

plished, may well reflect that the end is not yet, and consider carefully what the end may be.

This counsel is equally good for the other side. The notion that the end justifies the means is at the bottom of the worst practices of the labor organizations. The coercion to which they often resort is utterly iniquitous; but they defend it on the ground of a benefit to be conferred on the whole working class. To compel employees content with their work and their wages, and on good terms with their employer, to quit work and suffer in idleness, is a gross violation of personal rights; to drive men out of the labor in which they are gaining an honest livelihood because they do not choose to join the trades-union is a most flagrant usurpation; but such invasions of the rights of individuals are justified by pleading the good to be gained in the increase of wages.

Nothing could be more utterly hostile to the fundamental principles of a democracy than these interferences with personal liberty. If any right is inalienable, except for crime, it is the right of the workman to sell his labor in a free market. At a great price the workmen of America have obtained their freedom; the denial of it to any man is a crime, no matter by whom committed. We boast of our liberties; is any one of them all more precious than the right of every man to choose his occupation, and to make his own contract for the disposal of his labor, without let or hindrance from any man or men? Yet this is the right that the workmen themselves are trampling under their feet. They admit the immediate injustice, yet point to an end to be gained that justifies the iniquitous means. It is wrong, they confess, to deprive men of their liberty, but they do this present evil that future good may come to the men oppressed, in the form of enhanced wages. The coercion of a peaceable citizen by unauthorized private bands of men is clearly wrong; but the citizen is coerced for his own good and for the public benefit.

This is the plea of every despot; he deprives the people of their liberties because he thinks that they do not know how to use them. And it is time for the American workmen to consider whether they desire to establish a despotism for beneficent ends. Does a beneficent end justify despotism? And are we quite sure, after all, that the end is beneficent? Larger wages and shorter hours of work will result, we are told, from this benign tyranny. But will this be the final and sole result of these lawless methods and these deeds of violence? Shall we not witness, along with this result, a grievous breaking down of the self-respect and the self-reliance of multitudes of our workmen, who have ceased to think and act for themselves, and who have become the tools of an impossible ochlocracy? Shall we not, even more surely, find that lawlessness has become chronic; that the habit of coercing men by one sort of mob rule or another has become dangerously prevalent; that the foundations of our liberties have been undermined? It is no more the end when violent combinations of workmen have raised the rate of wages, than it is the end when heartless monopolies have lowered the price of commodities. The end is yet to come, and it is the same in both cases — a deterioration in the manly virtues of individuals, and a weakening of the just restraints of the law that protects our liberties. How

high should be the wages and how cheap the commodities for which we are ready to barter these birth-rights?

The workmen of this country will do well to give this subject serious consideration. Their right to combine for the promotion of their own interests cannot be denied; the attempts of some to deprive them of this right are tyrannical; but the correlative of the right to form such combinations is the right of every man to refuse to enter into them. That right they must recognize and defend. Whatever they can do by peaceable and rational methods to improve their circumstances they ought to do; but let them not suppose that they can grasp by violence any real advantages. The right of every man to work for whom he will, and for what wages he chooses to accept, is the corner-stone of our free institutions; it is a monstrous blunder for workmen to deny this right to any honest man. Some of them do not seem to see how deeply their welfare and happiness are concerned in the preservation of this sacred right. Let them think well upon these words of one of themselves, who stood when he spoke them at the head of the nation:

"Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality. To the humblest and poorest amongst us are held out the highest privileges and positions. The present moment finds me at the White House, yet there is as good a chance for your children as there was for my father's. Again I admonish you not to be turned from your stern purpose of defending our beloved country and its free institutions by any arguments urged by ambitious and designing men."<sup>\*</sup>

To save these institutions for our children, to keep these paths of privilege and preferment open to all, there must be no despotisms here, not even for beneficent ends. Workingmen want no other weapons than liberty and light. By peaceful and orderly measures they will the more speedily and surely gain the ends they seek; by any other measures they will undermine and shatter the civil structure which is the shelter and the defense of all that they hold dear.

#### Democracy in England.

It was, no doubt, a source of some umbrage to our forefathers that their English cousins should care to know so much less about American geography, history, and politics than Americans were wont to know about those of England. There was in the comparison a certain derogation from what Americans felt to be a just estimate of the work which their country had done in the solution of the problems which vex the progress of men from good to better. Our own domestic difficulties of the past two years have not taken our attention from English politics, and the study has given rise to sympathy where once there was resentment. We see Englishmen struggling desperately, almost hopelessly, with problems which were solved in the United States decades since; we see that our comparatively successful solutions came from a previous study of English experience; and we think, at last, that our English cousins would have done better and more wisely if they had made a judicial study of American experience before their own problems came hurrying upon them with a pressure not to be denied. The

<sup>\*</sup> Lincoln's speech to the 148th Ohio Regiment.

most acute of English thinkers are coming over to the same belief, and are beginning, though late, the thorough examination of the *terra incognita* of American politics.

