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Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

Charles Lang Freer's letters to Frank Hecker during foreign travels, 1899-1903

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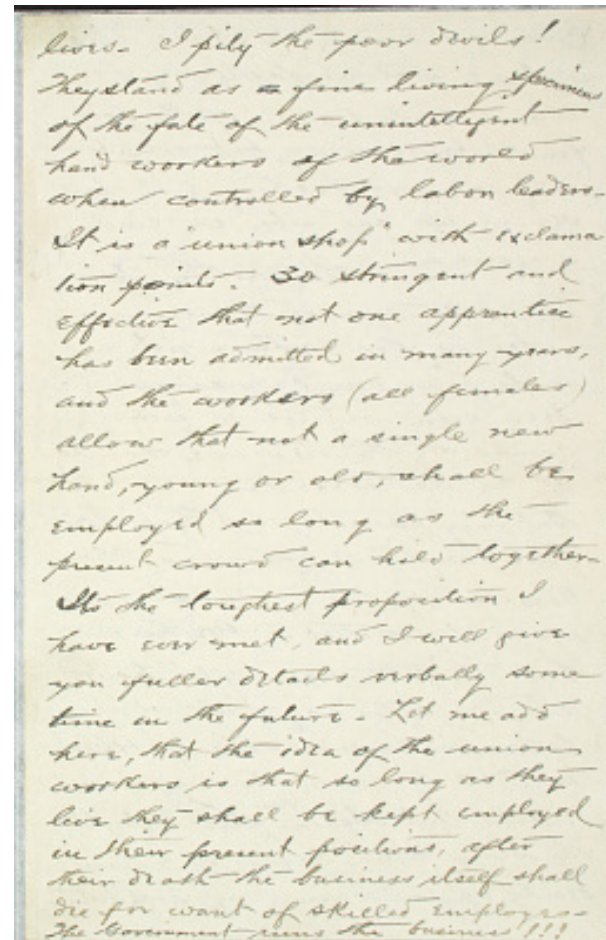
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lives. I pity the poor devils! They stand as fine living specimens of the fate of the unintelligent hard workers of the world when controlled by labor leaders. It is a "union shop" with exclamation points. So stringent and effective that not one apprentice has been admitted in many years, and the workers (all females) allow that not a single new hand, young or old, shall be employed so long as the present crowd can hold together. Its the toughest proposition I have ever met, and I will give you fuller details verbally some time in the future. Let me add here, that the idea of the union workers is that so long as they live they shall be kept employed in their present positions, after their death the business itself shall die for want of skilled employees. The Government runs the business!!!

A photograph of a handwritten letter on aged, cream-colored paper. The handwriting is in cursive, written in dark ink. The text is a transcription of the typed text on the left, with some minor variations in punctuation and capitalization. The letter is dated 1903 and is addressed to Frank Hecker. The paper shows signs of age, including slight discoloration and a few small stains. The letter is written in a single column, with the text flowing from top to bottom. The handwriting is clear and legible, though some words are written in a slightly abbreviated or shorthand manner. The overall tone of the letter is one of sympathy and criticism, as evidenced by the use of terms like "poor devils" and "unintelligent hard workers". The letter also contains a strong statement about the "union shop" and the "toughest proposition" of keeping workers employed for life. The final sentence, "The Government runs the business!!!", is written with three exclamation points, emphasizing the writer's opinion.

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