

*A FEW WORDS ON THE CONDITION
OF LABOR.*

The conflict between capital and labor is increasing instead of diminishing, and we doubt whether the "line of procedure" adopted by these two classes will result in bringing about a better understanding of their differences.

The laboring class has been outrageously imposed upon by capital, but has not labor imposed upon labor? Let us proceed to consider this interrogation.

Granting that legislation has favored monopoly and that through legislation the laboring people may be greatly relieved of some of the burdens they now carry, nevertheless there are other remedies, not less effective.

While the organizing of the laboring people is essential to their welfare, yet the individual laborer must think and economize for himself.

There are many difficulties which can be overcome, in no other way, than by the united efforts of the laborers. There is no doubt but that public opinion, a weapon so needful in such a struggle, can be courted in a better manner and sooner, by organized labor than in any other way, but often there is too much importance and dependence placed in the organization by the "ignorant" and that, upon which future success and happiness is based, is utterly lost sight of. There is no other question before us to-day that requires more sober thought, patience and endurance than the labor question. It is a failing in us all, when we feel that we have been imposed upon, to forget the importance of reason and to rush into a frenzy. It is owing to this failing that the laboring classes' condition is becoming more serious each generation.

Let us look into the individual side of this question and see how the laborer may be benefited. The American laborer has not learned the lesson so well mastered by his foreign brother. There is less importance paid to the amount he saves than to the price paid for his labor. He

has not experienced the hardships so prevalent among the laborers in Europe—present gratification is paramount in his thoughts; what is made in youth is squandered in youth; economy is a thing unknown to him, the fear of sickness and the thought of old age is not realized by him, and in his ruinous course he continues until the very net of recklessness and dissipation which he has woven environs him. It is either all sunshine or all rain with him—a feast to-day, to-morrow a crust, and thus it goes with him through life. He leaves nothing as a recompense for his work, has grumbled at the condition of affairs, now dies and it is a question whether his life has been worth living.

The discontented laborers of any community are those who do not save any of their earning and who are indebted to the stores, if there be any, connected with their work. The man who is saving some of his earnings, each month, rarely thinks of starting a strike. It is because of the few persons, ambitious enough to look forward to a better day, that there is so much trouble and so much imposition practiced upon the laborers by the monopoly. Were there more energetic workers there would be fewer strikes. The man who can afford to pay from ten to twenty-five per cent. of his earnings, an estimate not made without inquiry, for strong drink and tobacco, "because he has a right to," should not be too quick to complain on account of a six or eight per cent. reduction in his wages and go on a strike, thus losing more than he would have acquired had the reduction not been made. It has occurred to us that it would be better to instigate a strike against whisky monopolies. A boycott on whisky would receive the favor of all good thinking people.

The educating of the masses, so earnestly advocated in the constitution of the Knights of Labor, would undoubtedly make clear many of the mysteries connected with this question. The ignorant laborer is imposed upon by the better educated laborer. Those who have the ability to