

# Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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John Kane (1859-1897)

(Photo published in the History of the United Mine Workers of America  
by Chris Evans. Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society.)

JOHN KANE:  
RELATING RERUM NOVARUM TO THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA  
(Concluded, from Vol. XVI, No. 2)

For some time after December of 1891, nothing further appeared in the UMW Journal concerning the labor question. It may be that Kane was studying and absorbing the teachings of the encyclical, for by the second half of 1892 balanced pieces which agreed with the words of Pope Leo began to appear. On June 19, 1892 a piece appeared which was unsigned and not attributed to any other source; Kane may have written it. It said, in part, "We do not say that the demand of the proletariat, that the rich shall at once divide with the poor who have nothing, is correct; nor do we say that poverty can be removed

by any purely socialistic scheme, but we insist that it is possible to so organize industrial relations and social conditions not, perhaps, that there shall be no poor among us, but that the number can be greatly lessened and that absolute wretchedness can be exchanged for comparative comfort. It is the duty as well as the interest of the rich to see to this and to aid materially in providing ways and means to bring it about."

In July of 1892 the workers at the giant Homestead, Pennsylvania iron works of the Carnegie interests were on strike. In an editorial which appeared on July 14, in the middle of the heated and bloody conflict, Kane took the chance of offending his fellow union members when he wrote, "There can be no two opinions about the legal right of the Carnegie company to the possession of its mills, neither is there any question about the legal right of it to run its mills, 'as it pleases.' It may discharge, blacklist, discriminate, favor or banish any of its employes just as in its sweet will it chooses; and all this legally." But he then went on to say where justice to the laborers was being violated. "There is a law, however, which is gaining in respect among American workmen, higher and more natural than all the statutes ever created, and one which the great American middle class must recognize ere long...the law of life. Do we claim that Carnegie...should be coerced into employing any unemployed wayfarer? No! And no one knows better... that such claim is not set up by any trade union in the country. But, we do claim that union men shall not be coerced out of their trade organization under the penalty of increasing the ranks of the unemployed." Here he was drawing upon the teaching of the natural-law right of workers to organize.

In looking to religious leaders for practical guidance, Kane more often than not was disappointed. A long editorial in which he vented his frustration appeared on September 8, 1892.

One of the most discouraging things in present day society is the absence of ministerial influence in the arena of labor or its utter inability to grasp and discuss the situation in a comprehensive way. Not long ago we listened to one, who, as possessor of the honorable letters D.D. as an appendage to his name, ranks very high indeed. His effort at the time was directed to the question of eight hours in particular and the relations of capital to labor in general. By an intricate course of reasoning he doubtfully or rather timidly arrived at the conclusion that eight hours might be a good thing to establish, and yet he held forth that workingmen could never afford to do a good many things which were practically just the thing necessary before anything like the eight hour day can be established. Interspersed with various paraphrastic sentences as "love your neighbor as yourself," etc., was strong censure of the interference with men whose opinions and wishes led them to ignore or fight labor organizations such as blacklegs and that ilk, and to use nothing but gentle moral suasion in the conducting of the progress which he promised would certainly follow were these methods coupled with an ample faith in the great omnipotent laborer who made the earth and all things thereon.

Again we were aroused the other evening at the announcement that a prominent divine was to discuss the labor question and in response to a pressing invitation to all students and friends of labor we took up a position calculated to catch all of the philosophy which might pour from the lips of the reverend political economist. Disappointment was our position again, for in all that was said nothing more than the stereotyped twaddling apology for the present unfair condition was deducible from the (rhetorically speaking) able address. Prayer, faith and a recognition of the law is about the sum total of the philosophy of the pulpit; have these and all will be well.

We don't deny that these things are good; they are certainly very comfortable and laudable points in a citizen, but a citizen with an empty stomach, hopeless heart and active brain which has revolved the two and two makes four calculation, can hardly be expected to swell out with faith sufficient to join the sleek and complacent divine in this thanks to Him from whom all blessings flow, when, judging from the great discrepancy between his own dejected spirits and the illy suppressed animal vivacity of his spiritual mentor generated and maintained by a sufficiency of those earthly tangible blessings which the divine persists is no sigh of the great Fathers pleasure.

