

preceded and was part and parcel of the industrial revolution. Crowded into towns, where the new steam power and machinery awaited him, the lot of the laborer became a terrible one indeed, and this lot Karl Marx analyzed and dissected in its relations to industrialism with an understanding, thoroughness and keenness not known before his time. But since, as I have said, nine tenths of the readers of *Das Kapital* drop from fatigue before reaching the milk in the cocoanut of the last chapters and since by reason of this fact the Marxian movement in economics, before the Russian application of the Communist Manifesto, had become stultified and abortive, dropping into the hands of hairsplitters and becoming inextricably involved and obscure, surely it was time that, by the simple expedient of reversing the chapters, the casual reader should be introduced to the cogency and strength of Marx's underlying position and allowed the intellectual pleasure of his strictures upon the capitalist regime. "I sincerely believe," said Larry in conclusion, "that a rearrangement of Karl Marx's book, such as I have suggested, would do more than anything else to straighten the kinks out of the average Socialist's mind and get him to see aright the land question in its relation to the workingman."

The Baiting of the Cow

SIXTY years ago, or thereabouts, the first labor union in this country was organized. In due time it called a strike and was beaten. A dozen policemen ousted the strikers from the factory and replaced them with new men. That should have been, in the words of President Coolidge on a recent occasion, "a lesson to labor." But labor must have "played hookey" that day for the lesson was lost on it.

Then other unions were formed from time to time and occasionally one struck, but doing it singly, was defeated as the first one was.

Then the idea of concerted action suggested itself. When one union struck it was supported by the others, morally and financially. That made the movement more formidable and called for stronger measures to defeat it. So the militia was called upon to supplement the police. The fear of this kept the lid down for awhile, but by and by the seething forces underneath blew it off and the militia acted, leaving a number of the strikers dead on the ground. This created a situation sinister and tense and called for greater caution. The persuasive muskets were returned to the armory and those who had instigated their use cast about for some means of suppression equally effective with that abandoned, but less drastic. It was decided to head off the strike, if possible, while it was only impending. So the courts were applied to and an injunction procured restraining the strike leaders from acting, under penalty of a jail sentence if they disobeyed. This was partly successful in one instance, but only by the over-

awing presence of a part of the regular army, the state troops not participating because a courageous governor had refused to order them out.

This was a temporary check to the unions but it disclosed their temper and produced an intolerable situation which precluded any long continuance in this violent method of suppression. The positions of the unions, however, was not impregnable—concerted action was not yet complete. One aristocratic organization, composed of highly specialized workers and holding a position of considerable if not commanding importance, had always held aloof from striking. It had been singled out, therefore, from the first for special coddling. Its annual meeting had always been attended by some prominent member of the employer class who delivered the principal address, in the course of which he dispensed to the members liberal allowances of what the unregenerate call "soft soap." So successful was this for awhile that at a meeting of eleven hundred members of the order they solemnly resolved that their interests lay with the employers and not with the public.

But the day of toadying and cajolery passed quickly. The hoodwinked chief of the order died, and was succeeded by one more courageous and of clearer vision and, shortly after, the *elite* organization was swept from its moorings and found itself engulfed willy-nilly (but especially willy) in the swirling maelstrom of dissatisfied labor.

The way was open now for a decisive struggle. Then when each side had marshalled its forces and everything was keyed up for a final clash, a mysterious thing happened—the dove descended upon the employers' camp.

The growing membership of the unions had lifted them into political importance.

The effect was magical. The grim determination of the employers became "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Their warlike spirit oozed away and the white flag of armistice was raised. Outside influences then suggested arbitration—arbitration, which implies a yielding of something by one side or the other, when each had declared that it could yield nothing.

Justification and excuse followed. The employers disclaimed any hostile intention. They even said that they had all along been in favor of labor organizing. It was plain to everyone then that the armed guards at the gates of their plants were stationed there by the owners to prevent a pleasure-loving public from crowding in too fast to the merry-go-rounds inside and the high fences built round them and topped with electrically charged barbed wire, were simply a device of theirs to keep out humming-birds.

Thus the matter stands now between labor and monopoly. The approach of these two opposing currents to something like equality of strength, has brought about everywhere in the industrial world a slackwater condition of suspended effort, doubt, suspicion and apprehension,

with the question "What next"? uppermost in the public mind and no one qualified to answer.

