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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VIII.

LABOR PROBLEMS OF THE TWENTIETH
CENTURY.

BY PRESIDENT CHARLES WILLIAM ELIOT, LL.D.

[An address given before the Boston Labor-Union to define the author's attitude on the labor question. This address and his previous one on "The True Mission of Labor-Unions" (published in the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA*, for January, 1903, pp. 129-147) furnish two of the most important contributions to the subject that have been made, and are worthy of the permanent preservation which they will receive by being published in our pages.—ED.]

THE opening of the twentieth century has witnessed a remarkable change in the conflict between labor and capital—a change due to the rapid increase in the effective power of large combinations of men. Democracy has made legal these combinations, whether of laborers or of employers; and applied science has made them possible on an immense scale and over great areas. The telegraph, telephone, and quick mail have made it possible to unite thousands of men who live and work in groups scattered all over our broad land, in prompt common action under a few leaders whose headquarters are kept in instant connection with hundreds of thousands of different centers of industrial activity. This secure legal status, which is hardly thirty years old (in England 1871-75), and these means of instant communication, so recent as still to be developing, belong both to workingmen and to employers. The workingmen were the first to utilize them; for till the opening of the twentieth century the organization of employers was very inferior, both in extent and in firmness, to the organization of the employes.

RISE OF EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS.

In most of the trades and manufactures in this country the employers were so imperfectly organized that, by attacking

one employer, or a few isolated employers, in a trade or manufacturing in which many employers were competing with each other, the labor-union could gradually overcome the whole group by forcing a few at a time to raise wages or shorten hours in fear lest their competitors should capture their business during a strike. It is the frequent sight of this conquest in detail and the mounting demands of organized labor which have finally produced firm associations of employers. The spirit of the numerous employers' associations, which with characteristic American quickness have been organized within three years, is not always the same. In some of them the prime object seems to be to resist labor-unions; but in most of them the main intention is to discuss with organized labor new demands from either side, to prevent the interruption of production, and, respecting each other's rights, to keep the peace and cooperate for mutual benefit.

An employer, or an association of employers, may be expected to resist at first new demands of his employes, if these demands threaten to diminish the employer's habitual profit; but if the employes stop working, the employer will not long forego all income from his investments in buildings, machinery, and stock. If his market is secure, he will raise the price of his product enough to cover his new expenditures for labor and to keep his own habitual profit—that is, he will, after a time, compromise with his employes, resume operations, and recoup himself from the community. Naturally, an employer who has a practical monopoly in his business will act in this way sooner than one who has not, for he is surer of his market. Now, the final outcome of the successful organization of a solid and complete employers' association in any trade or industry is the securing of a monopoly of the whole product of that trade or industry; and the final outcome of the successful organization and maintenance of labor-union is a monopoly of all the labor in the trade or industry which the union represents. Work out to perfection in practice the theory of the complete national employers' association in any trade, and federated labor-unions all over

the country in the same trade, and we arrive at the successful establishment of two monopolies—one in the labor necessary for making the goods, and the other in the goods themselves.

The fundamental motive and spirit of these two monopolies are precisely the same. Both propose to prevent competition, so that each may regulate prices within its own field. The workmen propose to get into the union all the laborers in their trade, so that they can control the daily wages, the number of hours or of pieces of work which shall be called a day, and the general conditions under which the work is done, the definition of a day's work being the basis of the demand for extra pay for overtime. The employers propose to fix the conditions under which the whole product of the industry shall be sold to the public. The strong employers' association, which at the first may have been an organization chiefly for defense, inevitably tends to become a means of establishing a monopoly, or, at least, to become a price-raising or price-maintaining agency, and every national or international labor-union is trying to determine all the conditions of labor, pecuniary and other, for every laborer in the industry it represents, or, in other words, is trying to establish a successful monopoly of the sale of a certain kind of labor.

THE JOINT AGREEMENT.

The new feature in the industrial conflict since the twentieth century began is this—one monopolistic combination, the union, nowadays finds itself in face of another, the employers' association. This kind of encounter, which was rare, is now common. Out of it has promptly come the joint agreement. This joint agreement between a labor-union, or group of unions, and an employers' association is a very important step in the development of the conflict over industrial conditions, and it is of the utmost consequence that the general public should understand its significance. The firm labor-union, or group of firm unions, makes an agreement with a firm employers'

association—an agreement which ordinarily covers a period of from one to three years; in this agreement are included wages, hours, and elaborate provisions for the discussion of differences and the settlement of disputes in conferences between the two parties and for arbitration when conflicts fail to reach a satisfactory settlement by direct conference. The employers agree to employ only union men and the union agrees that its members shall work only for members of the association, and thus the employers accept and give effect to all the restrictive regulations which the union imposes on its own members.

