

Labor Among the Lowly



BY
ROSS D. BROWN

PRICE
TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

Labar Among the Lowly, and Other Poems

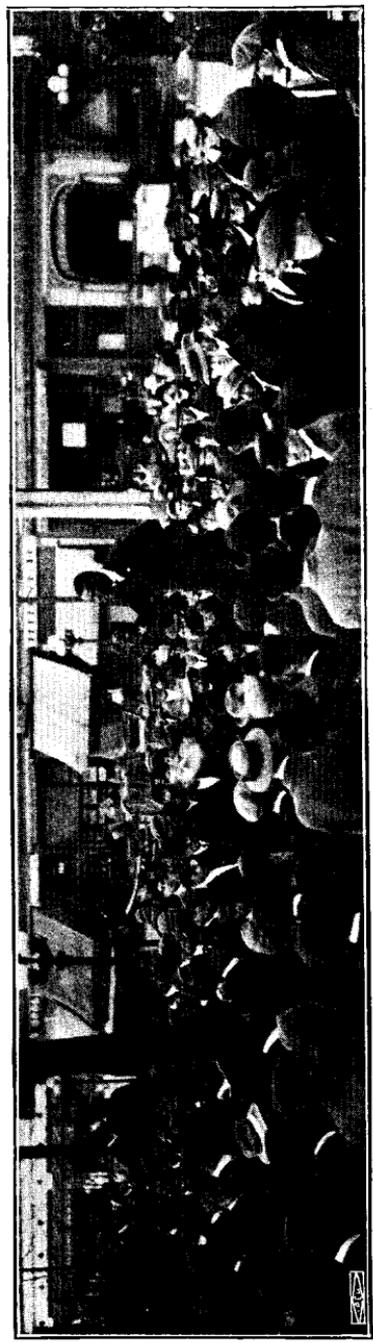


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ROSS D. BROWN
MUNCIE, IND.

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AS THEY LIKE IT

GRADUATE FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF ADVERSITY



Ross D. Brown spoke on the street corner the other night. He was logical, passionate and witty. The crowd stood fixed in their tracks as this colored man spoke words of wisdom. He appeals to all workers, regardless of race, creed or color. He is spreading the light of Socialism. He is quiet and unassuming, but he is powerful and effective. PITTSBURG NEW ERA (Editorial).

INTRODUCTORY



HE author of these verses, Ross D. Brown, a young comrade, has won renown as the "unbleached orator" of the Socialist movement. He is widely known, this gifted young colored revolutionist, as a speaker and propagandist of rare versatility and remarkable power. He is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of loyalty to his race and to his class, and the earnestness and sincerity which animate him are so apparent, even to the most prejudiced, that he is listened to with respect if not with admiration and approval by the many thousands who gather to hear him.

The colored people have, in this eloquent young comrade, a champion worthy of their cause, and the same is true of the working class. Ross D. Brown knows by his own painful experience the wrongs suffered by his race and his class, and in voicing his protest against these wrongs and pleading for the rights to which they are justly entitled, he grows eloquent and convincing, and his message goes straight to the hearts of his hearers.

