large numbers of the employed is miserable and cruel. Left to the free play of the ordinary forces of supply and demand the labor of these girls is so simple, the amount of it available, even at low wages and under hard conditions, is so great, that the great body of them are practically helpless. It is inevitable that humane hearts should ache at the contemplation of their lives. And the possession of public sympathy is in the long run a great advantage. But it is well to remember that the struggle is not peculiar in the issue it involves. The union shop is not the ideal of justice, efficiency, or mutual right and obligation, yet the effort to attain it is the latest stage in a movement that cannot be repressed and should not be. The problem is how the two parties that must live from the same industry can adjust their relations so as to make the product of the industry as large and secure as possible, and the division of it as equitable and mutually satisfactory as may be.

THE OPEN SHOP.

The issue between the striking shirtwaist workers and their employers has now narrowed down to a single point, but it is nevertheless far from being simple. That point is the recognition of the trade union of the workers. The employers, according to the statement of their organization, are ready to make substantially all the concessions asked for by the strikers, and they invite investigation as to the conditions complained of by the workers, which, if found bad, they say they will undertake to remedy. The strikers, through their organization, on the other hand, say that unless their union is recognized the concessions and improvements promised to them cannot be secured and preserved.

By "recognition" of the union as generally understood, and as shown by experience in other trades, there is meant "collective bargaining," that is the terms of employment, discharge, treatment, wages, hours of labor, the discipline of the industry, in effect, all the relations of employer and employed, must be settled with the officers of the union, and no one can be employed unless he or she is a member of the union in good standing. This, of course, is something very different from the methods and principles that have heretofore obtained in the industrial life of the American people. It is something that has by no means obtained general assent or adoption, and the labor unions constitute only a small minority of the workers of the country. At the same time, it is an idea and practice that has steadily advanced and appears to be gaining strength progressively. That is to say, its strength has advanced more in the last ten years than in the preceding decade.

It is a phase of the inherent and apparently inevitable conflict between the immediate interests of the employers and the employed. It may reasonably be argued that the broad and permanent interests of these two classes are in harmony, and that is unquestionably true in the sense that both are equally interested in having the industry in which they are engaged prosper. But the conflict arises over the respective shares of the two classes in that prosperity. Naturally each wishes to get as much as possible, and, in practice, that involves giving to the other as little as may be. The employers wish to get as much and as good work as they can for the least pay, and the employed wish to get as much pay as they can for as little work, and sometimes for as poor work, as may be. To promote their immediate desires each class resorts to organization, to united action, which is a powerful aid to the control of the situation. In this, so far, the employed have had an advantage over the employers because their interests are simpler and more homogeneous, and the mass of the members of the class more readily yield to leadership. The employers are apt to be intense rivals and competitors among themselves, and it is only in large and powerful combinations that a predominant share in any industry can be subjected to uniform regulation. To an appreciable extent the ability to secure uniform policy in the matter of employment has been, and is, one of the strongest inducements to the formation of these vast industrial combinations.

The industry in which the striking shirtwaist makers are engaged is an important one in this region. It is governed by the same general laws and the fight going on in it is precisely such a fight as the conference of labor leaders at Pittsburg is seeking to initiate in the steel trade. It is not a fight in which all the right is on either side or all the wrong on the other. But it happens that in the local strike there are circumstances that naturally and justly arouse a great deal of sympathy with the strikers. The condition of