The plain tendency of the joint agreement is to bring about a junction of the forces of labor and capital in the combined effort to raise prices and so increase both wages and profits. This ultimate result has been reached in several trades or industries in the United States within the last three years. It is not an original or novel idea. Just such results were aimed at in the combination called the Birmingham alliances in England, which date from 1890. These alliances included a pledge on the part of the manufacturers not to employ any but members of the operatives' association, and on the part of the operatives not to work for any but those manufacturers who sell their goods at prices decided on from time to time by a "wages board, to be formed of an equal number of employers and employed." The two parties united their forces in order to exact better terms from the community for their trade as a whole, and incidentally to protect themselves against what they considered unfair competition. It is this idea which has been rapidly carried into practice on a great scale among our own people since the twentieth century opened. The dual combination of laborers with employers is sometimes strengthened by including an association of manufacturers of the supplies which the employers in the trade concerned make use of. The three bodies acting together are capable of exercising a complete command over the trade so organized; but they have great difficulty in acting together except in very prosperous times.

Whither does this practice tend, and what are the natural limits of its power, if any there be? Under democratic law and custom, and with the facilities which modern society possesses for quick intercourse and free exchange of views, these two monopolistic combinations, the union and the employers' association, have come into existence, and are capable of uniting in a common interest. What is the limit to the successful exercise of the tremendous power such a combination of two monopolies possesses? The limit, I believe, is only to be found at the limit of the consuming power of the population. That consuming power is limited. It fluctuates from year to year, but it rises in civilized countries from generation to generation, and has risen prodigiously during the past one hundred years. Nevertheless, its limits are much narrower than the modern monopolists appear to suppose.

MODERN TENDENCIES ILLUSTRATED.

Let me illustrate, as briefly as possible, what I mean by these limits of consuming power. Ninety years ago Harvard College, which was then an institution of far less wealth and influence than it is to-day, built in the middle of the college yard, from plans made by Charles Bulfinch, the earliest of American architects, a handsome building of white hammered granite, from Chelmsford. It stands there to-day, one of the most valued of the university buildings, a great credit to the architect who designed it and the stonemasons who shaped the material. A few years ago, hoping that it would be possible to use the same material in a new stone building which had been designed for the university, I inquired into the cost of that same stone, cut in the same way, and found that cost to be absolutely beyond the resources of the present university. It was out of question to use again the hammered granite which three generations ago it was possible for the poorer college to employ to such advantage. Any one who examines the office buildings and other commercial structures lately erected in Boston will see that the stone used in them is a soft limestone, or a sandstone, which can be sawed.

Instead of the hammered granite fronts which used to stand on Pearl Street and many of the other older streets of Boston we have nowadays brick fronts, trimmed with soft stone, and steel frame buildings veneered with thin layers of the same easily worked material. The rock hills of New England could well supply granites of immense endurance and many pleasing shades of color; but the labor conditions in the granite industry prohibit the use of those materials.

To take another illustration from the building trades— heavy buildings used to be placed on solid foundations of block granite; but, because of the great cost of such foundations, concrete structures, which can be erected with little except the crudest sorts of labor, will be hereafter largely substituted for brick and stone. At this moment, building all over the United States has been checked, because the cost of building has so increased that men thinking to invest in buildings are doubtful if they can get, at the present prices of construction, an adequate return on their investment. The method of abstinence on the part of the consumer will stop the rise of prices, even in an industry which two absolute monopolies control. I believe that there is no other real limit to the power of such combinations.

SOME GAIN TO THE COMMUNITY.