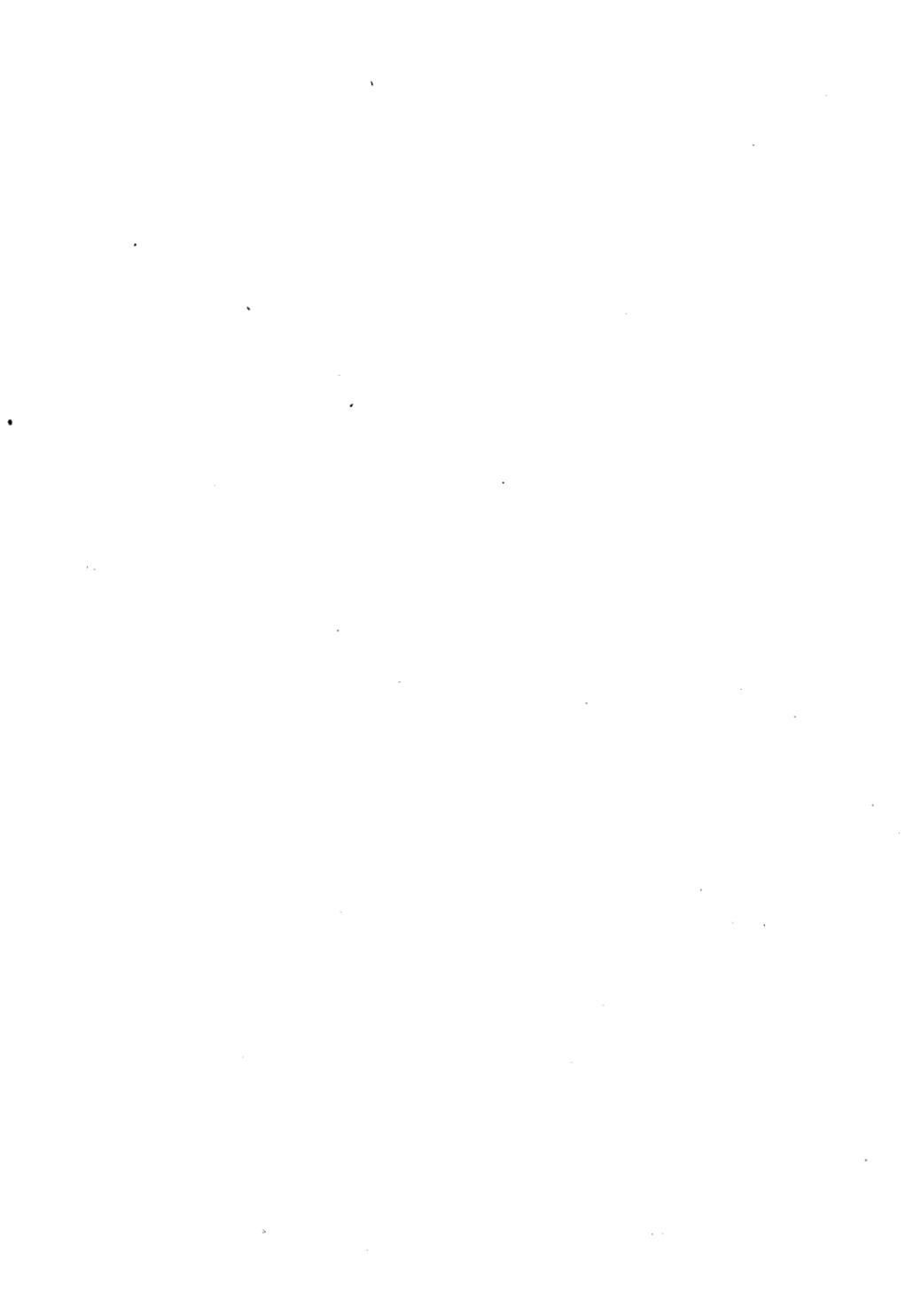
The title the author has given to this little volume is "Labor Among the Lowly, and Other Poems." It makes its appearance at an opportune time, and its passionate protest against the brutality and horror of war will strike a responsive chord in the breast of every class-conscious workingman in the world.

The author lays no claim to poetic polish or to the mastery of technique. He is no graduate of a college where "pebbles are polished and diamonds are dimmed." He is one of the innumerable children of poverty, and such education as he has was gained after the day's work or while looking for a job.

But there is a heart-pulse in every line and a throbbing aspiration in every verse he has written. He sees clearly and feels keenly that which moves him to write and to speak for the struggling poor among whom he was born, with whom he toiled and suffered and to whom he has consecrated his services with all his heart.

EUGENE V. DEBS.

December, 1916.



LABOR AMONG THE LOWLY

After the election is over
And the working class is beat,
They must pay double prices
For the things they wear and eat.

The capitalist class in America
Keep millions of eggs on ice,
Locked up in cold storage,
So they can throttle the price.

They buy up fields of pumpkins,
To lay out doors and decay;
The prices still go up higher
For the poor, hungry man to pay.

They let car loads of potatoes
Wither and rot on the switch,
To keep the prices from falling —
No wonder the masters are rich!

The working men who voted
To put these thieves in power
Are paying the highest prices
For the food they daily devour.

They export the very best wheat,
The sugar-cured hams and beans,
To the Nations that are fighting
To amuse the Kings and Queens.

When the price of food gets lower
Than they think it ought to be,
They ship it away from the market
And dump it way out in the sea.

The wage slaves who have voted
Theirselves in hell once more,
Curse, and growl, and grumble
Because they continue so poor.

They voted the capitalist ticket
To be overworked like an ox;
They organize in the factory,
Then scab at the ballot box.

THE TRUTH ABOUT WAR

The heartless capitalist system,
That fights for markets and land,
Poisons with vulgar orations
To induce the poor, heavy hand.
First, a fair flag is insulted,
Then brainless muscles relax,
Then comes the cough of the cannon,
The misery, the tears and the tax.

After the war is all over
And the battle is won or lost,
The countries are poverty stricken,
The Working class pays all the cost.
Some rich men once were soldiers,
And served in the depth of the ditch,
But now they stay home and reason,
For wars are not fought by the rich.

They write powerful editorials,
And entice with sweet bugle calls —
The workers go join the army
And face the hot rifle balls.
When markets are over-congested,
With a large surplus unsold,
The masters want foreign markets,
Then war for these gluttons of gold

They vote for war in the capitol,
And pray for victories in the pew;
If war is good enough to pray for,
It is good enough for them to go, too.
Imagine a cold, stormy winter,
When troops have begun to engage —
Think of old Andrew Carnegie
Eating hardtack with Russel Sage!

