirit of helpfulness

had taken possession of him. He seemed to make every other man's burdens his own. By a bitter experience he learned that other hearts have their aches, and as he learned more about others' trials, he became a comforter instead of a cynic. It was this evolution in King's life which effected not only himself, but nearly every other fellow in the shop. More of the spirit of brotherliness prevailed. Deeper became the sense of responsibility one towards the other. It needed the sacrifice of a life, but out of that sacrifice there sprang up a new spirit which found expression in many lives.

Unions and High Prices

"The greed and avarice of labor unions" is the common plea put forward by the capitalists as the reason for the high prices and general stringency prevailing at the present time. This excuse is, of course, generally accepted as authentic by the vast majority of people who take such stories from the capitalist press as true.

Recently the Dominion civil servants secured statistics showing the increased cost of living as compared with the increase in wages throughout Canada in the past ten years, and, needless to say, the increased percentage in the cost of living very greatly out-balanced the increase in wages paid.

This argument is now dead in Canada, for after being worn threadbare by the manufacturers it was killed by the report of this commission. In the United States the same argument has been advanced, and a leading American daily replying to the same has the following to say:

The argument that the high price of life necessities is due to the "greed and avarice of labor unions," is refuted by the United States government itself. For instance: The price of meat was advanced in 1903, after the great packers strike, about sixteen per cent. The strikers won an increase of from 2 per cent to 14 per cent, or an average of about eight per cent, just one-half the amount demanded by the packers from the consumers of meat.

There has been no strike since, the wage-scale of the packing house employees has not been advanced, nor does the live stock man get a cent more per pound since, yet the price of meat has advanced since last June alone nearly 20 per cent. Hardly due to the "greed and avarice of labor unions," etc.?

The price of butter has gone up 40 per cent. in a year. Yet there has been no change in wages of the butter workers for two years.

The price of eggs is 22 per cent higher than it was this time last year; yet, so far as the bureau of commerce and labor is informed, the hens have demanded neither an eight hour day or an increased scale.

Only last week the price of coal jumped 10 per cent. over what the coal barons charged for it last May. The men working at the mines are not getting a cent more than they did last May. There is no coal famine. The mines are just as productive and machinery is just as effective in bringing it to the surface. The railroads, they say, are charging more to haul it? Well, why? They are paying their employees not one cent more

than they did last May. And, besides the railroads own the mines—or the mines own the railroads, whichever you prefer.

These figures are taken from the reports of the United States department of commerce and labor, and they are absolutely correct. It would be possible to go on for columns demonstrating that capitalistic greed and the right of might alone is responsible for the criminal oppressions of the common people, but it would be only reiteration.

Lowering the Standard

Since the trouble over the Asiatics in the British possessions there has been a lessening of the loud clamor heard a few months ago when the question was first agitated on the Pacific coast. Whether members of labor unions or non-unionists, the working people of Canada and the United States stand with those others of their fellow citizens who are opposed to the introduction, into this country, of Asiatic labor for the simple reason that if it is practiced at all generally it will mean a lowering of the Canadian standard of living in its broadest sense—physically, morally and educationally. As one leading eastern paper well says:

"The employers of labor who are responsible for the introduction of Hindus, Japanese and Chinese into Canada and the United States are pursuing a course which marks them as men who would build their fortunes upon the ruins of the homes of their neighbors. They are not good citizens in any sense of the word; they are sowing the whirlwind for their countries, and can not be considered otherwise than as enemies of the flag that protect them. It is altogether feasible for white men to solve the Asiatic problem by declining to have any dealings with the Asiatics."

Dooley on Millionaires

When I was a young fellow, I used to think that I'd like to be a king or an impror, but there's very little future f'r a king nowadays, an' as f'r an impror, he's ayether got to learn th' business of sellin' cotton pants to th' Chineymen like the impror of Germany, or spend his days an' nights in a chilled steel safe like th' impror in Rooshya. I want wanted to be a milliyonaire, an' clank me good watch chain to make the multi-chood mad at me. But who wants to be a milliyonaire nowadays, whin there are pleasanter ways of gittin into jail? Watch ye'er boy, and see if he shows anny signs in becomin' a capitalist, an' if he does, talk long and earnestly with him. Tel' him how th' thirst f'r money grows on a man; how he begins by takin' a little f'r socyability's sake; thin he finds he can't do without it; he frequents th' banks habitchoolly; wanst ten thousand dollars wud go to his head, now it takes millyons to affect him; an' h'y he's took up be th' polis, an' his future is in th' gallery marked, "habitchool milliyonaire," and he's doin' th' lock-step with prisidints iv railroad companies and other notoryous maly-factors. Don't let th' lad develop into a milliyonaire. Stop him now before it is too late.

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