There is, however, some clear gain to the whole community from the progressive rise in the price of labor and of materials since labor-unions began to put up wages. Invention has been strongly stimulated thereby—the invention of labor-saving machinery and of new materials or new combinations of materials. Every such invention adds to the power of man over Nature, and some of this added power ought to be credited to the unions. At this point some enthusiastic unionist may say, Organize every trade and calling, so that there shall be no non-union public to suffer from the price-raising which twentieth-century unionism effects. But if we try to imagine the entire community divided into trade-union groups, each group containing the union and the employers' association of its trade, we immediately perceive that the attitude of

each single trade group toward its consumers will remain precisely what it is now. Society will be divided into monopolistic trade groups; but each group will be trying to get higher wages and profits by raising prices on its own goods. The union label will be on all goods, and therefore of no advantage to any; and the only market will be a higgling between entrenched monopolies. A demand consisting of many unionized monopolies will encounter a supply proceeding from a single unionized monopoly. This situation is almost unimaginable.

Recent experience and the ordinary working of universal human motives assure us that these combined efforts of two monopolies may be directed, and will be directed, to raising the prices of necessities of life, such as coal, wheat, and water. From real necessities of life the people at large cannot long abstain, though in some measure they can find substitutes for things they have considered necessities. People can wait for cigars or cash registers, or even for houses and shops; but they cannot wait long for food, or domestic fuel, or, in cities, for the water which must be pumped by coal, or for the street lights produced from coal. Already in the United States the supplies of these necessities of life in modern society have been seriously threatened, and indeed, for brief periods, partly cut off. From such dangers society must find a sure way to defend itself. The total interruption of the post-office, telegraph or telephone service, or municipal water supplies is not to be contemplated by modern society. Other modes than strikes or lockouts must be used for adjusting wages and hours of labor in such services as these. All possible alleviations and defenses being taken into account, it must be confessed that the prospect of encountering a combination of a perfect labor-union and a perfect employers' association, both engaged in providing a necessary of life, and both bent on raising its price, is a formidable one for society at large. Democratic society has by its legislation and by its public opinion made such a combination possible, and democratic society must guard against dangers which, in its pursuit of liberty, it has engendered.

It is, of course, conceivable that the legislatures which created the right of association should hereafter limit that right, or restrict the purposes for which the right should be exercised. It is also conceivable that the courts should find ways of preventing that close restraint of trade which results from firm monopolistic organization, whether that of a labor-union or of an employers' association, or indeed of a very comprehensive trust among owners of railroads, steamships or factories. Much of the old doctrine about conspiracy and restraint of trade seems to be in an uncertain and latent condition; but it is possible that this doctrine may be revived and developed by democratic courts and accepted by democratic society. The world has already seen the disappearance of monopolistic industrial organizations which once had great power.

THE GUILDS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

The old guild organizations of medieval Europe, once very powerful in the regulation of wages and prices, broke down before the end of the eighteenth century, under the action of new economic forces. It was in part the extension, first, of home industries, and then of the factory system, and the introduction of mechanical power, which gradually destroyed these ancient industrial authorities; but, chiefly, it was the incompatibility of the guild system with nineteenth-century ideas of individual liberty and free competition. The medieval guilds bore more resemblance to labor-unions than to the modern associations of employers; for they not only regulated wages, hours of labor, and apprenticeship in a given craft, but they had certain benevolent and social features such as enter into the purposes of modern labor-unions. The story of the decline of the guilds suggests that democratic forces may again put limits to the power of association laborers and associated capitalists alike. When such associations of either kind become monopolistic, they interfere with ideas which are precious to modern society and especially to democratic society—the ideas of individual liberty and free competition.

The same democratic government which gave the right of

association and the right of incorporation with limited liability has already exercised some powers of supervision over the strong combinations thus created, especially when the industrial combinations created began to exert a monopolistic power. Thus railroads, steamship companies, gas companies, and electrical companies of all sorts, with banks, savings banks and insurance companies, have been made subject to various degrees of public supervision, and this public supervision commands, in most respects, public approval, and has produced, where wisely exercised, admirable results in the protection of the public against monopolistic oppression.

GOVERNMENT INSPECTION AND CONTROL.

The present tendencies of labor-unions and employers' associations suggest strongly the expediency of establishing over them governmental inspection and control, and this for two reasons—first, that both kinds of association soon become monopolistic, and secondly, that they are secret societies. Democratic government, like despotic government, dislikes secret societies, particularly if they are apt to resort to violence for the enforcement of their demands. Americans seem to take kindly to private or secret clubs or associations for social and benevolent purposes, and now and then for political purposes, but they are inclined to distrust the organization of thousands or millions of men into secret societies having industrial or commercial objects. One would say that, on the whole, there has been a visible tendency during the last four years to an increased regulation of industrial combinations of all sorts through the courts.

