

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 172.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## GOMPERS'S PICKLE.

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**A**T the recent banquet of the Civic Federation, where Brer Capital dined and wined in fraternal embrace with Brer Labor, personified by Mr. Samuel Gompers, the latter gave utterance to statements suggestful of the idea that a family row is on between the two Brers. Mr. Gompers gave notice that Brer Labor would not submit to any lowering of wages as the result of the hard times. Mr. Gompers's observations were not in keeping with the ethics of "Unionism"—as the thing is understood in the A.F. of L.

According to the principles of the A.F. of L., employer and employe—workingman and capitalist—have reciprocal interests: they are brothers. The economic sun that spreads sunshine upon the head of the one, gilds with its golden rays the head of the other also, or likewise—at least "reciprocally." From this it should follow that the economic blizzards, that whiten the heads and cause the skin of the one to shiver and shrink, must also, likewise, at least "reciprocally," whiten the heads and cause the skin of the other to shiver and shrink. Indeed, not only is that theory a canon of A.F. of Hellism, but it is a canon to which A.F. of Hell ethics proudly conform. Nothing is more common than to hear a thorough-paced A.F. of Hellite denounce the crass disloyalty of Socialist or I.W.W. workingmen, who care not a rap whether the employer is faring poorly or nicely, and demand larger and ever larger wages. With the look of supreme disgust with which loyal royalists look down at heretical republicans, who have no feeling of compassion for their King, the A.F. of Hellite has no use for the "fanatics" who fail to feel the touch of the fraternal and "reciprocal" bonds that unite Brer Capital and Brer Labor. Mr. Gompers's language at the banquet did violence to the time-honored ethics of this organization.

Brer Capital is just now sore distressed. The automobile dealers are not making any sales, and what is worse, the automobile riders are dumping their vehicles into the market. Some who had several, are disposing of more than one; and, Oh, cruel

fate! some who had only one, are pawning even that one. The jewelry dealers are buying back their diamonds and pearls. One jeweler in Maiden Lane had as much as \$1,000,000 worth of stuff dumped back upon him. Keepers of retinues of servants are “disbanding” their “help,” and some are reduced, as recently published, to the straits of only one cook, one chambermaid and one washerwoman! The gruesome tale could be prolonged indefinitely. Suffice it to sum up with a cursory allusion to suicides and other moanful afflictions that now beset Brer Capitalist.

Which, if not the hour of need, is the hour to test Brership? Of what does Brership avail if it does not sympathize with the tribulations above mentioned that afflict Brer Capitalist? What comfort can there be in Brer Labor’s “reciprocity” if his heart can remain stony while Brer Capitalist is now going about like a chicken whose head has been cut off?

The present stony-hearted attitude of Mr. Gompers may cause some people to believe he is “reforming.” Others, less charitable, may say he is but playing to the galleries. Poor fellow, he is doing neither. To reform, a man must be gifted with sense enough to take in broad facts and generalize: Mr. Gompers lacks the gift. To play to the galleries is not a performance for which Mr. Gompers has not considerable genius, but, in order to indulge the sport, one must be in a good humor. The fact is Mr. Gompers feels decidedly uncomfortable. How, then, is his Civic Federation banquet speech to be explained? Quite simply.

Mr. Gompers is experiencing the fate of all who play with fire—he is getting burned. A conflagration is raging behind him. His coat-tails are being singed—one actually smells the odor of burning broadcloth. The Working Class—learning from experience to experience, the latest panic being the latest sermon—is muttering ominously. When Mr. Gompers to-day holds language savoring of Socialist and I.W.W. “fanaticism” and other bad things, the poor fellow but does what a man standing at the window of a twenty-four story skyscraper on fire, and burning him from behind, does. Such a man looks distractedly for escape in front, and in the meantime turns around distractedly and seeks to put out the sparks that fall upon him.—That is the pickle in which Belmont’s vice-president is now in.

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Uploaded November 2009

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