

The "Quitter" Does Himself an Injury

With the Farmers' Union at High Tide, says Barrett, the "Quitter" Indicts Himself as Less Than a Man, and Works Injustice to Himself and his Children—Peter Was once a "Quitter," but his Repentance Is One of the Finest Chapters in Biblical History.

Peter, who denied Christ thrice, was one of the greatest "quitters" in all history, but he repented, and his sublime atonement is one of the finest chapters in the story of Christianity, standing forever as a sublime lesson to the great tribe of "quitters."

There are plenty in the Farmers' Union who belong in that tribe. I want to say a few words of brotherly admonition to them. For with the organization stronger than at any time since its founding, it grieves me to see a few short-sighted farmers cut themselves off from its advantages.

It may be that you quit because the order didn't revolutionize the earth a month after you joined. You forget that tremendous results are accomplished slowly, that it took ages for the little coral pebbles to build up the State of Florida, and big islands by piling their bodies one on top of the other. You forgot that evils and ignorance that have been centuries in accumulating can't be wiped out in a day or a night.

It may be that you quit because, when you entered the organization, you were full of steam and ginger and spent it all in the first few local meetings without setting the brethren on fire. Steam and ginger are good things—indispensable things—but they ought to be nursed carefully and distributed gradually as you go along. If you gush out all your enthusiasm in one grand spasm, you won't have any left to meet the big tasks and ordeals that are inseparable from an organization of this national scope, and unprecedented nature. It may be that you quit because you had a little streak of crookedness in you, and saw you could go back on the organization, or on some one of its enterprises, and get a trifling mess of pottage for your treachery. Benedict Arnold figured it out the same way. He got his pottage, all right. But he died the most execrated man in America, the man most held in contempt in England, which had brought him, and there were no loving respectful hands to smoothe his pillow as he passed away in that lonely London attic.

It may be that you quit because you found some devilry in the organization, many specks of rottenness, graft here and there, incompetence, selfishness on the part of leaders, a tendency to play the organization for their political advantage. All these things have happened in the Farmers' Union. Nobody with any sense or candor denies that. They have also happened in all the churches, in all the secret orders, in all business, in every feature of private life. You don't lay down and die when you find any one of these weaknesses in one or more of these places. But just because it crops up in a farmers' organization—which is made up of fallible human beings—you want to kick right out. I tell you right now, that joining the Farmers' Union doesn't make a man, automatically, an angel. We have just as many devils as any organization of similar size. You needn't be surprised when you find them in your immediate vicinity. If you desert because you do find them, instead of jumping into the ranks and helping, either to cure them or eject

them, you ought to be ashamed to look your wife in the face.

I look at the hundreds of thousands of faithful members who have plodded along with the long, hard, patient pull—enduring, fighting and seeing just the evils you see—and then regard you with a feeling blended of contempt and pity and a longing to reason you out of your folly. It isn't the Farmers' Union you damage when you quit it in a fit of sulks. It's yourself, your wife, and your children. For every one of you who lays down his musket and turns tail, or becomes a knocker, there are a dozen who enlist, who boost and who develop the sense to see that because the organization isn't perfect there is no excuse for their leaving it.

The deserter is everywhere held in loathing. He is about the lowest creature under God's sun. The coward who flinches in the face of danger or inconvenience, is no better. You all know how the world feels toward the few men who showed the white feather when the big Titanic went down? Well, the fellow who deserts the craft of the Farmers' Union for some fancied or real grievance—and there are plenty of the latter—doesn't deserve any higher place in human estimation than the buzzards who proved craven on the Titanic.

Come back, you quitters. Study the story of Peter, of Benedict Arnold, of all the greater quitters. In Peter's case, the quitter who recovered his nerve and manhood did more valiant service than many of those who had never dreamed of deserting. You can do the same. There is no nobler work on the Almighty's foot-stool than sacrifice and labor for one's fellows—work and sacrifice when it seems that neither is to count for much, when ingratitude looks like your main reward and when you are tempted to take the easy instead of the hard road. But, bear in mind, we are engaged in the holiest work in civilization's history—the effort to bring into his rights and his full man's stature the farmer, that member of the race who has suffered most neglect and from misunderstanding, frequently from the avarice of his own fellows, not to mention outsiders. Are you going to stop sulking, and help us in a movement that promises to be one of the greatest achievements America will ever give the world?

CHARLES S. BARRETT.
Union City, Ga., May 8, 1912.

Small Carrie was inspecting her grandfather's peach orchard, and noticing a tree with neither fruit nor leaves, she asked what kind it was. Upon being told that it was a dead peach tree, she said:
"Oh, yes; that's the kind dried peaches grow on."

It is related of Phillips Brooks that once when passing through an avenue in Boston he saw a youngster trying in vain to reach a door-bell. The clergyman was in a hurry, but with his usual kindness of heart he mounted the steps and rang the bell, only to be startled by the urchin as he clattered into the street: "Now run—run as fast as ever you can."



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