Picketing is sometimes prohibited by police orders, on the ground that, like assembling in crowds on the streets, it causes public disorder in times of excitement. The growing strength of industrial combinations having been partly expressed in the accumulation of invested funds and cash resources, the tax gatherer is looking at these accumulations with increasing interest. Moreover, these accumulations invite actions for damages against either labor-unions or employers' associa-

tions—actions which may be brought by an injured workman, or an injured employer, or by the public prosecuting attorney.

The action of legislative or judicial remedies must, however, necessarily be slow and superficial. The real remedies for destructive strife, whether the strife between workmen and capitalists, or the strife between firm monopolies and society at large, must be found through the deep workings of the same democratic spirit which created the conditions that made such strife possible. Now, the effective democratic powers for good are the increase of intelligence and skill through education, and the increase of efficiency through the promotion of individual liberty and coöperative good-will. How to develop these powers is democratic society's great problem.

Real social improvement or progress is very seldom brought about in this world by violence, although violence seems to be sometimes necessary in order to procure public attention to existing wrongs, and to win opportunity for the play of reason and good feeling. There is no more misleading phrase in history than the phrase "decisive battle." Waterloo has been called a "decisive battle," and did restore the Bourbons for the moment; but somehow there has now been a republic in France for a whole generation, and the president of it is of peasant birth. How many things my generation thought were decided at Appomattox; but during the subsequent forty years it has gradually appeared that hardly anything was there settled except the preservation of the unity of the national territory. It remained for long years of civil endeavor to determine the uplifting of the negro race, the relations of the whites to the negroes, the new industrial resources of the South, and the slow development of a better social order. That frightful civil war did but procure the opportunity for the legitimate play on a great social wrong of the universal principles of good feeling and good sense.

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS IN LABOR CONDITIONS.

In all social and industrial strife it is immeasurably better to use the great forces of publicity, discussion, and fellow-

feeling before physical conflicts take place, rather than after they have occurred. It is, therefore, an intensely interesting inquiry what modifications of existing labor conditions will tend toward permanent industrial peace, and be absolutely consistent with the democratic ideal of liberty. To that inquiry I turn.

1. Steadiness of employment is reasonably desired by both the workmen and the employer. Labor is a commodity which should be salable for future delivery, and not be merely delivered at a price for the passing day. On the other hand, the enormous investments of capital which many manufacturers now require make it of great consequence to the employer that he should be able to count for at least one year on the cost of his labor. In this respect the joint agreement works a great improvement, but there are other possible improvements which look toward this same steadiness of employment. Thus, the instant dismissal of the laborer by the employer, except for the clearest reasons, is brutal, and inconsistent with considerate relations between labor and capital; and even sudden reductions in the working force of a large establishment without notice of previous concert are lamentable, although sometimes unavoidable when bad judgment or misfortune has changed a successful establishment into an unsuccessful one. American legislation on the tariff brings about in many trades alternations of exaltation and depression; and so long as it is persevered in, these alternations will occur. They militate against steadiness of employment; but the joint agreement will mitigate the situation, if it proves to work as well when prices are declining as it does when prices are rising. The automatic sliding scale of wages also offers advantages in promoting steadiness of employment and prevents the contests which the inevitable fluctuations of wages are apt to provoke.

2. Another common need for workmen and employers is that condition of labor which permits the laborer to have a settled place of abode. A nomad population can hardly be a civilized one. Only a firmly settled laboring population, which desires and expects to pass its life in one spot can be really

happy and contented and produce good citizens. The family which lives without love of its home, or pride in its local surroundings, is not the kind of family a free state needs. It cannot produce some of the most solid advantages of life. It cannot develop in its children the sentiments on which patriotism is founded. Hence, durable improvement in the condition of any body of laborers must contemplate a localized industry and terms of employment which make possible the creation and preservation of permanent homes. It follows that employers or associations of employers that import, or bring from afar, wandering work-people having no local attachments, impair the prospect of establishing just and satisfactory relations between capital and labor. From this same point of view it is undesirable that the managers of a business conducted by a large corporation should be non-resident. The managers of a factory ought to live in the same place with the work-people, in order that they may all have common local interests and daily friendly relations. On the other hand, so far as labor-unions encourage or compel the migration of laborers from one place to another, abandoning employment here, enlisting there, and forming one connection after another without any intention of settling anywhere, they postpone the only satisfactory solution of the laboring-man's problem, a secure, steady employment at wages which will make a settled family comfortable.

