

**THE FARMER'S
BOOKSHELF. THE
LABOR MOVEMENT
AND THE FARMER**

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The Farmer's Bookshelf. The Labor Movement and the Farmer by Hayes Robbins & Kenyon
L. Butterfield

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HAYES ROBBINS & KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD

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BY
HAYES ROBBINS



NEW YORK
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THE FARMER'S BOOKSHELF

Edited by

KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD

the truth, to show how and why workingmen have organized for the last hundred years, why they do the things they do, how the remedies they have tried actually work in practice, and what the much-used phrase "industrial democracy" really means. There is a concise statement of the various branches of the movement here and in Europe, who its leaders are, and the latest programs of trade unionism, socialism, the I. W. W., and communism. The big central question of all is gone into in plain terms, and in the light of facts, whether a rising standard of living for labor is really to the cost and injury of the rest of the public or a necessary part of the general prosperity and progress.

The author, Mr. Hayes Robbins, has for many years been in close touch with the labor movement and he has written freely and acceptably in this field. He has had the confidence of both employers and labor organizations as is evidenced by his direction of the Civic Federation of New England, which was devoted to the betterment of relations between employers and employees and which had a membership including the heads of most of the leading New England industries and practically every labor organization of consequence.

This book should be a valuable and practical help for the Grange lecture hour, for community study clubs, for debates and for supplementary reading in agricultural high schools, as well as for individual reading and study.

KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I HOW THE LABOR QUESTION COMES TO THE FARM	3
II IF THE FARMER WORKED FOR WAGES	7
III LABOR'S LONG TRAIL	15
IV AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISM	81
V RADICAL MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES	53
VI EUROPEAN LABOR MOVEMENTS TO-DAY	66
VII INTERNATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS	88
VIII WHAT DOES LABOR WANT?	97
IX THE PUBLIC SITTING IN JUDGMENT	113
X REMEDIES, OLD AND NEW	138
XI INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY	167
XII WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT IT?	178

**THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND
THE FARMER**

I

HOW THE LABOR QUESTION COMES TO THE FARM

EVERY farmer who engages a carpenter or painter, or visits the blacksmith, or pays monthly wages to farm help, meets the labor question face to face. It comes up to him in a hundred other ways, some readily seen, others not so clear. In everything he buys—his clothing, groceries, tools, stock feed—the labor cost is the main item in the making of the price. Whenever he pays the freight bill on a shipment of his products to market he thinks of the wages of railroad men.

It meets him at another turn. Young men, raised in the country, do not stay to work the farms. Good help is hard to get; the farmer must compete for it, against the higher wages and shorter working day of the cities and mill towns. In other words, the labor conditions of the outside world come immediately back to the farm in dollars and cents, but not in higher costs only. The immense wage rolls paid every week in the cities and mill towns are in great part the farmer's market. He does not need to be told what this means. When the market is far distant, help may be plentiful and the young men may stay on the farms, because it is difficult to get away, but the labor advantage disappears in the long freight haul, commissions and selling expenses. The same industrial centers

4 THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE FARMER

that make the farmer's help question harder, as they come nearer to him, mean also a vast population close at home that buys farm products and does not raise them.

The hiring and keeping of farm help is a problem upon which the farmer himself can give more information than the books afford. Industrial labor is another matter. The farm scatters labor, the factory draws it together, and gives us a problem of its own with a history of its own. In that history the reasons appear for the great organized movements which have grown up in every modern country, and the reasons also, which do not commonly show on the surface, for most of the bitterly disputed issues and practices in present-day relations between workmen and employers.

We are accustomed to think of the whole matter quite too much as a thing apart. Merely in naming it the "labor problem" we set it off as something far removed from every-day life, a matter of endless complicated disputes, lockouts and strikes, to be settled by courts or police. That is one of the outer sides of the labor problem: another outer side is a commonplace world of industry at peace which seldom gets a newspaper headline. But the inside of the labor problem any man may find in himself. In his own necessities and motives, in his ambition for something more or better than that he already has, are the roots of all that gives rise to a labor movement or any point to arguments on wages and hours, on trade unions and shop rules, on plans of social reconstruction.

And in the modern world these roots have grown