

Portland Labor Press



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CORPORATION PHILANTHROPY.

The philanthropy of some of the big capitalistic enterprises is exemplified by a case in San Francisco. On August 2 Michael Egan, a trusted and faithful employee of the San Francisco Gas & Electric Co., was suffocated in the service of the company while repairing a pipe in a trench. Michael Egan was an honest and industrious workman, a devoted husband, and father of three handsome little children. He was poor, but managed to make a good living for his little family, but did not get enough wages to lay any money aside for a rainy day. About a year ago they lost a daughter six years of age, and the funeral expense put Michael Egan in debt \$100. This amount he was gradually reducing when his life was snuffed out by the accident.

But a few hours after the poor wife and mother had been advised of her great and irreparable loss the company sent a female adjuster, who is a relative to one of the officials of the company, and in the midst of the grief of the heart-broken woman, endeavored to persuade her to sign a "quit claim," in full settlement of her claim against the company for \$150. This Mrs. Egan refused to do; not because the amount was so small, but because it seemed to her that she was selling the life of her husband, whom she loved as she did her children. Now she is deprived of her only support, with three little children to care for and the youngest only six months' old.

Her husband's fellow workmen raised amongst themselves a purse of a couple of hundred dollars, but this amount will not be sufficient to clear the debt of the child a year ago and the funeral expense of her dead husband.

Very simply, and entirely without malice, Mrs. Egan explains why she does not want to sign the document which offers her \$150 in full settlement of her claim against the corporation.

"If I put my name to it," she says, "it is like saying that I was taking \$150 in payment for my dear husband's life and love and devotion—my good, kind husband. Not all the money in the gas company—no, nor all the gold in San Francisco can pay me back for what I have lost."

"My husband died for the company. His life may be nothing to those rich men, but if he had been spared to his little ones he would have earned many and many times that sum to care for and educate them. I must go out to work for their bread in his place. And there are the burial plot and undertaker's bill yet to be paid. I need the \$150, but I cannot acknowledge in writing that my dear husband's dead body is worth such a sum—no, I cannot."

"But Mrs. Hindes says I must sign or I will get nothing. It is not for me to dispute so grand a lady who perhaps thinks she is kind. At first she offered me \$100. I refused to sign a 'quit claim'—that is what she called it—for \$100. She came again and left this paper for \$150. I told her it would be signing away my children's rights. She said that I had better not antagonize so rich and powerful a company; that if I had any idea of suing for damages I had better give it up. 'The gas company has enough money to buy up all the lawyers in the city,' she said. You see, I have no money at all to hire a lawyer with, and I do not doubt what Mrs. Hindes said. But I told

her that no money on earth could bring back to me what I and my babies had given up to the company, and how could I sell my happiness for \$150?"

"Mrs. Hindes answered that she considered it a liberal sum—a very liberal sum indeed. 'Furthermore,' she said, 'the meter and service men have made up a fund of \$314. If you do not sign the paper releasing the company, that sum, or the most of it, will be withdrawn.' Today another and longer paper came from the company. I suppose they think because it is longer that I will be frightened and will sign. But I am not frightened. I am not even angry—my heart is like it was turned to stone."

And this is corporation philanthropy—not all, but most of them.

San Francisco has been characterized by the enemies of organized labor as a "union-ridden city," but the 15,000 Knights Templar who meet in that city the first week in September in convocation will hardly admit that this is true. Labor Day occurs on September 5, the same day the Templars hold their monster procession, and while over fifty trades unionists will march in the streets in a great spectacular procession, they have given the Knights Templar the right-of-way, and have shown them every courtesy due a guest. In fact the managers of the Knights Templar demonstration and the trade unions are working together so that both affairs will prove a grand success. The Templars will be given the street first. After they have concluded their pageant they will retire and the labor unions will take possession of the streets. The Templars have invited the union members and their families to occupy their review stand, which seats 5000 people, and the invitation has been accepted. The Barbers' Union has voted to keep open shop on Labor Day, for no other reason than the accommodation of the visiting Templars. This is a considerable personal sacrifice, as Labor Day is the only holiday that they have all to themselves. It is this broad-minded, public-spirited policy that has made union labor popular in San Francisco. There is no doubt that labor unions have been stigmatized for things that it is wholly innocent of, but this was done by enemies and accepted by people who were ignorant of the facts. However, if labor unions would be more liberal, and not try to hew too close to the line, it would not be long until the public would recognize the merits of its endeavors, and turn a deaf ear to the pratings of its oppressors. It hardly pays an individual to be wholly selfish, let alone an organization that endeavors from time to time to improve its condition, asking at the same time the endorsement of the people who hold the balance of public sentiment. It is the disposition to give the other fellow some of the good things that has made San Francisco the strongest big union city on the continent.

