

The “Scab”

A Result of Conditions

Lucy E. Parsons

August, 1892

Scab is a new word, and like the individual it represents, it is the result of, and is coined from, the conditions of today. We believe in organization among the wealth-producers because it, for a time at least, enables the wage-slave to withstand the encroachments of the capitalists; it disciplines the raw material of the factory; and besides, men and women who are too ignorant or indolent to organize in the unions of their trades are too ignorant to be amenable to the teachings of the science of economies. But the “scab” is here; he is a factor, and is becoming a more important factor with each day’s momentum of the capitalistic system.

Analyzed, who is the scab? A poverty-stricken, disheartened wage-slave—no more, no less.

According to very conservative statistics there are constantly from a million to a million and a half of wealth-producers out of employment. What an army from which to manufacture the scab! And this army is ever on the increase. Can the unionist hope to keep his wages at the present maximum standard with this vast army of men and women who possess every essential of life that he does? Whose daily needs are the same as his? Then what is the unionist and the scab to do?

Stop fighting each other and say unanimously and unitedly the wage-system has outgrown its usefulness, if it ever had any, and must go. Trades Unionist and scab, this is the situation which confronts you today. Will you accept it or will you reject it, and thus rivet tighter the chains that bind you?

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