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EDITORIAL

## THE CHICAGO STEAMFITTERS.

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**A** FOUR-PAGE leaflet entitled *A Plain Fact*, issued by the Steamfitters' Protective Association of Chicago, sets forth the many years' existence of the organization; its membership in good standing with the A.F. of L.; its having an agreement with the employers that expires on April 1, 1911; its having demanded an increase of wages to take effect after the expiration of the agreement now in force; and the appearance, at this juncture, upon the scene of a rival organization, the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Steam Fitters, which, on January 3, 1911, addressed the employers offering to enter into an agreement with them for steamfitting. Upon these facts the Protective Association of Steamfitters concludes that the new organization is violating the ethics of Unionism.

The conclusion of the Protective Association is not borne out by the facts it cites.

Unionism in the mouth of the Protective Association means, and can mean, nothing else than {the} A.F. of L. article. What are the ethics of Unionism?

The ethics of A.F. of L. Unionism flow from its economic principles. These principles do not recognize the solidarity of the Working Class. A.F. of L. Unionism has for its ethics the protection only of the men that each craft Union allows to join it. A.F. of L. ethics start with rupturing the solidarity of Labor even in a given trade, by shutting out all the workers for whom the Union cannot secure jobs. Starting from such beginnings, A.F. of L. ethics logically ruptures the solidarity between the workers in the Union of one craft and those in the Union of another craft. There is not one craft Union in the A.F. of L. that, in pursuit of the exclusive interests of its own members, has not, under orders of its leaders, indirectly, often directly, scabbed upon some other sister craft Union. In short, the ethics of A.F. of

L. Unionism are embraced in the principle: “Each Union for itself, the Devil take the rest.”

Examined by the light of A.F. of L. ethics the United Association is conducting itself strictly according to the ethics it has seen practiced by the A.F. of L. It is seeing to its own members.

The Steamfitters’ Protective Association, ten to one, has thought highly of its “practical sense” and pooh-poohed at the teachings of Socialism as “impractical.” What its “practicality” amounts to it is now experiencing.

The ethics of Unionism are deadly opposed to the ethics of A.F. of Hellism. Unionism demands the solidarity of the whole working class and the organization of all the workers. Unionism makes no “agreements” with the employer. Every agreement with the employer is an agreement against some employes. Unionism preaches that no individual worker can ever prosper at the expense of any other. From these principles flow the ethics of Unionism. These are summed up in the word Industrialism. May the steamfitters of both the rival organizations learn the lesson.

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