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EDITORIAL

THE HANNA-GOMPERS PARTNERSHIP.

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IN an article, commenting upon certain recent strikes ordered with the design of securing the discharge of men who worked too rapidly, the *Evening Post* declares:

“NOTHING NEED BE SAID OF THE DISASTROUS INFLUENCE OF THIS POLICY UPON THE INDUSTRIES INVOLVED, or of its effect in holding back the more efficient workmen, and leveling down to the standard of the poorest men, instead of allowing the best to set the pace.”

The second portion of this quotation, the portion not underscored above, has been considered in these columns. Its bearing upon the meaning of the “survival of the fittest” in the capitalist’s mouth, when applied to the workman, was pointed out. Of equal importance is the first portion, the portion that appears underscored above. It discloses the meaning and significance of the solidarity recently established between the Hannas and the Gomperses.

Stripped of its rhetoric, the recent “Harmony” gathering between Capital and Labor, and the Arbitration Committee that the gathering crystallized into with Hanna as President and Gompers as Vice-President, are a serious effort on the part of Capital to avoid strikes. Why, the above quotation explains. The tendency of the pure and simple Union is to “level down to the standard of the poorest men”; if the American capitalist yields, the “influence is disastrous” upon his business: he is now competing with the world and underselling his competitors: he does so because of the intensity with which his workmen toil: in his effort to keep up that intensity, and even intensify it, he gets tangled up in strikes: these he can and has overcome: but the process, besides being costly and onerous, deprives him of a halo that he has found to be eminently useful, the halo of “democracy” and “friendship to Labor.” The problem before the American capitalist was, accordingly, How to avoid strikes and

yet having the most rapid workmen set the pace? The “Harmony” gathering was intended to solve the problem. By the joining of hands between the Hannas and the Gomperses the problem is solved,—until the scales shall drop from the eyes of the Gomperses’ dupes. Until then—and the alleged first fruit of “Harmony,” the settlement of the Garment Workers’ strike is a sample—the “solution of the problem” amounts to just this:

The Gomperses will see to it that no disaster shall overtake the business of American capitalism. It shall continue to produce with that plentifulness that is the fruit of the intensest toil. Such intensity of toil spells the physical ruination of the toiler. Whenever the toiler shall kick, the Gomperses will take him in hand, discipline him, and free the capitalist from the odium of harshness.

The pure and simple Trades Union is developing rapidly. Originally intended to administer to the economic interests of the rank and file, its false structure has caused it to slide more and more off its economic premises, until the day has come when, owned by the Organized Scabbery that officers it, the best developed of them are being delivered tied hand and foot to the employer, and fulfill to-day none other than the role of wheels in the mechanism of capital, grinding down the Workers and swelling the power of the Idlers.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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