

# THE TOILER

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## INDUSTRIAL EUROPE SEEN THROUGH AMERICAN EYES

### How the House of Lords has Paralyzed the Labor Movement in Great Britain.

By JUDSON GREENELL.

London, England, June 6.—One must read Charles Reade's "Put Yourself in His Place" to appreciate the contrast between the English trade unions of the middle of the last century and the trade unions of today. Then the members were practically social outcasts; to-day they sit in county councils and parliament. Then the methods were brutal and the funds of the unions were expended in gaining victories by harshness; to-day the large unions only a small per cent. of all contributions goes to the support of strikes.

This improvement was very general, and not until 1870 did parliament legislate labor organizations, perfecting the law in 1876. There is a remarkable change centered, from being secret societies, the unions stood before the public as responsible organizations, intent only on pursuing legitimate methods for the increase of the hours of labor and the abatement of the hours of the day.

A fair day's pay for a fair day's work was the universal slogan of the labor movement. To be sure there were disputes between masters and men as to what was a fair day's pay, or what should be the day's length; yet of the whole these disagreements were seldom accompanied by violence. The union press, the masters made good profits on their capital and ability, and the accumulation of wealth kept pace with the imports and exports.

Remarkable Strides.  
The statistics of the older trade unions show remarkable strides in the way of increasing membership benefits and reducing the cost of wage disputes. The law of 1875 protected the funds of the unions or was supposed to—and as labor society was responsible for the acts of its individual members or its officers when not sanctioned by a vote of the membership.

Under these favoring conditions the unions built up their treasuries, until the accumulation now run into the millions of dollars. But with this increase came increased responsibilities and benefits, until to-day there are thousands of members on the superannuation lists receiving from \$1.50 to \$2.50 or more a week, and the out-of-work benefits well into hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. One instance must suffice, that of the Friendly Society of Iron Molders, known in the United States as Iron Molders. In 1863 the superannuation list cost this labor organization over \$87,000; out-of-work benefits were \$150,000; the cost per member per week for strikes was less than a cent. In short, the total income in 1883 was \$325,000, of which less than \$5,000 was spent in disputes.

What the House of Lords Did.  
This was the condition of affairs up to 1900, when the House of Lords inaugurated a new rule of conduct for courts to follow. There had been a strike on the Taff Vale Railroad, which was carried on with vigor until the courts were asked by the company to interfere. The House of Lords, like the Supreme Court in the United States, is the highest authority in Great Britain for the interpretation of the law, and the House of Lords decided that when a strike injured the business of an employer, the union must pay the damages. This particular union was therefore assessed \$125,000, and it had to be paid out of funds collected for out-of-work superannuation, death and other benefits. There was, I believe, a compromise effected as to the amount to be paid, but the precedent has been established that the funds of the union are liable for the unauthorized acts of its officers.

By the Taff Vale decision every trade union in the land has been paralyzed," said Secretary Skinner, of the National Society of Compositors, to me. "We now have a small strike on our hands, but if we should carry it on with vigor in the most lawful way, there would be no protection against the opinion and decision of a hostile judge."

Mr. Skinner also told me of another case in point. A certain city government advertised for bids for printing. Among the bids received was one from a firm employing non-union printers. The secretary of the union wrote a letter to the city clerk, stating that this particular firm was a non-union one. Im-

mediately the firm demanded ample apology, or, threatened to sue. The apology, for fear of the funds, was forthcoming.

Organized Labor Respects Parliament.  
The unions are now trying to restore the status quo that preceded the Taff Vale decision. For this purpose they have introduced a bill into Parliament, and it was recently brought to a vote. I was an interested listener to the discussion, and in conjunction with delegations from the trade unions of England, Scotland and Wales, heard Mr. Arthur Balfour, the Prime Minister, and other Conservatives say that the labor organizations of the country had been prospering, though they were not quite ready to admit the necessity of the proposed law. But though Mr. Balfour spoke as highly of the good work done by labor organizations, it is the general opinion of labor men that if the Conservatives had their way, "The Tower of London" expressed by a Yorkshire weaver from the woolen district, "is the proper place to confine trade union leaders."

