

of the human race with due humbleness of heart.

The wageworker sees that unless he takes some steps towards the protection of the increasing number of workers against the ever increasing power of monopoly, combined with the influence of labor saving devices, the cold-blooded law of supply and demand will swallow him up completely. Each day adds largely to our numbers and each day adds largely to the production of labor saving machinery. Each day, therefore, increases the number seeking employment and decreases the demand for their services. This state of industrial anarchy has compelled the individual laborer, who would save himself from industrial slavery, to join hands with his fellow craftsmen to control the conditions under which he labors. It is a peaceful and lawful attempt to emancipate the wage slave from the galling chains forged by Shylock. We organize to give the worker the same opportunity of selling his labor dearly that the employer has of buying it cheaply. This is not all, however. We aim to raise the individual in physical and mental well being and self estimation by shortening the hours of labor so that he may have opportunity for education and development.

The greatest opposition to trades unions comes from the ranks of business and professional men, who little think that they are members of trades unions. They are banded together with men of their own calling to control the conditions under which they labor. If you are a doctor you have served an apprentice, passed an examination, and received your diploma and, I am reliably informed, you have your bill of prices. If you are a lawyer, the same is true with the possible exception of the bill of prices. That, I believe, is left to your own conscience. Go and buy a ton of coal or a keg of nails below the market price if you can. All the banks are paying exactly the same rate of interest on time deposits and charging about the same rate of interest on loans. If you are a manufacturer you are banded together with men in your own line of business to reduce the price of labor and to control the market price of what you produce. Now, if you are a member of a union and enjoy the privileges and benefits of such membership, is it fair to deny the same privilege to those who grow grain, yet go hungry; who weave silken robes, yet go threadbare; who bring forth the dusky diamonds from the bowels of the earth that you and your family may be warmed, yet go cold and penniless; who rear palaces and live in hovels; who produce all and yet have little?

But, you say, I don't deny them the right to organize, so long as they don't go out on a strike or declare a boycott. Then you go on to tell how many millions of dollars have been lost to the wage earners of the country by strikes, what suffering and privation the innocent are very often

compelled to endure, and thousands of other arguments that are generally used against trades unions.

No one can deplore a strike more than I do. That there has been and will be unnecessary strikes no one will deny, but no step that has been taken for the emancipation of the human race but has been brought about by a strike—I mention Valley Forge, the strike of the Wilderness, and the many battles fought during the revolution. The strike and the boycott are the only weapons in the hands of the unions.

This is an age of progress. Compare the first locomotive in this country with the last one turned out from the shops, No. 199. What wonders have been wrought by the hand of man. Would you deprive the many of the right to enjoy the fruits of their own energy and industry?

If this is an age of progress, should not labor enjoy a few of its blessings?

Such modern captains of industry as Carnegie, Pullman and Rockefeller, who pose as philanthropists, and donate toward the building of colleges, libraries and churches, and then follow with a cut in the salaries of their employes more than sufficient to make up for their liberality, put me in mind of a doctor who would make a lot of people sick, and then cure a few.

What the American wage earner wants is not only a public library, but a private one also.

There are about ninety thousand members of my craft—cigarmaker—in this country, about twenty thousand of whom are organized.

The condition of the organized cigar-maker has improved wonderfully since 1879, when the present organization was perfected. His wages have increased from forty to 100 per cent. and the hours of labor have been reduced from 16, 12 and 10 to a universal eight hour day. The system of piece work prevails.

Compare this with the deplorable condition of the unorganized cigar-maker. In the filthy tenement house districts of our great cities, he finds an abiding place with want, misery and disease for boon companions. In one small room he and his family work from early morn until late at night for a pittance barely enough to keep body and soul together. Grim warts stand at his elbow and urges him on to increase his efforts so he may lay aside something for sickness. Death, which comes to him early in life, is welcomed as a glad release. The potterfield embraces another victim of our glorious social system.

Just think of the children born in surroundings, spawned like reptiles, unhealthy and ignorant, dwarfed in mind and body, thrust forth into the world to starve, steal or murder, further spread disease, and you now have a faint picture of the moral and physical condition of a child born in these tenement houses.

Of course there is anarchy and murder and all kinds of crime in the world, but who is to blame for it? Surely not the poor criminal whose crime is a disease? No! a thousand times no! For if evil sur-

roundings beget bad morals and bad morals beget crime, then those who are responsible for the evil surroundings are indirectly responsible for the crime. If there is a God and a judgment day, I believe they will be so judged in the world to come. Those who have been making stepping stones of the skulls of their brothers to cross life's stream upon will find, when they get to the other shore, that even the hairs of our head are numbered.

We believe that a system that denies to the willing man the opportunity to work, then treats him as an outcast, arrests him as a vagrant and punishes him as a felon, is inhuman and destructive of the liberties of the human race.

We believe that the right to work is the right to live and to deny the one is to destroy the other. That when the private employer cannot, or will not give work, the municipality, state or nation must.

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Plumbers' and Gasfitters' Convention.

The Minnesota convention of journeymen plumbers and gasfitters was held in Duluth, Sunday, April 5. The three principal cities were represented. There were five delegates each from Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth. The visiting delegates were E. J. Harrington, J. Rogers, John Watson and W. D. Shay of Minneapolis, and W. J. O'Brien, A. H. Gerber, P. A. McQuilgan, I. H. Doherty, W. J. Feehan, of St. Paul.

The day was taken up in the transaction of the business of the convention and in the evening a banquet was given by the local journeymen Plumbers and Gasfitters union in honor of the visiting delegates.

The election of officers resulted as follows: President, E. J. Harrington, of Minneapolis; vice-president, Morris Connell, of Duluth; second vice-president, A. H. Gerber, of St. Paul; secretary, W. N. Oakey, of Minneapolis.

The most important subject discussed was the helper question which has agitated the craft for several years. It was the sentiment of the convention that the helper should be dispensed with.

Under any circumstances the helper plan was not approved. In the future, when the time shall arrive that new men will be required it was agreed that an apprentice plan should be adopted.

The delegates will report back to respective unions to the above effect.