



A SQUINT BEHIND



Just two hours ago I wrote an article for the Industrial Worker and stated that we are living "the life of twenty years ago"—meaning that we (labor) are behind the times—though behind everything else also. Anything happens, lo and behold—we are behind it.

But when I said we are twenty years slow I erred. As a matter of figures I was thinking of 1876, and that is fifty years ago.

Gladly do I make this correction for the sake of humanity (regardless of the dark looks the editor is tossing my way) because the *life of labor is at stake!* It stands to reason that a man cannot live the life of 1876 and eat the concoctions of 1926 and get by with it. He'll strip his gears or be stripped all around—if nothing worse happens—and it is for that reason that I corrected myself so that labor may be fully warned as to its location, time and speed.

In the matter of unionism, I note evidences of it stick out every place I go—but it is 1876 model.

Not one worker have I seen that didn't show signs of it.

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Throw a bunch of strange men together and after the first grape-yine preliminary is over, and it has been determined whether each man is a bonafide old-timer, the organization work proceeds. Somehow names are found out, George, Charlie, Adam, Phil, Matt, etc., and a certain agreeable *brotherhood of sacrifice and desperation* has been started to help men bear the burdens of the shekelless shackles of unceasing toil. The bunch of men have every respect for each other and give sincere consideration to each others views—and would give the *shirt off their backs* to help a brother in distress—for, as I said, they are now organized in a union, however unconscious they may be of the fact.

All interclan disagreements stand automatically dispelled; quarrels stand gagged and *fights stand hitched* serenely nibbling at the olive branch of surging slavery—each man so distributed as to catch a little *more than his share* of that irritant.

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Thus, you see, editor, organization is inevitable—it comes in spite of hell, and because of it.

But when it does so come without a chaperone, it is an old model (and not of much use to the struggling workers). It cannot alleviate the strain on his muscles and frame; it can only ease the mental *shred* of mutual distress making for the amicable reception of the impersonal dirt of a master's will.

But, it is unionism, nevertheless—and better than no fellowship at all!

The next step naturally is Industrial Unionism—and, the Industrial Workers of the World is its prophet.

A high grade of unionism that will transfer some of your aches and pains into the shoulders of the boss; driving a modicum of sense into his head and saving his soul—a union of great ramifications—an institution of gigantic possibilities, timely and up-to date.

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FISH OIL

When I was running a ferry across the river Styx, over in Aphasia, I was considerable older than I am now. It's a long while ago—and although I've forgotten the owner's name I can remember that it was I—myself. Understand me, I was not running the ferry for profit or for the love of it—I was running it just to serve my fellowman. An unselfish deed. A thoroughly unselfish . . . why I even didn't sell the fish that came aboard (voluntarily) and surrendered themselves. No sirreebegee—I mean, yessirreebegosh, I gave them away free of charge to itinerant and transient blacksmiths that did me the honor to use my humble scow and prowess. . . And soon it was that my fish had the fame of being the "best" for tempering chisels and cold cuts—and my rise to fame showed signs of life shortly after. . .

But I did accept money for my services, and for to live on—just enough enough to live on. That was the custom—and it was customary for me to wring a certain reasonable custom duty—I mean booty—from my customers.

On days when business was dull I used to charge higher rates; when it was bad I charged still more and on days that I had only one passenger I used to make him pay my upkeep, the full dollar—for I was living on the "piecework" plan, a dollar a day. Tips I would not accept because they would disarrange my charging system, disorganize my bookkeeping or *lighten the burden of those coming later*.

But, as luck would have it, word reached my ear that a bridge across the Styx was proposed. Tough titty! That would kill my business, take away my livelihood and leave the scow deadweight upon my hands. So what did I do

It wouldn't do to be without business, so I continued to take souls across the Styx—but, thereafter, before transferring them to the "hereafter," I began to charge each pilgrim \$1.15 (15 cents peace tax; \$1 for sinking fund). Business was good! As the bridge began to take form I increased the ransom and when it neared completion I soaked each rambling soul \$5 per head, on the grounds of hi-cost of cornflakes. My fame and fortune grew, and when the bridge was finished "I had it made!"

I was quite well off—a billionaire. I lived happy forever afterwards . . . and when I died the dead ones raised a monument in my memory, inscribed quite properly: T-Bone Slim, Pioneer Settler and Fish-Oil-Philanthropist.