It becomes tiresome to listen to men whose knowledge of the true conditions of the laboring man's life should be second to no other man's in the community forever telling workmen to depend upon moral suasion and Christian charity, when we have been telling them until the task has become odious that laboring men are not permitted to use even moral suasion. Were labor organizations given the actual scope by employers of labor to exert their healthful influence in the ranks of labor which the law and constitution grants, half of the difficulty which is now confronting the nation would never have existed. Surely it can't be a secret to our spiritual guides that the first sign of moral suasion exerted by one employe toward another is the signal for instant dismissal in thousands of factories and mines throughout the land. It is the compressed condition in which the laboring man finds his feelings and his liberty which is the greatest menace to society and it is very natural that at times it should seek a leakage and become of a kind more violent than if his condition was to be attributed more to his own neglected opportunities than is now the case. There is too much reasoning on false premises; it is taken too much for granted that labor is free to write for its own protection and that workmen have free and unabridged liberty to mutually defend each other. No such condition exists and until it does the sophistries of all philosophers both lay and clerical based upon this ground is necessarily so much wind.

Not only did he find the speakers in Columbus un-helpful, he found the religious papers in general hostile to the cause of the working man. In the issue of November 10 he wrote the following.

Extracts have been gathered from a large number of so-called religious papers, and the manifestation of hostility to organized labor is about a unanimous quantity. The Northwest Christian Advocate, the New York Christian Advocate and Independent are quoted as the most rabid. What a travesty of the Christian name is here revealed. If the suppression and maligning of labor is one of the prerequisites for Christian perfection we don't wonder that there are so many canting hypocrites asking the question: "Why don't the workmen attend our churches?" When the organs of the churches and their great verbal expounders devote more time to the denunciation of labor organizations than to the proper analyzing of the texts: by the sweat of the brow shalt thou eat bread, and the laborer is worthy of his hire, it cannot be matter of surprise that so many people seek for Christ and his teachings in other places than where the atmosphere is laden with prejudice against them and their noblest attribute, their ability to labor with their hands and with their bodies.

The Northwest and New York Christian Advocate were published by the Methodist Episcopal Church, while The Independent was published in New York and Boston (having been founded as a Congregational paper, by 1892 it had become "undenominational").

In the UMW Journal of February 2, 1893 Kane devoted an extraordinary three & one-half columns to a transcript of a speech delivered before a local

ministerial alliance by Rev. Charles L. Kloss, a young Congregational minister of Kansas City, Missouri. A few extracts follow. These may help to show some ways in which the speaker's remarks lined up with Rerum Novarum; some of what Kane might have thought interesting; and some points of local interest to Columbus. The report was headlined, "Church vs. Labor: A Minister Who Is Not Afraid to Speak...Gold Rings in Puppy Dogs Ears and Women Starving Is Not the Kind of Society Christians Should Smile On."

Social questions...are religious questions. They concern man's relation to man, and it is possible to so get a message out of the divine word with reference to them as to make every comfortable sinner in our pews squirm. In studying the labor movement it is necessary to take into account the complex elements entering into it, its history, what the movement stands for and involves and the relation of the state and church to it.... It is a movement to secure more leisure, better wages and more economic resources to the laborer.... Generally now they [the labor leaders] see how long and slow a growth the present state of society is, and how it is to be corrected by a long and slow process of teaching and training by use of the ballot. Strikes are growing in disfavor, and arbitration is advised....

The labor movement is the church's opportunity -- a chance to show friendliness and forever win instead of alienate the wage worker. Two as safe and conservative economists as Washington Gladden and Richard T. Ely assert that the workingman is slowly being alienated from the church. Washington Gladden found in his own church, with seats free, a plain building and special efforts to reach them, only about one-tenth of the families belonging to this class, whereas of fifty leading business men of Columbus 45 per cent. were communicants and 77 per cent. were regular attendants. Whatever the cause...the fact is indeed a hard one and admitted without much dispute.

The Roman Catholic church, with her usual astuteness, is alive to the situation. At their congress to be held in Chicago next September these are some of the topics on their program:

- "The Encyclica of Pope Leo XIII on Social Meetings."
- "The Rights of Labor; the Duties of Capital."
- "Pauperism and the Remedy."
- "Public and Private Charities."
- "Workingmen's Societies and Societies for Young Men."
- "Trade Combinations and Strikes."
- "Intemperance."

