

**LABOR AFFILIATION.**

**Its Advantages to Capital and Labor Explained by Gompers.**

**The Scheme Is However Largely Tentative—A Few Questions Propounded for Public-Spirited Men to Answer—The Story of a War Judge.**

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THE project for an affiliation of all the labor orders of the country, whereby the trades unions will acknowledge some one central authority instead of being divided, as now, into two great orders, is perhaps the most important subject which union labor has had under consideration in many years. The very magnitude of the undertaking appears to be responsible for much misunderstanding with reference to it. The scheme is largely tentative. It is not proposed to amalgamate the American Federation of Labor, the Knights of Labor and independent unions into an entirely new order. On the contrary, the idea is to maintain the autonomy of all existing organizations, but to make them allies in a more systematic way than has heretofore been thought possible. In other words, it is a closer application of labor's favorite motto: "In union there is strength."

When, at the last annual meeting of the American Federation of Labor, there was formally presented a proposition from Mr. James R. Sovereign, General Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, for a conference of delegates on this much discussed project of affiliation, a committee of three received instructions to act in the premises. As a member of that committee, I have found a general agreement among the members as to the desirability of maintaining the principle of home rule. That is, no central power of any kind should be granted authority to interfere with the affairs of particular trades. The printers must be left to govern the concerns of printers, carpenters of carpenters, and so on. It has always been my opinion that what have been termed the mistakes of organized labor grow out of the disregard of this principle. Fortunately, a clearer understanding of this matter begins to prevail. Now, under a judicious system of alliance, we should not witness such things as an ill-advised strike brought to failure through lack of cooperation on the part of an allied trade. Not that the idea of strikes is necessarily associated with this project. Indeed, one of its chief claims to consideration is the fact that it will lessen the provocation to strikes, and enable organized labor to redress its wrongs more effectively.

One effective way in contemplation is, of course, through the ballot-box. This has led to the supposition that the new movement is in reality the formation of another political party. That is leaping at a conclusion. When the wool-growers assemble to discuss the tariff, nobody accuses them of trying to form a new political party, even assuming that political parties are manufactured in this expeditious way. The laborer's idea is to ally themselves and then say: "We, the workmen of the republic, believe that such and such a law is unjust to us. We wish it done away with."

It will then be in order for the lawmakers to determine whether the great love they have for the workmen, as per platform planks, is sufficient to warrant them in granting the concession. This, it seems to me, will be one of the chief benefits of the proposed new order of things. But it should not be thought that there is any intention of threatening or bullying. The tyranny of the majority is as odious to union labor as any other form of tyranny. Indeed, it seems to me that even those elements in the community which take but a languid interest in labor matters should be glad that there is a project afoot which promises to do away with the wearisome disputes over the question of labor's power and labor's wrongs. It is hardly likely in the face of a solidified alliance of workmen's unions that the absurd aspects of labor's disputes with capital will continue, as we have seen exemplified recently, when a judge signed a document restraining a strike on a railroad. I use the word absurd in connection with this, not in criticism of any judicial power, but because I cannot understand how a piece of paper, however legal, can compel 80,000 men to do a thing which every one of them is resolved not to do. They tell a story of a war judge who issued an injunction restraining the battle of Gettysburg, yet the battle of Gettysburg was fought, I believe. We hear a great deal of the absurd ideas of workmen on the subject of the redress of their wrongs, but the curious devices which capital resorts to have not, apparently, received the same amount of attention. When a certain number of railroad hands have decided that their pay is miserably inadequate for their support, putting aside any thought of their families, and conclude that they will not work for their corporation employers unless their pay is increased. It seems to me a curious thing that they should all be threatened with jail on the ground that they have entered into a conspiracy, the evidence of the supposed conspiracy being the fact that they all quit work together.

The proposed cooperation of labor orders would have much to do with these conspiracies. It would endeavor to convince the powers that be that the conspiracy contemplated nothing more dreadful than the procuring of adequate wages for a day's work and would further try to punish the railroad magnates who enter into a conspiracy to carry the traveling public from one city to another to their own pecuniary profit. Should it be pointed

out, as the judge I have in mind pointed out, that the workmen's conspiracy injured the people who used the road, the labor allies could show that the conspiracy of the railroad directors to keep down the rate of wages was injuring the business of an entire community, because the shopkeepers who traded with the railroad hands were losing good customers, and the community itself was being impoverished. If the law still favored the capitalistic conspirators instead of the "labor conspirators," the conspiracy laws themselves—long a hateful tyranny to workmen—would be made the subject of an utterance to the lawmaking power.

Now all this is not creating a new political party. It is simply bringing the power of organized labor to bear on authority. Moreover, the redress thus sought would be obtained far more speedily than through the present method of waiting for election day to come around, not to mention that as matters stand now there is no central power with authority to voice the demands of labor generally. Of course there exist very adequate means of setting forth the wishes of influential sections of the working classes. The difficulty has heretofore been that there was no harmony in the multitude of plans for relief.

When the labor organizations have formally allied themselves, it will be possible, I think, to secure such reforms as government ownership of railways and the telegraph far more speedily than through any other channel of public opinion. One of the chief tasks of the new regime will be to push these favorite measures by an active propaganda. Another thing will be the conciliation of those elements opposed to labor unions by a series of actions and utterances that will show how fair-minded workmen really are. It will be made clear that everybody's interest is to let the workman be prosperous.

