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EDITORIAL

A SLIT IN THE VEIL OF A.F. OF HELLISM.

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THE “advantages of Unionism,” meaning thereby the advantages of A.F. of L.-ism, is a common expression upon the lips of A.F. of L. officials. The unsophisticated take these words for current coin. “Advantages of Unionism”—what else can that mean but shorter hours, higher pay, better treatment? Accordingly, it is concluded that the A.F. of L. secures these good things to its members; that it seeks to attract new members by the good things so secured; and that the bond that holds the members to the organization is the fruition of these good things. Who would not be loyal to a body that insures his well being, his life, liberty and pursuit of happiness! Certain things, however, are happening, certain official moves are being resorted to, certain utterances are being made officially that place the “advantages of Unionism,” meaning thereby of A.F. of L.-ism, officially in a different light.

The International Typographical Union has a death benefit attachment of \$175. Recently, a proposition issued with headquarters’ approval to raise the monetary fund to \$400, with increased dues to match. One should expect from people enjoying the “advantages of Unionism” that they would be both willing to secure the increased insurance, and able to pay for it. Here is where the revelations start. The opposition to the plan was intense: that was revelation No. 1: then followed revelation No. 2, as a consequence of No. 1: from the president of the Union down, the place-holders stirred themselves to carry the plan through, and, in their eagerness made statements that nothing but distress could have wrung from their chests. In condensed form these statements appear in the leading editorial of the *Typographical Journal* for February. There it is said plump and plain: “Secession will receive its quietus if the mortuary benefit is adopted”; and the article is backed up with a statement of Morris Braun, who is reported in his full paraphernalia of

“Secretary of Cigar Makers’ Union No. 144” as saying: “that in his organization they are positive that it [a big mortuary fund] has made the membership more loyal.”—The truth is blurted out.

The “advantages of Unionism” is essentially a glittering soapbubble. What is implied by the term—increased well-being—is so conspicuously slight and growing slighter that the members are extensively “disloyal,” that is, are apt to drop out. In order to hold them a big mortuary fund, a fund to be enjoyed, not by the quick but the dead, is found necessary. The dues for such a larger fund being proportionally larger, the members who have paid in some of the assessments, it is figured, will be more likely to remain “loyal” lest they lose their mortuary contributions. No wonder the *Typographical Journal* talks of a “business organization.” In short—the A.F. of L. has entered upon a grand retirade: its officers have become undertakers and sextons: it organizes not for Life but for Death; and its only means to inspire “loyalty” are the means of insurance companies.

That this is the case with the A.F. of L. was pretty well understood before; more than once did *The People* show with figures that the A.F. of L., which pretends to be a Labor Organization, holds together only by virtue of its being a Coffin Organization. That this development is moving apace, so far as to have brought the I.T.U., a craft that holds one of the few strategic positions in the capitalist system, down to the level of the Gompers Cigar Makers’ Union, that is a fact, a clear sight of which may now be caught through the wide slit—made by the I.T.U. move, by the editorial in the *Typographical Journal*, and by the about 1,000 majority of the members who voted against the move—into the veil behind which our hideous Veiled Prophet of Khorassan, A.F. of Hellism, hides its hideous features.

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