It is interesting now to recall the attitude of the organs of public opinion during those troubled days. The press, always ready to uplift the down-trodden, gave fatherly advice. It said that order must be maintained and the law obeyed. These two things were particularly stressed. It said that the employer could not be expected to pay a higher wage than the one agreed upon with the employee, bargaining with him individually, saying nothing about the latter being compelled to take whatever the former choose to offer. It said that contracts must be lived up to, keeping dark about the fact that rising prices might force the weaker party to the contract to violate it if he hoped to live. It said that every citizen in a republic had a right to choose his job and continue at it unmolested, without letting on that the jobs were fewer than the jobbers and the refraining molester might starve. Especially did it caution the strikers not to forfeit the esteem of that potent factor of success, "the sympathy of the public"—that altruistic, tender-hearted public, which in order to increase its ability to help, denies itself every luxury, puts itself on a Spartan diet of bread and water, and lies awake nights, tossing on its pillow, in its yearning for the welfare of the underdog. Then, too, those prime movers in all fundamental economic research—the ministers—took the matter up and pointed out in their illuminating way that capital and labor were partners and ought to live together in harmony—a brand new truth which had escaped general notice. The practice of these self-constituted umpires continues and will continue so long as the blind, according to the proverb, accept the one-eyed as king. If some day, however, with larger knowledge and in an unaccustomed mood of candor, they review their record in the matter, their state of mind will be a trifle qualmish, like that of a healthy palate on tasting an ad-dled egg.

Such in brief, and to date, is the story of organized labor. The subject of that story is no longer clubbed or shot down or jailed—it is not even openly flouted or despised. Circumstances have groomed it into respectability. It takes its seat now at the council table with monopoly, an equal and at peace—each still, however, with watchful eye and its right hand on its hip-pocket.

Of course, from now on there is no hope; chaos is upon us and modern civilization is marching straight down the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

There is a curious uncouth animal in Florida—the manatee or sea-cow—which lives on the bottom of the rivers there and feeds upon aquatic plants. A collector, wishing to obtain a specimen, undertook to build a crate around one for transporting it. At first the sluggish creature paid no attention to what was going on, but by and by suspecting, apparently, that something was being done to restrain it of its liberty, it just stretched itself lazily and tore the crate to pieces.

That experiment, in its essentials, bids fair to be repeated shortly but in a wider field and on a grander scale. There are signs that the great American proletarian sea-cow is getting ready to stretch. When it does, the crate which special privilege has been building round it these many years—made up, as it is, of land monopoly, wage-fixing, tariffs, exorbitant freight rates, court injunctions, company stores, black lists and the like—will be shattered beyond repair.

The crate builder is not allowing for the stretch.

—DAVID L. THOMPSON.

Questions on Taxation

IS there not an infinite difference between the value of the products of industry and the value of the land?

Is not the existence of the buildings due to the industry of the builders, while the value of the land is due to the presence of the population and to public improvements?

While the increased assessment of the buildings is an indication of the increase in their abundance, is not the increased assessment of the land an indication of the greater relative scarcity of the land? Where the first settler found a thousand acres available, today we may find a thousand people crowded on to a single acre in the center of the city.

While the buildings diminish in value year after year, and require cleaning and repairing to keep them habitable, and eventually have to be renewed, the value of the land remains generation after generation so long as the population remains. The stock of food must be supplied by labor thrice daily; who ever heard of the renewal of the land value by the owners daily?

While labor must work continuously day by day to maintain the life of humanity on the planet, how much toil must the owner of the valuable land exercise to maintain the enormous rentals that he can collect yearly?

While the value of the land has increased from one dollar per foot to ten thousand dollars per foot in the last one hundred years in the center of this city, where did any man ever hear of a building increasing ten thousand fold in a hundred years?

With the use of the improved printing press, the use of the locomotive, the use of the automatic machinery and other appliances, labor can now accomplish a thousand times as much as our grandfathers could accomplish. In this way the prices of some products have been reduced to a mere fraction of the prices of old times. Does labor receive the benefit of this increased power? While industry has been devising all kinds of contrivances to make goods cheaper and more abundant, the owners of the town sites have been enabled to make the land dearer and dearer. As he can say with every increase in population: "Pay me more, pay me more." Do we not thus place industry under an indebtedness that grows and grows, driving the