From present appearances there is likely to be no great difference of opinion among the members of the committee on the subject of organization. There may be what may be termed an advisory council, in which the referendum will form a court of last resort. For I am convinced that the unions will never submit to the dictation of a federate committee. The present subjection to capitalistic tyranny is so hateful that relief will not be sought in subjection to anything equally unrepresentative. The functions of the advisory council may be to outline policies and recommend measures. These policies and measures should in turn be submitted to a referendum on organized labor and the majority vote ought to decide. It seems to me that when the one million or more of union workmen have voted among themselves on ascertain measure and have agreed upon it with practical unanimity, the result upon the lawmaking power will not fail to be satisfactory.

As I have said, workmen are not in favor of strikes until every other fair means to obtain redress has failed. Under an amalgamation of labor orders a large general strike would be less likely to occur because such a variety of different trades would be called upon to participate and the general discussion would tend to evolve some satisfactory plan of settlement. If the demand of the men were fair, the discussion would enlist public sympathy and bring moral as well as general victory. And if the demands of the men themselves were not fair, their brother unionists would be the first to acknowledge the fact.

This naturally leads to the old question of the temptations labor leaders are asserted to be under to show their authority by precipitating a strike—the bigger the better. It never seems to occur to outsiders that the most to suffer by strikes are the labor leaders themselves. If the leaders were the selfish and mercenary creatures their enemies make them out to be, living in luxury and traveling in state, they would naturally dread a strike. For their revenues and the revenues of their orders come exclusively from the wages of the members. Throw those members out of employment and those revenues cease. The treasury of the order is drained for their support and a momentous responsibility is thrown upon the labor leader. Why, then, should he long to bring about a strike? Why should he be so anxious to leave his fine horses and his carriages, his picture galleries and conservatories, to say nothing of his hosts of friends in the Four Hundred, for whom he sets the fashion, to lead a lot of impoverished wage workers, ill clothed and ill fed as they frequently are, when in nine cases out of ten the result is so aggravating to himself? The public-spirited men who have been denouncing the new scheme of alliance as a provocation to strikes on a gigantic scale, owing to the ballying labor leaders, can, no doubt, answer these questions.

In fine, the workmen of the United States have been forced to consider and act upon this contemplated alliance. I believe it will be a success, that it will bring harmony, redress many wrongs and lead to the ultimate emancipation of labor.

*Samuel Gompers*

**He Ought to Know.**

A good story is told by one of a party of sightseers that was recently being shown over the house in Stratford-on-Avon in which Shakespeare was born. The guide pointed out in the room in which the great man's mother introduced William to the world sundry alleged autographs on the whitewashed walls of great actors and actresses of the present century. Among them were the names of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft.

"This is not Mr. Bancroft's signature," said a tall man who was one of the party.

"I ought to know," added the tall man, "seeing that I am Mr. Bancroft, and this is the first time that I have been in this house."—Waverley.

**A Genial Warmth.**

"I was very much touched by the warmth of my father-in-law's affection," said the young man who talks about his private affairs.

"Indeed. How was it expressed?" "By the present of a ton of coal."—*Washington Star.*

Experience proves that nothing else so surely destroys scrofula, as Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

**Not in the Swim.**

"Do you ever meet the Probusses, who moved down here from Milwaukee?" asked the visitor.

"Lord, no," answered the Chicago lady. "They ain't in society. They're dead rank outsiders."—*Indianapolis Journal.*

**Got There Anyhow.**

"What's all this talk about Jones' war record? He never smelt powder!"

"No, but his mule lost his voice brayin' at the surrender."—*Atlanta Constitution.*

**A Prominent Lady Arrested**

much attention at a Washington ball by her remarkable appearance of health. The glow and the charm of beauty need not depart from so many women, when a certain remedy exists in Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription for their functional and organic diseases. It properly cures nausea, indigestion, bloating, weak back, nervous prostration, debility and sleeplessness. Strength is renewed, energy returns, and beauty again blooms. It is purely vegetable and perfectly harmless. Druggists have it.

**He Believed Him.**

Fred—My girl wasn't through dressing when I called last night to take her to the theatre.

Arthur—That's what I thought when I saw her in the box with you. Why in the deuce didn't you let her finish?—*Philadelphia Life.*

**Corrected.**

The Mistress.—So you have really been married ten years? Then this will be your tenth anniversary.

The Landress.—No, mum. Not the tenth, but the ninth. That's why my friends are goin' to give us a lot of tin things.—*Pittsburg Bulletin.*

**A Boy's Experience.**

"A few months ago my face and neck were covered with boils and carbuncles and I had a tired feeling. I tried several different kinds of medicines but they had no effect until I got Hood's Sarsaparilla. When I had taken the second bottle the boils began to heal and the tired feeling was gone." Lorenzo Grinnell, Columbia Cross Roads, Pa.

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As a specimen of the dodges that are being resorted to by those who are opposed to the government's printing its own postage stamps that of bringing a committee there with a petition from the New York plate printers, setting forth the distress that would fall upon them should the government take this work away from them, is about the most transparent yet resorted to. The lowest private bidder for the work is a Philadelphia concern. So that the New York company is bound to lose the work, whether it comes to Washington, where it really belongs, or not.

Customer (in a restaurant)—"See here, waiter, I've found a button in this salad."

Waiter—"That's all right, sir; it is a part of the dressing."—*Good Housekeeping.*

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That did what the doctors could not do. It cured her. She has no trouble now, and no dread of the coming month. "I owe my life to you," she writes to Mrs. Pinkham. "Oh, if other suffering women could try your valuable medicine they would bless you as I do."



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