

LABOR DAY.

Labor is the source of all wealth and the creator of all values. Money itself is only its representative. Every one dollar bill and every silver dollar is a certificate that its holder, or somebody from whom it was derived, has somewhere at some time performed 100 cents worth of services for society. Labor tickles the earth with the plow and reaps the harvest that feeds other laborers both at home and beyond seas. Labor gathers the fleeces of the sheep and of the cotton field, and spins and weaves and fashions them into garments for the people. Labor with glittering ax lays low the green-plumed forest monarchs, and sends them screaming under the gang saws, and provides materials for the building of cottages and palaces and warehouses. Labor rends the earth and hoists the somber ore, and with flaming furnace and ponderous hammer melts and rolls it into ponderous rail and tempers it into glittering blade. Labor sends steel drills into the caverns of earth, and gathers for our use, for light and fuel, the oil that spouts in fountains to the skies. Labor makes the iron leviathans which sail over the foam-crested seas, and bring for man's use the products of distant climes. Every article of use and beauty from a locomotive to a gossamer fabric, from a skyscraper to a breastpin, is the product of labor. Nor bloom of orchard, nor work of art, nor luxury of food could exist without labor. The chemist labors in his laboratory, the artist labors in his studio, the author labors at his desk. Deft fingers, strong arms and bright brains are laboring ever for the comforts and luxuries and enlightenment of mankind, and from the broad foundations built by labor, "civilization on her luminous wings soars Phoenix-like to Jove."

God send to the laborers of our land the wit and wisdom to dispense with the services of the walking delegates who advise them into the wasteful idleness of strikes, and incite them to the crimes and turbulence which are often the offspring of strikes.

It is a hackneyed but a truthful saying that the work which a man might have done and did not do on Monday is of no value whatever on Tuesday morning, and this because man can by ingenuity and industry conquer all things except Time. Time he can neither order nor preserve. Invention has made nonsense of many ancient proverbs. It is no longer true that "the wheel will never turn with the water that is past," for man prisons the power of the cataract and flashes it up stream and literally "turns a wheel with the water that is past," and the great wheel in turn lights cities, and propels cars, and furnishes power for factory and forge. The products of labor may be stored in warehouses, but time cannot be stored. Time stands by the dial of the universe and as the minutes are ticked off he gives them to those who grasp them, and, if left unused, they pass on unyielding and unfruitful of good into the gulf of the unreturning past.

The Goddess Aurora could bestow immortality upon her earthly lover, but she could not save him from the wrinkles with which the pitiless hours pelted him as they passed by, and Tithonus tottered with decrepitude though he was the bridegroom of the Eternal Morning.

It is the right and the duty of labor to organize for its own protection and it is the duty of capital to respect that right. If a man chooses to quit work and go to sleep upon the grass, it is his right to do so and the capitalist who seeks to forcibly invade that right should speedily find lodging in a prison cell. If, however, having finished his nap the laborer finds that another man has picked up the hammer that he has dropped and the idler seeks to regain his job by clubbing the man who has taken it, then the prison cell ought to have two inmates.

The right of a man to rent the use of his muscles, his skill, his experience or his brains for as many hours as he pleases to whomsoever he pleases for such sum as he pleases, is an inalienable right that should be protected by courts and constables and if necessary by armies. The right of a capitalist to select his employes as he pleases and make such conditions as to their hours of labor and compensation as may be mutually agreed upon, is also an inalienable right, with which no man or body of men have a right to interfere by menaces or violence.

Only by mutual respect for each other's right can the relations of capitalists and laborers be properly and permanently adjusted. In our country where there are happily no grooves of caste, where the poorest man who has the wisdom, the wit, the industry or the good luck to achieve the highest office or the greatest fortune in our country where every soldier, as was said by the great Napoleon, "carries a baton in his knapsack;" in our country where there is no bar of birth or creed across any man's pathway, where a Mackey, a Carnegie, a Huntington or an Armour can rise from the carpenter shop, the blacksmith's forge or the plow handles to be a multi-millionaire; in our country where a Johnson can go from the tailor's bench and a Grant can go from the tan pit to the Presidency, the road ought to be kept open for all, and no man or body of men should be permitted to obstruct it.