3. In manufactures which require large and costly plants and numerous operatives the strife between labor and capital—so wearing and wasteful for both parties—would be pacified in the most substantial and durable manner if means could be found of giving the workmen two things which they now obtain but rarely in a highly organized industry—first, a voice in the discipline of the works, including that very important part of discipline, the dealing with complaints; and secondly, a direct pecuniary interest besides wages in the proceeds of the combined application of the capital and the labor to the steady production of salable goods. A voice in the management of the works the workmen may reasonably aspire

to. The successful management of any large industry involves two quite distinct processes—first, the maintenance of good discipline of the works, and, secondly, the maintenance of a shrewd and alert trading policy. The workmen themselves generally recognize that the trading policy must be determined from month to month, or even from day to day, by a small number of skillful persons, or oftener by one extremely skillful man.

RELATIONS OF EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYED.

It is not in deciding on this policy that the workmen think they have a right to take part; but they almost unanimously believe that it is both right and expedient that they should have a voice in regard to the discipline of the establishment. They also believe, almost unanimously, that the faithful and industrious workman who works for years in the same industrial establishment has earned something more than the wages paid him. They believe that he has contributed to the reputation of the product and therefore to the good-will of the establishment, and that he should have some pecuniary share in the value of that reputation and that good-will. They recognize the fact that only the settled or reasonably permanent workman has any claim on this intangible and yet real something. The transitory workman who shifts from one factory to another is evidently entitled to his wages only.

The share in the profits or the good-will which should go to the permanent workman is a difficult thing to determine wisely and justly. It would doubtless be different in establishments having different products, and indeed in the same establishments at different periods. The satisfactory determination of it would involve knowledge by the permanent workmen of the annual results of the business, and this knowledge would have to be given with exactness and completeness to chosen representatives of the body of workmen.

To secure the confidence of the workmen in the statement of the year's business, expert auditors or accountants selected by them would examine the accounts and certify to the annual statement. Although public accounting in intelligible and

uniform methods is as yet in its infancy among us, there are numerous successful financial and transportation companies, the accounts of which are already published under the supervision of the state without prejudicing the business in any manner. Thus, savings banks, insurance companies, trust companies, and railroads are obliged to publish at stated intervals figures which enable the public to form some useful judgment as to their condition and as to the results of their business during the period covered.

The necessity and value of an extreme privacy in a manufacturing or building business have been much exaggerated. Doubtless, if intelligible accounts of the results of a business were to be annually submitted to the permanent workmen employed, the chance of occasional high profits kept secret would have to be abandoned by the employer. The capitalists of the enterprise would have to be content with a regular moderate return on the capital and with sound safeguards against depreciation or degeneration in stock and plant. In maintaining any degree of privacy which contributed to the success of the business, the permanent workmen would be as much interested as the owners.

The establishment of mutual confidence between capital and labor, based on acquaintance with the methods and results of the business they combined to conduct, would be so precious an achievement that large sacrifices might reasonably be incurred to secure it. One of the results of this mutual confidence and coöperation would be that every workman would see it to be to his own individual interest to improve in every imaginable way the methods of the industry, and to impart to the management any idea of improvement which came into his head. Questions about working hours, as well as questions about wages, would be more easily adjusted than they are now; for the operative who had an interest in the annual profits would soon learn, that in large, staple industries profits are much affected by the number of hours of the twenty-four during which the costly plant can be utilized.

These two provisions—a voice in the discipline of the works

and a share in the pecuniary value of the good-will—would give the workingman something indispensable to a satisfactory working life, namely, the opportunity and purpose to serve generously and proudly the establishment or institution with which the workman is connected. This is one of the deep, permanent satisfactions of human life, and I cannot call any conditions of employment humane which make that satisfaction unattainable. Looking back on my own working life, spent in the service of a single institution, I see clearly what a happy privilege it is to give unstinted service to an undying institution in whose permanent and enlarging serviceableness one ardently believes.

RISING WAGES AND PENSIONS.

Two other humane conditions of labor, if generally introduced, would render industrial conflicts less frequent and greatly mitigate their severity. These are the rising wage—rising, that is, with years and experience—and the pension or retiring allowance at disability. I see with great satisfaction that these two provisions, both of which prevail in my business, are spreading widely among industrial, financial, and transportation companies in the United States. Wisely applied and taken together, they are capable of doing much to prevent strikes and other disastrous interruptions of manufacturing and trading operations. They give security and dignity to the laborer, and are as applicable in the humblest careers as in the highest.

