

Written for this Paper.

## ARE WORKERS ONLY TO BE BLAMED!

It would almost appear to a looker-on or to a reader of the papers, as if all the blame of all the conditions existing in this country is to be thrown "sans ceremonie" upon the shoulders of the laboring population, and as a corollary to this, that all employers, all capitalists, all politicians, are the very models of propriety, the embodiment of righteousness, the very soul of honor and the makers of the nation in which we live. This representation may arise from the fact that most newspapers are owned and controlled by the critics, and the accused has not so many facilities (if any) for the statement of his grievances, heavy though they may be.

If there are strikes, and riots, and violence, the participants are denominated as aliens, or anarchists of some degree, and their presence here is stigmatized as a menace to the nation. They are often called criminals, and the older nations are charged with making this the dumping ground for the uncontrollable elements of their own society. Now, this is not fair at the outset, for agents from this country traversed Europe for years, by speeches and specious literature begging all creation—the "downtrodden and oppressed" of all nations, to come here and enjoy those blessings of liberty to them hitherto unknown! On the same line of action, manufacturers and capitalists contracted for labor abroad, until legislation had to make it a penal offense, which compelled greater secrecy, though some assert that it is still continued in violation of law. Steamship companies, since sailers were superseded, have found it a profitable part of their business to encourage emigration, almost without supervision or restraint! That under this loose method some undesirable persons have found their way here, need not be denied; but the country is to blame for this and not the ones who are denounced. But politicians have juggled with this element, and for fear of losing a few votes of some nationality, they have winked at malfeasance in office. Discrimination has been avoided, and far too often this crude populace have been admitted to the polls, and indirectly have influenced the home citizen's natural desire for well being and laudable self-defense!

Every now and again this fallacious form of conciliation has been pointed out in leading cities, by men who sensed the dangers thereof, but the man or party who wanted the Irish vote, the Hungarian vote, the Italian vote, or the German vote, sought to conciliate the influential of that nationality as a *quid pro quo*! More than that, the feeling of a vagrant sentiment has been encouraged, in that men were not urged to become whole-souled Americans. They were allowed to remain Irishmen or Hungarians in fact, while nominally citizens of a grander and better country, as was assumed. Societies have been formed and encouraged; means have been collected and sent, by the former class at least, in enormous aggregate to foster animosity, and against the friendly comity of a nation as great and proud as ours; United Irishmen, Fenians, Parnellites have flourished on this

supply, collected and sent abroad, without remonstrance, because it was justified (so they said) of political expediency. And in deference to this sentiment, vicious under the circumstances, the flag of these alien hordes have floated from the public buildings of our largest cities. When one official decried and forbade this, the patriot everywhere saw its propriety; and he was sustained. Since that, another official has ruled the other way, as a conciliatory move, an election being close at hand.

All the great centers are affected by this feature; municipalities, counties, states and the nation, bear witness that offices are bought, and others are filled by those who have to be placated for services rendered or to be performed in some expected political campaign; and the spoils of office are counted upon as the *summum bonum* of all maneuvering, and the universally undisputed method of patriotic (?) reward.

Combinations and trusts for the securing of assured interest upon capital are always legitimate (so say the papers) but combinations of labor to prevent reduction or secure advance are considered to be anarchical, particularly if persuasion is used with non-union men amounting to what is called intimidation. But if a man's business is crushed because he will not become a member of a trust, it is looked upon without compunction for the man or firm at all.

On the basis that none should seek to prevent a man from working at a lower price than his fellow, an eastern house (abetted by the railroads) swamped the Utah Soap company years ago, for they laid down soap here at Chicago prices because they had the power and means. Every other struggling industry of our Territory is thus beset, if no higher attribute of humanity is to be brought into play than that of soulless or necessitous competition.

Then, again, where it comes to the sensitive character of capital and its rights, about which we hear *ad nauseam*, can it not be said that most of our great capitalists made these mammoth fortunes in trade or manufacturing? A. T. Stewart began life as a peddler, he died the ostensible owner of many millions. Was that wealth acquired legitimately? Was he justified in exacting profits from those who bought, until by cumulation he owned as much as all his trade combined? He is dead, but there are hosts of similar men and corporations of one kind and another—we could mention their names—who have advanced from poverty or labor to what might be called undue affluence. Their employees mark the expansion of their works, building and rebuilding each time on a more palatial scale. They bear of the grandeur of their homes, the magnificence of their surroundings, their style and fashion and table, the obsequence of their servants, and they are confronted every now and then with a reduction of their remuneration, ten or fifteen per cent on work or a few cents per ton on coal! It would be less than human nature of any kind, if no query were asked as to the everwidening gulf between the conditions of the producer and his boss!

A certain proprietor in Wales inherited a vast iron works which had been founded of his father. He and his family (as he called his workers) had grown up together; their interests were identical; mutual confidence made labor pleasant and remuneration more than certain. A few demagogues wormed their way among the workmen and pressed the necessity of union in self-defense. They had no grievance, but suspicion was aroused. Their old friend was looked upon as their enemy, spite of all experience. For years they had gone to him for counsel even in their private affairs. But coldness crept in, in its stealthy way, and the old man succumbed in death to the changed conditions. His son was heir to the business and the works, and this changed feeling wrought upon a more sensitive organization than the father's a condition of despondency. To be suspected was death; but his remonstrance fell upon a soured and jealous soil, and escape only seemed possible by the closing of the works, which was eventually done!

Very little of such a regretful feeling is possible among the multi-millionaires of this amazing country. Sympathy there is none, and wealth indulges so freely in ostentation and parade, that maybe envy and jealousy are aroused when a better acquaintance, greater cordiality, and warmer interest between the classes would ward off that danger which seems imminent in almost every state!

It is a sad reflection upon our civilization, upon our patience, upon our inability to cope with human nature, to realize that in seven states of the Republic, troops are in the field to put down riots, based on labor disputes, which ought to be settled amicably and peacefully as they arise from time to time! Maybe the American character is too intolerant, too impulsive, too sure that everybody is in the wrong but one; that this may yet become serious as was the war of the Rebellion is not improbable, and that was as uncalled for as any war on earth from the standpoint of today, for it was a "word and a blow" without diplomacy, without truce, without arbitration, yet at the cost of millions of treasure, and at a fearful sacrifice of life and property.

We would not have it thought, however, that labor is without fault; but all can see that to the toiler every reduction of wages means a diminution of comfort for wife and babies. Even the few cents a day which a proprietor would throw into the gutter is the margin between desire and enjoyment which it is criminal to disturb. To continually apply that test which asks, "how little can we pay that man for his labor?" and then enforce it, will lead to untold destruction of property and drench this land in blood. It is the "sowing of dragons' teeth," which will eventually produce an army of desperate and uncontrollable men!

## STAKE CONFERENCES.

ST. JOSEPH.

The quarterly conference of the St. Joseph Stake of Zion was held at Pima, Arizona, June 10 and 11. It was well attended. There were present