There are many things the labor movement stands for which the church can endorse.... First -- Their demand for Sabbath rest.... Second -- Demand is for better wages.... Third -- Demand for shorter hours; for more leisure.... Fourth -- The laborer demands better homes and sanitary conditions.... Fifth -- The movement is for larger resources and priviledges which the church can certainly endorse.... It is not demanded to reduce men to a dead level, but to elevate, eliminate to some degree pressing, biting temptations, and help solve some of the practical religious problems.... Several things the ministry can do with reference to the movement. They can teach that we are all to be laborers; that work of brains or hand makes us all workingmen, and that in this common work is manhood and dignity; that the rich idler and poor idler are to be put in the same category.... Sixth -- That we are co-laborers and laborers with God.... We ought to fight with all our energy the aristocracy of wealth.... Teach that no one class, as a class, should rule. That we are in the world to minister and serve, not to be ministered unto and served. Let us hold with John that men may love God and be never so pious, and have so long a list of benefactions to their credit that if they do not do justice and love men in a measure as Christ did, they are liars and will eventually find themselves in Gehenna. This is not the hell of Dante, but mighty, real and genuine....

Some portions of Kloss's words remind one of Pope John Paul II's recent work, Laborem Exercens. Another Protestant divine, Rev. Dr. Jacob Todd of Trinity M.E. Church in Philadelphia, was extensively quoted on the question of proper wages in the UMW Journal of March 9, 1893.

It has not been possible, in preparing this article, to follow any further John Kane's efforts to relate the teaching of the Church and to bring the weight of the Gospel to bear upon the practical problems and questions facing his fellow coal miners. But this much at least shows us how faithfully the effort was pursued.

At the 1897 national convention, held again in Wirthwein's Hall in Columbus, on Saturday January 16 John Kane was elected Vice President of the union, garnering 129 of the 184 votes cast for a field of four candidates. It is unfortunate for us that Kane was the official reporter for the convention and remained editor of the next issue of the Journal, for his modesty forced him to decline to run for himself the biographical sketch usually accorded to newly elected officers. (13)

At this point, union membership had dropped to about 10,000 miners. (14) Kane spent the next several months on the road, organizing and preparing for a national strike proposed for July 4. "Organizing" was the task assigned to the Vice President when Kane had helped to write the UMW constitution in 1890. Late in April he attended a local convention in Tennessee and in June he visited the Pittsburgh district to prepare that region for the contemplated strike. He returned to Columbus to attend a meeting of the national executive board and district presidents on June 24 through 26, but was not feeling well then. It soon became known that he had developed pleuro-pneumonia and, though his recovery was expected for a time, he died at his home on the evening of Monday, July 19, 1897.

High Mass was offered at his funeral at St. Patrick's church in Columbus, followed by his interment in a single grave at Mt. Calvary Cemetery. He was survived by his invalid wife, Rebekah (for whom he had cared most tenderly during her illness), and two brothers, one who lived in Coal Bluff, Indiana, and Thomas who lived in Lamont, Pa. People who saw Mrs. Kane in July predicted that she would not last long after John's demise. John's brother Thomas and his wife saw to Rebekah's care until her death at their home on November 6. Her funeral was also from St. Patrick's and it was at this time that the couple were interred together on the lot at Mt. Calvary and, shortly thereafter, the United Mine Workers raised the monument over the remains of the beloved couple.

Thus ended "a life so full of activity on behalf of the cause of humanity in general, and of the mining craft in particular...which...had not reached the full measure of its possibilities, and had he been spared for a few years we believe that there would have been development of resources and capabilities as to overshadow his past achievements -- brilliant as they were." (15) ..."he was fearless in his advocacy of our cause, where his reason and judgement confirmed his idea of right and truth, the cause of the poor and oppressed of all classes found in him a sympathizer, a friend and defender, who never faltered nor deviated one iota from the plain path of rectitude and duty"... (16) He is an excellent example for us of one striving, a hundred years ago, to carry out the task of the lay faithful which

was recently taught again in the apostolic exhortation Christifidele Laici, namely, the "Christian animation of the temporal order." (17) The Second Vatican Council stated this vocation in different words: to "seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them to the plan of God." (18)

#### EPILOGUE

The national miners' strike of 1897 was the organization's first unqualified success. The next national convention, in January of 1898, replaced Kane as Vice President with a young miner from Illinois, the soon far-famed John Mitchell. That convention also severed the union's connection with Columbus, deciding that the national headquarters should be moved to Indianapolis. (19)

#### NOTES

Special thanks are hereby extended to Dr. Anthony Lisska and the Denison University Library for obtaining microfilm copies of the United Mine Workers Journal for use in preparing this article. Photographs of Old City Hall and the Clinton Building, used with part 1, were supplied by the circulating visuals collection of the Columbus Metropolitan Library.