These processes of improving the conditions of labor by giving free play among laborers to the ordinary hopes and motives which govern the conduct of all intelligent and conscientious people are in the main within the power of any single employer, and should be examined, not as philanthropic performances, but strictly as business measures. It has been abundantly proved that what are called "welfare" arrangements in factories—good air, strong light, cleanliness, tidiness, ornamented grounds, washing facilities, lunch-rooms, and so forth—emphatically pay. They are not favors or charities,

but business. Just as the single employer or owner, whether an individual or a corporation, can introduce these welfare arrangements of his own motion, so he can adopt all the humane conditions of employment I have described, with the single purpose of making his business steadier, more agreeable, and, all things considered, more satisfactorily profitable. These humane conditions, wisely adjusted, will pay, because they will make all hands more alert, zealous, and efficient, more contented and happier, and therefore more productive workers.

NEW OBJECTS OF ASSOCIATION.

You have doubtless perceived that an organization of industries under the humane conditions which I have been describing involves the continued existence of both kinds of industrial association—the employers' association and the labor-unions—but the motives and objects of both these associations would be much changed. In industries which support thousands of workmen and hundreds of employers, both workmen and employers often need to take action through representatives, and must maintain organizations capable of choosing representatives. Apart from benevolent and social objects, those two forms of association would be maintained for the principal object of determining prices—the prices which each industry would bear. A secondary object would be to improve steadily those sanitary and educational conditions of labor which make labor more efficient and both capital and labor more productive. Those two objects are perfectly harmonious, for since wages can in the long run only be paid out of product, the economic justification of higher wages is greater skill and efficiency in the individual workman, and their social justification is the increased total efficiency and happiness of the community. The process of determining what prices a given industry will bear is now a process of combat. The weapons have been chiefly strikes, boycotts, and lock-outs, all of which ordinarily involve bitter strife and violence, and not infrequently the disastrous interruption of a productive industry. This is certainly a very stupid way of arriving

at a determination of the best price to be got in any year or at any moment for a given product. Conference and discussion between the workman, the capitalist, and the trading agent, whatever he may be called, are the rational modes of arriving at a practical answer to the question of price; and this would be the mode adopted if the right relations existed between capitalist and workman, each believing that the other had a genuine interest in the real success of the business they unite to conduct.

Democratic society believes fundamentally in seeking the greatest good of the greatest number, and in seeking this greatest good through freedom, order, justice, and good-will. During the first half of the nineteenth century it believed that the greatest good of the greatest number was consistent with the greatest good and largest freedom of the individual. During the last half of the century it seemed to have experienced some reversion of feeling with regard to personal liberty. It has seemed willing to sacrifice the welfare of the individual to the supposed welfare of the mass, to abridge the liberty of the individual for the supposed collective benefit of his class.

The labor-unions and the employers' associations both illustrate this tendency. They are both fighting organizations, and all fighting abridges individual liberty—indeed, puts an end to it for the time being. Armies and navies are not concerned with personal liberty, but with implicit obedience and the complete subordination of the individual to the efficiency of the organization to which he belongs. In the same way labor-unions and employers' associations, so far as they are fighting bodies, abridge personal liberty; and so far forth they are in conflict with the democratic ideal. They are also in conflict with the democratic ideal when they destroy free competition. In this respect one kind of association is just as bad as the other. A monopoly has always been an object of detestation in democracies, and such it ought always to remain, for competition is the native air of human progress and improvement.

DEMOCRACY AND THE LABOR QUESTION.

How else can the new and better thing get a chance to demonstrate its superiority to the established but inferior thing? How else can rising genius win its way against entrenched dullness? How else can new inventions in industry or trade demonstrate their superiority? The rising generation should be free to compete with the generation in possession. The young journeyman should be free to compete with the old one, and surpass him if he can. The department store should be free to prove that it serves the community better than a large number of separate stores. A young department store should be free to prove itself better than the older ones. Competition in industries, trades, and professions provides the indispensable opportunity for progress. It is the friend and servant of liberty; and this is the reason why democracy has always feared and protested against monopoly.