Even these investigators, however, are in too many cases beginning their work on wrong lines. The success of the American Democracy has not been due simply to its adoption of a Federal system, of Home Rule, if you will, though this has been one of its most excellent instruments. Just as soon as it can see a reasonable certainty of growth and permanence in a community of frontier farmers, it is quick to grant them a Parliament of their own, a Legislature, as we call it, with powers wider than have yet been seriously proposed for St. Stephen's. All this is Home Rule in the fullest sense of the term. But our country had this same Home Rule under the Articles of Confederation; and it brought then neither prosperity nor peace. Nor can the secret be found in the Senate of the United States, austere grand as that body may appear when the wide Atlantic rolls between it and the observer. It is the surviving fragment of the Home Rule of the Confederation; and the nation which puts its trust only in the Senate, as we have it, is simply adopting a form of Home Rule which this country has already tried and found wanting. Nor is the secret in the Federal judiciary. The nine wise men, who, sitting as a Supreme Court, determine the legitimacy or the illegitimacy of legislation in this country, would find their occupation hopelessly gone if they were transferred bodily to England. That occupation consists in comparing the rights claimed under an act of legislation with the standard set up by a written Constitution; and such a constitution does not exist in England. Thus, also, it was this written Constitution which converted the intolerable Home Rule of the Confederation, now represented by the Senate, into the excellent system which has covered central North America with autonomous commonwealths. Turn as he will, the English observer will find that the American success lies in some phase of the written Constitution, and that other instruments are only indices of this.

There seems to be a great deal of misapprehension among Englishmen as to the nature of the work which the Constitution has done for the United States. There need be no such misapprehension; like all great political inventions, the essence of this is simplicity itself. In 1787 the American Democracy, acting, as it has always preferred to act, on State lines, delegated to certain representatives the task of formulating that which should be a permanent expression of its will. The work of the representatives having been done, it was approved and ratified. From that time to this the American Democracy has had no further occasion to meet by delegates. It need not speak, for it is always speaking through the Constitution; it is continually saying to Congress, to every Government agent, to the State Legislatures and Governments, "This may be done; that must not be done." Englishmen consider the Crown as a most useful means of avoiding quadrennial Presidential elections; the American Constitution is, much more accurately, a device for avoiding most of the haste and hurry of Parliamentary constitution-making. The American Democracy speaks once for all through the Constitution; the English Democracy

must be always at it through Parliament. The American judges arraign legislation and individual action by the rules of the Constitution; English judges arraign individual action by Parliamentary legislation. It is most misleading to compare Parliament with Congress; it would be more exact to say that the Constitution is the American Parliament, and that Congress takes the place of the English Ministry.

No democracy can be forever declaring its will. It has other business to attend to, and it must lose a percentage of its efficiency in daily business if it is again and again called upon to consider minutely and register its final decision on great matters of public welfare. One cannot wonder that the Athenian Democracy lasted but a little more than a century, when he finds that every citizen was continually busied in serving as a magistrate, or priest, or juror, or legislator; that he could not oversee the lading of a ship without being interrupted by a call to decide whether there should be peace or war with Sparta, or whether some novel religious teaching was in accord with public policy. Nor can we hope for a long existence for an English Democracy, if it is to be called upon to drop all other business and deliberate and decide upon a fundamental change in the constitution of government whenever an ambitious or desperate Minister chooses to "appeal to the country." It is but a question of time when the weary people shall seek and find in Cæsarism of some sort the respite which the American Democracy has found in its written Constitution. Better, far better would it be to call upon the people to decide, once for all, upon the broad and clear lines within which they wish their government to act, so that the government may be as much as possible administrative, and as little as possible creative. Creative geniuses are a bane to a democracy.

A still higher advantage of a written constitution is that it is a self-imposed check upon the democracy. A repeated necessity of dealing with fundamental questions is not only exhausting to a democracy; it is dangerous for much the same reasons. Here sober second thought is not a luxury; it is an absolute necessity. Time and again the American democracy has put the seal of its condemnation, at the second or third opportunity for consideration, upon propositions on which it would have wrecked itself at the first but for the impediments found in the Constitution. The Constitution is the minority's barricade; under the English system the minority is at the mercy of the majority, and a House of Commons may upset at one blow the rules of governmental action which have been the only guides tested by experience. An omnipotent Parliament, with a strong aristocratic or royal influence within it, is a conceivable, though hardly an advisable system. An omnipotent Parliament of a single house, elected by almost universal suffrage, the Crown and the Lords having gone by the board, could be suggested to an American only to be repudiated as essentially and incurably revolutionary.

