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EDITORIAL

CAUGHT IN A CLEFT STICK.

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DROLL are the contortions of the Perry-Post crowd in their *Square Deal*. The editors and contributors rack their brains for arguments against the “Closed Shop” and in favor of the “Open Shop,” as well as for illustrations to illumine their arguments. Ancient and modern, sacred and secular, Christian and heathen archives are ransacked for material. It should not be difficult to fish out of such a vast pond sayings and arguments enough, which, when wrenched out of their historic context and properly garbled, would furnish any argument that one may want. And yet, the Perry-Post crowd are seen doubling and twisting, not as an elegant snake deftly winding its way between grassblades, stumps and stones but like one in contortions, fearing to strike himself whichever way he turns—and prime is the lesson therein.

The “Closed Shop!” is the cry of craft Unionism. Whom is it wanted to “close out”? Is it the capitalist? Why, no! As far as the capitalist is concerned, craft Unionism pledges its support to the gentleman, and loyally strives to keep him in possession. Not the CAPITALIST is the shop to be closed against; for that craft Unionism is too much of a “Pillar of Society.” Them whom the shop is to be closed against are OTHER WORKINGMEN. Such being the facts, one should think that when the Perry-Post crew come walzing down the pike to the tune of the “Open Shop!” as the only original lovers and the true liberators of the workingman, they should have an easy course, so easy that their posture would, not merely be unconstrained, but marked with all the ease and elegance that marks apostle-paladins of Liberty? Why, then, the contortions? For the simple reason that the Perry-Post crew, having, not the liberation, but the enslavement of the workingman for their purpose, are in mortal trepidation lest, in pursuit of THEIR “Open Shop,” they drop a word that may illumine the path of the workingman and open his eyes

to the path he should strike—the OPEN UNION.

The Perry-Post crew are caught in a cleft stick. The wrongfulness of the Closed Shop can be driven home only by arguments that lead directly to the Open Union. If, accordingly, the heinousness of the craft Unionist's position is to be shown, the result is the Open Union; if the Open UNION is to be avoided, then the arguments against the Closed Shop are lame. If the Perry-Post crew lay full emphasis upon the fact that the reason why there are at all workingmen against whom the craft Union wants to close the shop is that the craft Union deliberately goes about to keep the majority of the workingmen out of the Union,—if the Perry-Post crew do that then they run the danger of furnishing arguments for the Industrial Workers of the World form of Unionism, and thereby would help conjure up the tidal wave that would (and will) swamp them; if, on the other hand, the Perry-Post crew try to escape this dread horn of the dilemma, then they impale themselves on the other by depriving themselves of the only powerful weapon with which to crush the “tyrant” against whom they claim to have taken the field—the craft Union—and present the lamest of appearance. Which way shall they turn? If one way, their fight is so futile-weak that it makes them look ridiculous; if the other way, then they but promote their own doom.

Marx says that the capitalist class have every reason to fear the ignorance and every reason to dread the enlightenment of the working class. They are all—Belmontites and Perry-Postites alike—caught in a cleft stick. But drollest of all is the plight of the latter as they contort themselves in the effort to avoid the fix they are in.

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