13. UMW Journal, Jan. 21, 1897.
14. Coleman, op. cit., page 57.
15. UMW Journal, July 22, 1897.
16. Evans, Chris, History of the United Mine Workers of America; page 477: report of the committee on condolence.
17. Apostolic exhortation on the laity, released Jan. 30, 1989, 42.
18. Lumen Gentium, 31.
19. McDonald, David J. and Edward A. Lynch, Coal and Unionism; Silver Spring [Md.]: Cornelius Printing Co., 1939; page 45.

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HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, SOMERSET, OHIO  
REGISTER OF BAPTISMS AND MARRIAGES, 1827-1851  
(Continued from Vol. XV, No. 12)

Society member Rose Stakely Carmean has suggested that two of the previously published records of this series should be corrected as follows:

February, 1990 Bulletin, page 214, June 9, 1837 John, son of Frederick and Ursula Musselman, should be John, son of Frederick and Ursula (Musselman) Rohrer.

April, 1990 Bulletin, page 235, Jan. 20, 1839, Sebastian, son of Frederick and Mary Ann Boner(?) should be son of Frederick and Mary Ann Rohrer.

+ + +

1840, continued

Sept. 1 Mary, daughter of James McAnnulti and Jane Bel----, born Aug. 30; spons. Michael Murphy and Mary Kelly. NDY

Sept. 6 conditionally, Mary Frances, daughter of August Delong and Ursula Johnson, born Sept. 1; spons. William Johnson and Eliz. Delong. NDY

Sept. 14 Jane Smith, born Aug. 22, 1838, daughter of Robert Smith and Jane McCondalls; spons. James Mulrine. NDY

Sept. 14 Thomas Jefferson, born -- July, son of Robert Smith and Jane McCandells; spons. James Mulrine. NDY

Sept. 15 Anna Crow, born 1837; spons. Dom [Mr.?] Doyle and Dom [Mrs.?] Crow. NDY  
(page 60)

Sept. 15 Samuel, born Aug. 31, son of Reason Scribner and Mary Sten(?); spons. James Mulrine and Susan Boyle. NDY

Sept. 20 Mary Ann, born Sept. 12, daughter of William May and Catherine Guisinger; spons. Mary Scallion and Thomas Scallion. NDY

Oct. 13 Martha Ann, born Sept. 21, daughter of Francis Trunnell and Elizabeth Trunnell; spons. Belinda Trunnell. NDY

Oct. 21 Sara Augusta, born March 7, daughter of John Rankin (?) and Mary Walker; spons. John Fink and Elizabeth Fink. NDY

Oct. 25 William Henry Harrison, born Oct. 23 at eleven in the morning, son of Joseph Hodge and Rachel Dittoe; spons. Robert ---kin and Catherine Dittoe. Joseph S. Alemany

same Anna, born Oct. 11 at seven in the morning, daughter of John Slevin and Barbara Flowers; spons. J-ahacho Flowers and Sara Mecune. JSA

Nov. 1 Mary Elizabeth, born June 13, daughter of Robert Mitchael and Livinia Mitchael; spons. Walter Mitchael and Rosanna Mitchael. NDY

Nov. 3 Cornelia Frances, born Oct. 13, daughter of David Finck and Elizabeth Gonloff; spons. Apilonia Gonloff. NDY

Nov. 6 conditionally, Mary Ann McAron, born Sept. 6, 1837, daughter of Samuel McAron and Catherine Long; spons. Margaret McAron. NDY  
(page 61)

Nov. 11 Elizabeth Malinda, born Sept. 29, daughter of John Guysinger and Elizabeth Scofield; spons. Ann Guysinger. NDY

Oct. 24 John D. Luke(?), born Sept. 10, 1836, and George Clarke born Sept. 16, 1839, sons of [blank]; spons. Michael Dittoe and Barbara Dittoe. NDY

Nov. 29 Cecilia, daughter of John Elder and Elizabeth Linch; spons. Patrick Harren and Mary A. McDonnell. NDY

Dec. 2 Mary, born -- Nov., daughter of Patrick Gartland and Mary Sharville (?); spons. James McBarron and Mary McBarron. NDY