The trade union men answered with vigor, and the result was the bill was sent to a second reading by a vote of 228 for to 199 against, a majority of 29. But this does not insure the passage of the bill. It is not possible, with a hostile government, to carry it through the other stages. Only a dissolution of the present House and a Liberal victory at the polls will do this.

One incident of the day was striking. The Irish members of the day before were in Ireland attending to a conference, but so interested were they in the success of this measure that they travelled all night and arrived in time to vote in its favor. Another incident was the break-down of Winston Churchill in his speech supporting the bill. This member has heretofore voted with the unionists, but he has now deserted his old party and will, at the next election, stand for Parliament from one of the Manchester boroughs where working men's votes and free trade go hand in hand.

Unions Bound to Succeed.  
Until the bill is passed or defeated I feel confident that little progress will be made by the trade unions of Great Britain. These British workmen are a long-suffering people, who will try every constitutional method for gaining their ends before resorting to more drastic methods. But they will succeed in the end. There have the numbers on their side, and numbers, like battalions, count in war.

All W. C. Bowersman, of the London County Council, and Secretary of the London Society of Compositors, with its 11,000 members, voiced the opinion of the trade union element when he remarked to me:

"The workmen of this country made the trade unions against the fiercest opposition of courts, press and parliament, and they will find ways, with or without the aid of parliament, to protect their funds and continue the beneficent work of supporting the aged, aiding those out of work, burying their dead members and upholding fair conditions and fair wages."

Old Age Pensions.  
While on the subject of parliamentary action on a labor bill, I might mention that the bill calling for old age pensions has gone to a second reading without a division, though some of the Conservatives opposed it. Will Crooks, a labor member, championed the measure, claiming that the industrial veterans of the country were as important as those of the army or navy. "But for him,"

Mr. Crooks remarked, "there would be no need of army or navy to protect the wealth he has created."

It will take, it is estimated, about \$100,000,000 a year to give married couples over 60 \$1.75 a week, and single persons \$2.50. This bill is still a long way from becoming law.

But I have had my readers in London long enough, though it seemed necessary to lay a good foundation for investigation into social and economic conditions in the "provinces," as everywhere, England outside of London is called. So in my next I will let my readers hear the ring of the hammer on the anvil of Cradley Heath, where I have seen women making chains at their own freshest.

JUDSON GREENELL.  
TRUE REMEDY FOR THE DRINK EVIL.

In view of the way in which government ownership of the liquor traffic has been coming to the front lately the following editorial remarks from the Adelaide Herald (South Australia) will be of interest. The writer is contrasting Government ownership with the plan of local option prohibition.

"I do not oppose the rule of the majority if the issues are fairly placed before the people and if the people are sufficiently enlightened upon the subject. But it is possible that a majority vote may be the vote of the majority. This may appear paradoxical but it is true, and I think it is true with reference to the local option polls. Many hundreds of people think as I think that the issue is not fairly put before them; that the questions do not touch the vital principle of the matter, and they therefore do not vote as they should. I do not agree with those who are advocating the issue in refraining with the temperate party against the issue of new licenses, because it is the best practicable method of restraint so far put before the people. It is a method which is wrong, and that no efficient control of the traffic is possible without the exercise of private ownership. It is a method which is wrong, and that no efficient control of the traffic is possible without the exercise of private ownership. It is a method which is wrong, and that no efficient control of the traffic is possible without the exercise of private ownership."

"I am not ignorant of the enormous cost to the community of the drink traffic; I am not unaware of the tremendous sacrifice of human life, of the loss of the productive power, of the misery, poverty, suffering and crime which are attributed to drink. But I also am aware that for nearly a century past there has been an extensive and increasing sale of liquor, and that the people, and especially the poor, have been suffering from the effects of this sale."