The mission of the Portland Labor Press is to exploit the beliefs and doctrines of organized labor in a dignified and conservative manner, without assuming that the working people are the heirs to all of the ills, and that capitalists are all industrial brigands and slave drivers. The purpose of the labor press throughout the country is to appeal to the better elements of mankind, and act as a medium of education and defense against the attacks of the subsidized press. This kind of policy may not suit a certain class of men that can see no virtue in their own government, her people and their customs, but that doesn't matter. The Labor Press is after the class of working men who have brains, and who are anxious to acquire them. Men who are willing to reason together and act with calm deliberation. At the same time it should expose rascality in whatever strata of political or social society it is found, at the same time willing to be charitable according to the intent and issue involved. This policy of the Portland Labor Press has led one of our best business men in the city to remark: "If every laboring man in the City of Portland would read the Labor Press as carefully as I do, and act upon its advice, the whole movement in the city would be away ahead of where it is today. I read the paper carefully each issue and find in it many good things for the employer as well as the employee. It should be better patronized." And acting upon his remarks this gentleman is one of our substantial supporters.

A street car conductor that runs over the river to the East Side came in for a pretty rebuke the other day by a business man who does not have to work with his hands, and never belonged to a labor union. He was sitting in the vestibule, along with a number of other men, and in

the course of a few minutes started a conversation with the conductor about the butchers' strike in Chicago with the meat trust. The conductor replied that the butchers were getting just what they needed, whereupon the business man fairly grew white with rage. "You," he said, "a man who works for a living, denouncing the endeavors of wage-earners to place themselves above the level of the serf. I have been in Chicago and saw it all. I have never worked with my hands, or for another man in my life, but I am in sympathy with the Chicago butchers, and you had ought to be, for they are right. You had ought to be ashamed of yourself to express yourself in that kind of a way." By this time the business man had reached his street and gave the signal for the car to stop and let him off, but before he could alight several well-dressed men shook him by the hand, although they were strangers to each other, and told him that he voiced their sentiments.

The committee on Labor Day is actively engaged in raising funds and preparing a program of afternoon sports. The money derived from the receipts of the gates in excess of actual expenses will go to the leather-workers, who have been forced into idleness for the past several months by the bosses. If the Citizens' Alliance can see anything in it for either party or the community to keep men out of work, or employ them at starvation wages, they are welcome to it. It is a pity, however, that they escape the actual burdens of the situation. Assuming that they are sensible and liberal men, it would change completely the attitude they have shown thus far.

According to street talk the financial condition of Portland is in bad condition. It is said that since the revenues that were extorted from the gamblers of \$5000 per month had been cut off it would be necessary to retrench in some of the city's departments. If some of this retrenchment had been industriously applied in the past the City of Portland would not now need this blood money to carry on its departments, and the property owners would not be compelled to pay the exorbitant tax of 40 mills either. As usual the mending process has not been begun until the garment is almost a total wreck.

MOLDERS INDORSED.

Organized Labor Asked to Taboo Certain Goods.

New Britain, Conn., Aug. 15, 1904.
To the Officers and Members of Our Sister Unions, Greeting:
Brothers: On May 1, 1902, the molders employed by the Russell & Erwin Co., of New Britain, manufacturers of locks and builders' hardware, made a request on the firm for an advance of 10 per cent on the wages being paid. The matter was discussed with the firm for a month or so, and, after the visit of our national officer the firm referred the question to the National Founders' Association. Preparations were made to take up the question with this association, but shortly after the Toronto convention the firm notified the molders that they had withdrawn the matter from the hands of their association and that they would take it up again with their employees. When they did so, however, it was to inform them that they would not grant the request. Later a conference was held, at which the representatives of the two associations failed to agree.

Seeking a peaceful solution of the situation, we allowed our request to be held in abeyance until the conference that was held in New Haven in January, 1903. This conference, after two days' session, adjourned for several days, and during the interval between conferences a number of our members were discharged, their places being filled by laborers. This action being a direct violation of the firm's obligation as a member of the National Founders' Association, the firm's attention was called to this violation of the agreement between the two associations by the officers of the National Founders' Association, as well as those of the I. M. U. of N. A., but the firm declined to be governed by their own laws or the spirit of equity. Later on another situation arose in the foundry through the efforts being made to further weaken our shop organization, and we have since endeavored to peacefully adjust the matter, but without avail.

In January, 1903, an agreement was entered into in the city of New Haven, between the National Founders' Association, on behalf of all its members in Connecticut making locks and builders' hardware (these firms were the Yale & Towne Co., J. B. Sargent & Co., P. & F. Corbin Co., and Russell & Erwin Co.)—and the Iron Molders' Union of North America, on behalf of its members employed by the above named firms. This agreement established a standard by which wage

rates were to be fixed. The first two firms mentioned have carried out the terms of this agreement in its entirety, but the P. & F. Corbin Co. and the Russell & Erwin Co., known also as the American Hardware Co., have failed to do so, and the latter firm has also notified our officials that it would not carry out the terms and provisions of the agreement it was a party to.