The apprehension of Americans, however, is that it is too late for the English democracy to impose upon itself the permanent curb of a constitution. The time was in 1832, when the wheel began to turn toward democracy. Then, if ever, was the time to limit the coming power, to accustom it to act with self-restraint and rely for details upon its governmental

agents, and yet to put those agents under bonds to see and respect the expressed will of the people, without harassing them by continual appeals for new revolutions. Then the steps which followed, in 1867 and 1884-5, would have been only a safe and orderly advance upon well-marked lines, instead of an admission of a wider and still wider circle to a share in irresponsible power. For fifty years the energy of English

Liberals has gone to widening the suffrage, without taking any hostages for order, deliberation, and the security of the minority. It is unhappy for the best hopes of human progress if the outcome of a half century's struggle for democracy in England is to be simply the establishment of that for which the most democratic American has no liking—the tyranny of a majority.

## OPEN LETTERS.

## A Dutch Success in Coöperation.

THERE is no undue boast in the title of the book, "La Question Ouvrière, Essai de Solution Pratique," in which the story of this coöperative distillery is told by its creator and managing director, Mr. J. C. Van Marken, Jr. What I have to say of the enterprise has been learned from his lips as well as his book; and the testimony of both was confirmed by my own eyes when I made a pilgrimage to Delft, not long ago.

The factory began work in 1870. It is owned by a joint-stock corporation, so that Mr. Van Marken has had to make his coöperative schemes not only alluring to his workmen but profitable to his fellow-shareholders. In 1874 the first dividend was paid on the capital stock of \$84,000. It was less than six per cent. In 1877 the dividend was thirteen per cent.; in 1879, twenty-four per cent.; in 1880, thirty-six per cent. upon a doubled capital of \$168,000. During 1880 the profits set apart for the laborers amounted to six and a half per cent., so that the total net earnings of 1880 were forty-two and a half per cent. on the capital invested. I give these figures to show that the business has been carried on upon a business basis, for profit and not for philanthropy.

This factory lets its employees buy, in small installments, a minority interest in its stock. It supports them in sickness. It supplies them, or rather (and more wisely) it aids them to supply themselves, with good doctors and pure drugs at cost. It began to teach them about "first aid to the injured" a year or more before such teaching was offered in New York. It sells them fire insurance at cost; and the cost is 12½ cents per \$100 per annum, payable in quarterly installments. It has given their children a gymnasium. It has built some model tenements for them. Lately it was laying out a small park for them.

The company has established a system of premiums, which is intended to "interest labor in increasing the yield from the raw materials used." The average yield of alcohol and yeast from a given quantity of grain prior to 1874 was fixed in that year as a minimum. It was determined to divide among the workmen each week, in proportion to their wages, about one-third of the value of any increase. If the yield in any week fell below the fixed minimum, this deficiency was to be deducted from the surplus of subsequent weeks. The results of this system are thus stated: "The percentage of yield from the raw materials is not surpassed, so far as I know, in any other similar establishment." The consequent premiums increased wages about ten per cent. in 1875 and about thirty per cent. in 1880.

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There is a system of rewards, which is intended to "interest labor in the reduction of the general cost of production by limiting the number of laborers." In 1878 the number of men needed to work a certain amount of grain was fixed. A reward was offered for each extra thousand kilos of grain worked per week by this number of laborers. This reward is a small percentage of the gain. The result has been that forty-three workmen now do twice the work formerly done by thirty-nine, and earn forty-five per cent. more wages.

There is a "participation in profits, interesting labor in the net result of its toil." From the profits of each year a five per cent. dividend is paid. The surplus is divided about as follows: ten per cent. of it goes to the reserve fund, fifty per cent. to the stockholders, ten per cent. to the executive committee, twenty per cent. to the managing director, and ten per cent. to the executive committee and the managing director in trust for the operatives. These trust funds are devoted to the purchase of annuities. An amount equal to seven per cent. of each laborer's wages buys him a fixed annuity, payable to him from his sixtieth year. An employee whose labors in a factory begin when he is twenty and continue till he is sixty will thereafter receive an annuity about equal to the average of his wages during that time. If the percentage of profits fails to pay the sum due in any year, there is no forfeiture of rights already gained, for a separate annuity is bought each year. The only result is to diminish the aggregate by the amount which would otherwise have been bought that year. Workmen who are employed less than two years, or who are discharged for misconduct, lose their annuity rights. Those discharged for any other reason retain only a part of their annuity rights. This annuity system was introduced in 1880. The profits of that year permitted the purchase of annuities for all the workmen then in the company's employ, not only for that twelvemonth, but for each year of their employment before the system was introduced. This is at once the most novel and the most valuable of all Mr. Van Marken's plans.

Plans for general accident insurance are in preparation. Since the barbarous doctrine that an employer is not liable for a hurt to an employee caused by the fault of a fellow-employee has ceased to be law in England, companies have been formed there to insure employers against such liabilities. Mr. Van Marken's plan seems somewhat better.

When the ten per cent. of net profits above the fixed dividend on capital becomes more than sufficient to