"Does not this seem to indicate that the benevolent people who have been trying to stem the tide of drink have been working on a wrong issue? Does it not seem to suggest that they have overlooked the principal cause of the trouble? Have they not been regarding as a cause what is really only an intermediate effect of a more remote cause? I believe I am right in saying that the drink traffic is greater to-day, its victims are more numerous, its evil more astounding than it has ever previously been. The opinion is held by a large number of people that the evils of drink are most manifest among the two extremes of society, the wealthy and the poor. It is at these two ends of the scale that the waste on the one hand and the suffering on the other are most in evidence. The great middle classes do not drink."

"I have devoted much space to this subject, because I believe it to be one of vital importance to the moral, physical and intellectual well-being of the people. I have said so because I wish to see men thinking on what I believe to be right and practicable lines. Let me state the case in a few words. Drink is a cause of poverty, and poverty is a cause of drink. The waste among the wealthy, and the misery among the poor are due more to the unjust social system which admits of the existence of

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MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE'S REPORT.  
To the District Labor Council.

Your Municipal Committee beg leave to present their seventh report as follows:  
The hearing of an abattoir for the slaughtering of pigs in a residential neighborhood, such as Patton street, is a matter which should be dealt with by the Council. And the fact that the Council should have had an ulterior motive in view, must have been under the impression that the permit would meet with strong objection, if not finally quashed, had it taken the usual course. The suspension of Council rule always put a check on the quietude of the city, and something unusual was about to be pushed through quickly, but instead of frisking up their ears they dozed on under a cloud of perhaps premeditated stupidity. Your Committee believe there should be a plot of land set apart for the corporation for an abattoir, and that a citizen purchases property in their vicinity for the purpose of erecting a home he knows what he is going up against. When a locality is fairly well converted into a residential neighborhood it is difficult to find for our corporation to permit one of these "peculiarly smelling drug shops" to drop in and try to complete matters. The suspension of the rules of the Council to put through the above mentioned permit, in the opinion of your Committee, savors strongly as if it were a put-up job.

The Mayor's strong opposition against the city giving grants in purely local societies and organizations holding conventions in Toronto for the purpose of giving their friends a gala, meets with the approval of your Committee. The people's taxes have no right to be used for any such purpose. These appeals of general charity have been on the increase during the last five or ten years to such an extent that societies so indulging would consider it now a violation of their constitution with their by-laws thrown in, if such appeals were not made. Mayor Erhart's contention in this matter should receive the fullest endorsement of all classes of citizens who possess the least tittle of independence in their composition.

The summer months are rapidly passing away, and still the police are not enjoying their one day per month off as sanctioned by the Council some time ago. While Chief Grassett does not personally set his foot down on this order of the Council, yet he turns the cold water tap of disapproval upon it. He also sends a mild threat of doing away with the superannuation fund because it has been heavily handled and extravagantly indulged in in the past. This voluntary acknowledgment of the chief and the few tender-hearted officers who constitute the Benevolent Board does not sound well for their management. By all means let the superannuation clause remain till it covers the board.

J. ARMSTRONG, Secretary.

## SPARKLING THOUGHTS FROM J. L. GORTON'S SERMONS.

Egypt means bondage.  
The wilderness discipline.  
Patience the true development of the larger life.  
"My subject this morning is the turning of water into wine."  
We are living in the dispensation of the spirit.  
Paul calls it the grace of God.  
Jesus said I and my Father are one.  
These can be no godship, sanctity and holiness until you and I can say that.  
Becoming as conscious of the spirit and life as we are of the physical.

When God has His hand on the first He is in His heaven all is right.  
The critical hours are the hours of solitude.  
Jesus spent a night in prayer before He gave out the greatest sermon the world had ever heard.

E. W. CHARD  
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