Since the first circular was sent out by this union, August 14, 1903, the National organization has made every effort to have this question taken up with the association representing these two firms; repeated promises were made that this would be done, but finally it became apparent, through the correspondence received from the officials of the National Founders' Association, that they declined to take up this question upon its individual merits.

In view of these conditions, the National Executive Board of the Iron Molders' Union of North America have granted us authority to continue the strike against these two firms, and have also accorded us the financial support of the organization, and the power to place these firms upon the unfair list, as no method, excepting this, is left to us if we are to enjoy the terms of the agreement. We now request you to assist us in our righteous cause by appointing committees, and sending them wherever possible for the purpose of informing all who might have an interest in the matter that all of the products of the American Hardware Co., composed of the P. & F. Corbin Co. and the Russell & Erwin Co., manufacturers of locks and builders' hardware, are on the unfair list.

Fraternally yours,

DENNIS O'KEEFE,
ROBERT SPENCE,
CHARLES BAISDEN,

Approved: _____ Committee.

JOS. F. VALENTINE,

President I. M. U. of N. A.

Address all communications to Chas. Baisden, 57 Madison St., New Britain, Conn.

Headquarters American Federation of Labor.

Washington, D. C., July 20, 1904.

To All Organized Labor and Friends: Greeting: The executive council of the American Federation of Labor has made a thorough investigation of the complaint of the Iron Molders' Union of North America against the American Hardware Company (composed of the P. & F. Corbin Co. and the Russell & Erwin Co.), manufacturers of locks and builders' hardware, and find the complaint well founded. An effort was also made by the executive council for an adjustment of the dispute, without a successful result, the company manifesting its unwillingness to be fair in the matter. For the above reasons the executive council has approved the action of the Iron Molders' Union of North America, and its locals, in placing the American Hardware Co. (P. & F. Corbin Co. and Russell & Erwin Co.), manufacturers of locks and builders' hardware on the unfair list.

We urge all trade unionists and our friends to render every assistance within their power to bring this company to a realizing sense of its duty to the organization and the men in interest.

Fraternally yours,

SAML. GOMPERS,
President A. F. of L.

We hereby request that all unions affiliated with the Oregon State Federation of Labor comply with the following petition.

C. H. GRAM,

GEO. E. SHAVER, President.
Secretary-Treasurer.

White Men Preferred.

The employment of Japanese workmen in the C. S. Mumby shingle mill in Olympia, Wash., which for a time threatened to extend to the other shingle mills of the city, has come to an end.

Following an agreement recently made by which union weavers began work in the Lea mill at Tumwater, at a temporary reduction of 10 per cent, in wages, Mr. Mumby announced that he would employ white men on the same terms. The Japanese workmen have been gradually replaced by white men, as the latter could not be obtained. Last Monday the mill closed down for two weeks, and it is announced that when it starts again the last of the Japanese workmen will have been replaced.

The amicable settlement of the question of employing Japanese shingle weavers is largely due to the merchants of Olympia, who have aided Mr. Mumby in coming to an agreement with the white workmen and in securing a crew from among their number.

Plumbers are perhaps the best paid of any mechanics in the City of Mexico. They get from \$2 to \$4 a day.



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Carmen's Hospital Association.

One of the grievances of the street carmen of this city under the old regime in the local street railway service was the exaction by the Market street company of monthly "hospital fees" from each employee. Many of the men were afflicted with fraternal orders which paid sick benefits and others for various reasons objected to the payment of this "hospital fee," consequently when the strike occurred the abrogation of the compulsory fee system was demanded by the men and agreed to by the company. Some time thereafter a number of the street carmen determined to organize a hospital association of their own, and the plan was put into practical operation on August 1, 1903, under the name, Street Railway Employees' Hospital Association. The association is governed by a board of nine directors, and it has been a success from the beginning, and has a healthy bank account at this time. The city is divided into three districts, a physician to attend the members of the association being located in each district, and the members have also the privilege of consulting a specialist engaged by the association.

The following extract from a circular issued by the association will give an idea of the service rendered during the last year:

"Dr. F. W. Simpson, of the first district (2594 Mission street), has treated 1474 patients, and these patients made 3103 visits to Dr. Simpson. Dr. A. S. Keenan of the second district (room 411, 927 Market) has treated 1165 patients, who made 1956 visits to him. Dr. Leo L. Meininger of the third district (807 Sutter street) has treated 967 patients, and these patients made 2243 visits to the doctor. Dr. A. W. Kirk, specialist for the association (room 611, 927 Market), has treated 436 patients, who made 1738 visits to him. Total number of patients treated by the four doctors, 4036; total number of visits for the four doctors, 9042; total number confined in the various hospitals, 57. Members have received all medicines and supplies, which alone, purchased by the individuals, would amount to thousands of dollars. Take for illustration: The cost to the individuals of 9042 visits at \$2 a visit, would amount to the enormous total of \$18,084, which alone is considerably more than half of all the dues collected for the entire year, and that