



Plenty or Misery



When hunger and want and crime stalk our fair country, misery and cold lays like a pall over the voters, it may comfort us to know that monkeys in South Africa kill each other for cocoanuts; in the midst of plenty.

Monkeys do not organize—in that respect they are like our scissorbills. But monkeys do not work and scissors do.

Nevertheless monkeys find it advantageous to congregate in trees and associate one with the other—a crude form of unionism. Without a doubt, if monkeys had to earn five livings in order to get less than one living, they would organize. But, since, they are not obliged to work, they are able to get along with little unionism and much chattering and some killing.

The I. W. W. recognizes that if we must work to earn our living, in an organized society, we must organize to protect ourselves from being imposed upon by other organizations that may be so disposed. Thus it is the I. W. W. has earned the distinction of being an "extreme." Well and good. Let us say so—Monkeys are the other extreme. This does not mean that between these two extremes there is nothing—There is the scissorbill. He is participating in the "moves of organized society, (orderly civilization) but he is doing it as an unorganized man in an impersonal manner. He is not protected. He is an individual. Any organization of two or more men can defeat him. Another individual may defeat him.

Numerous defeats, difficulties and obstacles, not ill-luck, has undermined his living to what approximates half-rations. We may meet him in the harvest field, in a delapidated flivver, bearing a Buckeye license. As we approach "they" are having lunch—a jug of water and a sack of doughnuts. Beautiful Ohio in dreams again I see visions of what used to be. . . they are singing.

Fearful that I may cut his tire, hold him up for the jug of water, or ask him for a union card he squirts "fire-drops" into the combustion chamber and rattles away towards the Tourist Camp, the mecca of Flivver-Tramps and Ever-Ready Kindling Wood. Oh Joys!

These tramps seem to be the lesser evil in the eyes of "renovated respectability"

and serve as an "go-between" between the "nobodies" and "somebodies." But they do not serve as a medium for intercourse between labor (The Realbody) and these has-beens, would-be's and mimic-bodies—plated-respectability, polished dignity and varnished virtue.

But they find their location somewhere between the I. W. W. and the Monkeys. As an unorganized man he emerges from the meat-market with a ring of bologna a world to him; something tangible to "tie to." That ring of bologna is the link that connects him with life even as he, himself, may be the very missing link Darwin tried to find. He isn't a Wobbler, it's a cinch; he isn't a monkey, for he works. What is he if he is not the Missing Link?

Society in every direction is an organized society. He is completely surrounded by organizations. Organized police force says good-morning to him. Organized business-men take profit from his trade. Organized preachers threaten him with hell. Organized religion promises him a heaven—and organized doctors try to keep him from going there while he has money.

Organizations to the Right of Him; organizations to the left of him, and organizations in front of him, but no organization is behind of him—he is unorganized. He "must-be" the missing link.

Organized employers' delight to harrass him with wages, wage-cuts and under-pay—ill luck has nothing to do with his misery. The best luck in the world wouldn't enable him to compete in an organized society. Sickness doesn't make him poor—he is not robbed in sick-bed—he is robbed at the point of production—(sickness can't be organized). Robbery makes him poor and poverty makes him sick.

Organization will cure him!

A red-card will put meat on his ribs.

How about it?

Owing to a tart temper (of myself) and the slave driving propensities of the farmers I find myself casually embarrassed from time to time. It is therefore that I offer a suggestion and pray that each industrial union adopt same:

First, I suggest that a "special delegate," with extraordinary powers be sent in the field to round up us "national characters," and stamp us up, and keep us in good standing during our period of poverty.

Second, there is no "second," let the I. W. W. appoint a receiver immediately to take charge of our expenses—we'll handle the income, frail as it is.

I recite this merely to show how delicate the ladies can be if they want to, and there is no good reason why a harvest stiff can't be equally diplomatic, I know I am,

But that reminds me, in turn.

On the farm we had chopped meat three days in succession—there were no fourth

day—and the meat was very tough. But, on the evening of the second day, the farmer had the good fortune to shoot an owl—next day the meat was tender—so I "up and quit."

Exhibit A: (pertaining to the food-problem) Farmers "go in cahoots" to thresh. Each farmer hires his own help, the thresher only "dogs" them around. Thus a man "stays" at one place, and "works" at another. Now it would seem that a man should get something to eat at one or both of these places. Such is not the case, however. The farmer, of course, reasons that the man will get fed at the machine. The thresher, of course, reasons that "he'll be fed at home"—if the "hand" doesn't reason, (of course) he will be fed in town—when he is able to pay for it. Hence, the work progresses merrily and cheaply—good joke, eh.

Exhibit X Y Z: "A little more pep," says the thresher.—So I "stuck it up" in the middle of the load (so it wouldn't fall off) and "got down" to mourn those two pancakes I ate this morning (income \$1.80; time 4 hrs. 11 minutes; distance 9 1/4 miles). Funny how fast men work!

A load of 20 shocks (200 bundles) is unloaded in 13 minutes and 20 seconds. (I, too, did it) I was tossing them off at the rate of 4 seconds per bundle when the call for "more pep" came.

Indeed, men work fast!

Improved machinery, has been installed to encourage them to take it easier. They will swett!

Breakfast has been practically cut out to force them to slow down.

They will not!

They will race the machine!

Every two or three days they sneak into town to egg-up (I, too, did it) and then try it again.

A little more pep! That's what he said.