Dec. 6 Catherine, born Dec. 5, daughter of Thomas Kelly and Catherine Kelly; spons. James McNulty and Catherine McNulty. NDY

Dec. 19 Margaret Jane, born Nov. 4, daughter of John Trunnell and Mary Ann Ucker (?); spons. Edward Droge and Cecilia Droge. NDY

Dec. 19 Nicholas Dominic, born Dec. 15, son of Jacob Kintz and Alicia (?) Marr; spons. Anthony Kintz and Sara Ann Kintz. NDY

Dec. 22 Catherine McCaron (?), adult, age 25, conditionally; spons. Dom. Polin. NDY

(page 62)

1841

Jan. 10 Francis, born Dec. 23, son of Peter Maginn and Ann; spons. James Maguin and Margaret Mager(?). NDY

Jan. 12 Sara Jane (?) and Robert, children of James Will and Matilda Will; spons. Eneas McGarry.

same Margaret and Matilda, children of James and Matilda Will; spons. Daniel McKinney. NDY

same James Emmet, son of Daniel McKinney and Cath. McKinney; spons. Eneas and Elizabeth McGarry. NDY

Jan. 20 William, son of William Millay and Mary; spons. Sebastian Worley and Catherine Ivory. NDY

Jan. 21 -----, born Sept. 27, daughter of Charles Boling and Catherine Boling; spon. John Boon and Jane B-----. NDY  
 Jan. 24 Elizabeth, born Jan. 10, daughter of Peter Maguin and Catherine Maguin; spon. T---- Maguin and Ann Maguin. NDY  
 Feb. 3 William, born Jan. 15, son of William Gordon jr. and Lidia (?); spon. William Gordon sr. and Mary Gordon. NDY  
 Feb. 6 Emily Matilda, daughter of David Whitehead and Julia Anna Scott; spon. Peter Dittoe and Ann Dittoe. NDY  
 (page 63)

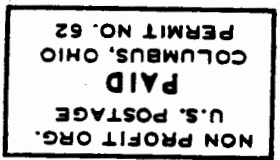
March 2 Mary Ann, born Jan. 1, daughter of Robert Footman and Elizabeth McGlacklin; spon. John McGlocklin and Mary Ann McGlocklin. NDY  
 March -- James, born Feb. 26, son of James Farrel and Jane Farrel; spon. John ----- and Judy Hurley (?). NDY  
 March 29 Frances Ellen [no surname given], 24 years old; spon. Barbara Dittoe. NDY  
 March 30 Catherine, born March 25, daughter of Thomas Ryley and Margaret Grace (?); spon. Michael Canada and Margaret Farrel. NDY  
 April 3 Patrick, born April 1, son of Thomas Gartland and Bridget Lenon (?); spon. Morris Carval and Rebecca Carville. NDY  
 April 7 Livinia Loquart, age 16 years, conditionally, daughter of --- Loquart; spon. Barbara Dittoe. NDY  
 Apr. 11 Louis Lyon, born March 11(?), son of Joseph Keim and Rose Kime; spon. J. & Dom. Herhoster. NDY  
 Apr. 13 Peter Wilson James, son of Jacob Dittoe and Elizabeth Wade (?); spon. Patrick Slavin and Catherine Dittoe, born Jan. 15. [Father Young here used the words "was baptized" rather than "I baptized".]  
 April 18 James Martin (?), born Feb. 3, son of Levi Dean and Esther Dean; spon. John Maginnis and Sara Higgins. NDY  
 Apr. 20 Mary Ann, born Apr. 15, daughter of Thomas Luny and Mary Luny. NDY  
 (page 64)

April 21 Henry (?), born March 4, son of Elias Vickers and Mary; sponsors Thomas Ivory and Judy Ivory. NDY  
 April 24 John, born April 23, son of David Clancy and Ellen (?Hennessy); spon. William (Dempsey?) and Mary D(empsey?). NDY  
 May 4 Mary Elizabeth, born today, daughter of Patrick McCon----- and Sarah McCabe; spon. Brien McCabe and Susan McCabe. NDY  
 April 2 Esther Palmer, adult, aged 25 years; spon. Mary Delong. NDY  
 May 9 William Henry, son of [remainder blank] [NDY]  
 May 12 George, age 9 months, son of Adam Doll and Barbara Doll; spon. Catherine M-----. NDY

(To be continued)

+++ There will be no Bulletin in July. Look for another in August. +++

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