Again, democracy believes to its very core in the modern mobility of industrial and commercial society, that mobility or fluidity which permits the capable and promising individual to rise through its various layers. It believes with all its might that every young American of remarkable capacity should find it easy to rise through all the grades of his trade till he becomes himself an employer and leader. It believes with all its soul that every child should be able to get the best education it is capable of receiving, and that society suffers a grave injury if the upward progress of a promising child is checked or prevented.

Democratic society, therefore, sees with great concern that in the joint agreements now made between labor-unions and employers' associations there are many provisions which tend to make rigid and high the barriers between the common laborer, the helper, the journeyman, the employer, and the capitalist, and the fences between one trade and another. It sees with alarm these great combinations of men acting on principles which tend strongly to divide American society into classes, and to perpetuate those classes. Whoever gets a monopoly—be it one man or one hundred thousand men

—invariably tries to keep other people from sharing his exclusive privilege. Any monopolistic classification must cause great abridgments of personal liberty among all sorts and conditions of men. Moreover, since the fundamental object of the labor-union or the employers' association is always the pecuniary benefit of its class, these two organizations are providing democratic society with exhibitions of class selfishness, which, in other centuries, society, and government have seen manifested by classes quite different from those that now manifest it, as, for example, by nobilities, priesthoods, and soldieries. The world has had bitter experience of the evils resulting from the class selfishness of these aristocratic, ecclesiastical, and military combinations; and democracy does well to distrust the new developments of class selfishness, different though the classes be that now manifest this dangerous quality.

Again, a bold, alert, and vigorous democracy will always believe in every man's doing his best, and being free to do his best whatever his station or function in society. Real democracy thinks of an operative or a mechanic who does not do his best at his trade with the same contempt it would feel toward a fireman who did not work his hardest at a fire, or a nurse who took care of a patient nearly as well as she could, or a surgeon who cut out a tumor with a slow, languid, inexact hand, or a teacher who regulated his own work for his pupils by the accomplishment of the slow and dull teacher in the next room, or the dairyman who kept his milk and cream only as clean as his dirty neighbor's, or the steersman who kept his vessel somewhere near her course when the only safety lay in keeping her exactly on her course. Democracy knows that the main object of being free is precisely the freedom to do one's best and win one's best, to-day, to-morrow, at home, abroad, at work, at play, alone, in society, in labor, and in love. Democracy knows that the only way to do better to-morrow is to do one's best to-day, and the doing better and being better should be the fundamental object of every free man's life. That way lies increasing usefulness and hap-

piness as life goes on. That way lies public prosperity and happiness.

Therefore democracy must profoundly distrust the labor-union's too frequent effort to restrict the efficiency and the output of the individual workman; but its objection is not economic, but moral. It objects to this method of rotting the individual man's moral fiber. But how about the feeble or slow brother who cannot keep up with the strong, alert brother in the craft? Shall not the strong man help the weak? Yes, by doing the work or bearing the burden of the weak in addition to his own, but never by voluntarily impairing his own force of body and will. We are told to bear one another's burdens, not to make every man's burden no heavier than the weakest can bear. The brothers in one family are seldom equal in bodily strength or force of character; but a wise and loving parent never wishes to average the brothers. To increase the superiority of the superior is more important to the family than to diminish the inferiority of the inferior. It is also more expedient for society at large. It is a false and degrading view of brotherhood which proposes to sacrifice the efficiency of the strong to the inefficiency of the weak.

A WORLD-WIDE CONFLICT.

How, then, shall democratic society contemplate these new and formidable industrial and social commotions? Calmly and courageously, as witnessing a world-wide conflict in which certain democratic qualities of ancient date are greatly needed, and are to be ultimately manifested. These qualities are an abiding confidence in freedom, publicity, discussion, and fair play, a love of vigor and efficiency, and a firm faith that free institutions will prove to be also fundamentally righteous, and consequently conducive in the highest degree to public welfare and happiness. Amid all these combinations and masses, what can the individual do, the man of free spirit, who is willing to pay a to-day's price for freedom? You and I and everybody must, in the first place, believe, and must teach our children to believe, that brave men are not mere

creatures of circumstances, slaves of blind forces, or tools of destiny, but are capable of molding circumstances, directing forces, and changing destiny. And then each one of us must fight evil and promote good by his own personal endeavors and sacrifices. The forces of society, which seem so strong, often turn out to be weak when confronted by men who believe with all their hearts in pure ideals of freedom and righteousness.