

THE LITTLE REVIEW

Literature Drama Music Art

MARGARET C. ANDERSON
EDITOR

MAY, 1914

THE LITTLE REVIEW
Fine Arts Building
CHICAGO

Union vs. Union Privileges

HENRY BLACKMAN SELL

“**W**e have granted the miners every union demand,” benevolently asserts the remarkable J. D. R., Jr., “but we will not recognize their organization”—and here is the hitch. The average lay observer of the fearful struggle raging in Colorado tosses aside his paper after reading this, and possibly comments that he can’t see what the miners want, if all the union privileges have been granted.

That was my first thought, but I felt that there must be something behind the trouble; so I hunted out my old friend Tony Exposito, a walking delegate for Chicago’s pick-and-shovel men, and asked him to explain.

Now Tony never took a degree, and his English is reminiscent of sunny Italy, but he knows just what the trouble is in Colorado.

“Eh? You wanta know what ees matta downa there? Eh? Meester Rokefella say he geeve union preeveleg to all da men? Eh? Meester Rokefella say begess shara men no wanta strike? Eh? He geeve many thengs to da men? Sure! Sure! He *geeve* many thengs! *He* geeve many preeveleg! Sure! *He* geeve! Das justa trubble! Das why da men go strike! No wanta thengs be geeva to them. Santa Maria! when a man breaka hees back en wear da skeen off hees hans wet da pick en da shovel, hasn’ he gotta *right* to da money he gets? Eh? Now, w’at you theenka dat? Eh?”

“Well, Tony,” I answered, “I never thought of it that way. It does seem as though a man might have what he earns without its being handed to him as if it were a charity.”

“Sure! Sure!” cut in the impetuous Tony. “Sure! das da theng—*charety!* Meester Rokefella, he say, ‘Coma here, leetle slave, nica leetle slave, coma here;’ en he patta on da head en say, ‘You donna have to work so meny hours; I geeve you tena cents more pay!’ Eh? en then what? Eh? He calla all the newspaper up en tella dem, ‘I maka mucha mon; I geeve some to my workaman.’ Then all the people say, ‘Whata fuss about?’ Eh? I tella you: Workaman want to sell hees labor justa lika Meester Rokefella buy hees beega machenes. Notheng extra to nobody. Eh?”

“But, Tony,” I interrupted, “they say that only a few of the men want the union recognized. What about that?”

“Sure! Das true! Sure! Das jus da fac. When deesa beeg, granda countree fighta Eengeland, deed all the men wanta fight? Eh? Tell me! Eh? No, et was justa few et ferst, dena more, dena more, teel everyone wanta to be free. Sure! Das da way. Poor nuts, dea don’a know whata rights dea shoulda have, en dea musta be ah—*educate* to steek togeater.”

And I wondered how many of my highly educated friends realized so well as Tony Exposito how frightfully devitalizing gratuities are, and what it means to be able to take a week’s pay with the feeling not of accepting a charity, but of receiving an honest wage for honest work; what it means to teach mentally stunned and browbeaten laborers that they have certain definite rights of life and happiness, and that they must earn them; that when they have earned those rights, it is no *favor* given or received.