Where men are praying and pleading,
Hear young Morgan groan in the dark;
Think of rich Thomas F. Ryan
Bravely charging with Senator Clark!

See J. Ogden Armour of Chicago,
And James P. Duke, of the South —
A regiment of rich millionaires
Up close to the gattler's mouth.

On the firing line, where they famish,
Think of great Henry C. Frick
With breast exposed to the bullets,
Where shrapnell and buckshot are thick.
Imagine Rockefeller in the open,
Digging a trench with his gun;
Think of George Gould, as a private,
Drilling with Hettie Green's son!

Fancy our great, rich statesmen,
The men who have nothing to do,
Fighting and bleeding and dieing
To defend the red, white and blue.
These men never go to war,
Nor bloody a tender, white fist —
The working class do their fighting,
The rich are too wise to enlist.

The ignorant, poor man can go,
But not Mister Norman B. Ream,
Where sabers clash and glisten,
Where bullets whistle and scream.
The meek under-dog can go,
It's no place for a rich man's son,
Where blood spirts in short jets
At the business end of a gun.

Why don't the wealthy enlist
A month for fifteen bucks,
Under iron-shod horses hoofs
And steel-bound cannon trucks?
They scoff at the penniless widow,
And the little orphans that yearn
And wait for the battle-scarred father
Who has gone to never return.

They display wonderful judgement,
With pink skin, tender and fat;
They have too much sense to enlist
And get in range of a gat.
They paint tame pictures of war —
A green field without any mud,
Omitting the entrels and rags
Glued together with brains and blood.

They don't describe the longing
Within the dark confines,
Where troopers trample under foot
And powder burns and blinds.
They know that war is a glutton —
They dare not put it on the bills;
It's not to the rich man's interest
Who own the factories and mills.

On in the hurricane's thunder,
Where cannon balls whistle and shriek,
They sleep with the doomed and damned —
The ignorant, the poor, and the meek.
They cannot sculpture the grieving,
Where mad horses stampede and snort —
A war is no more of a picnic
Than hell is a summer resort.

GENE DEBS

It was a pleasant summer day
In Muncie's Wysor Grand,
When Gene Debs held full sway,
With no room left to stand.

The house was packed from door to door
With men, and women, too —
An audience of rich and poor
Applauded his speech all through.

He flayed the System as being wrong,
And bent closer to the crowd.
A tear-choked voice, true and strong,
Of which the Socialists are proud.

“Is this the man Capitalism jailed?”
A fellow asks while standing near.
“In crushing him have they not failed
To prejudice this audience here?”

Yes, his words were wet with tears,
His temple wet with sweat.
Though I may live a hundred years
But never, never, will I forget

How he made class struggles plain,
So plain that I could understand;
His speech, I know, was not in vain,
That day he spoke at the Wysor Grand.

With the oppressed in peace and strife,
A big-hearted Rebel, through and through,
The smaller chance you have in life
The more his heart goes out to you.

AT THE SPEEDWAY

The first great Motor Speedway
Was packed from fence to fence;
They were lined upon the bleachers
Long before the race commenced.
It was on Decoration Day,
The hot sun was beaming down —
We could smell the scorching rubber
That was pounding on the ground.

Bill Endicott was in the race,
So was fearless Caleb Bragg;
Germany, France and England —
Every country had its flag.
Each driver cranked and started —
Hear their engines pop and bang,
Going, perhaps, to meet their doom.
Like Bruce Brown and Lewis Strang.

With nerves of iron and steel,
The fuel went through the feed.
Louis Disbrow set the pace
And sped with unknown speed.
Goux drove his Peugeot Special,
The Stutz bear-cat hugged the post,
Isotta, battling with the Mercer,
Passed the grandstand like a ghost.
Spencer Wishart and Ralph Mulford
Rode the saucer way up high.
Applause came from the bleachers
As Barney Oldfield thundered by.
Wild Bob Burman drove a Keeton
(Wind pressure broke his goggle lense),
He drove this car a trifle faster
Than he drove old Blitzen Benz.

By this time the track was oily
And they skid when tires were cast.
Then the danger was so dazzling
Every moment seemed like the last.
One car turned completely over,
A cloud rose up, thick and black;
I saw two unconscious pilots
Lying helpless on the track.

Dawson tried to dodge the wreckage,
But his Marmon would not halt --
Speeding like a mad tornado,
His car turned a summersault.
Death seemed to hover near,
As the champion lay there alone,
Bleeding from his mouth and ears,
With a broken collar bone.

The Sunbeam and the Beaver Bullet,
Faster still these cars were sent --
Drivers seemed to go speed mad
After Joe Dawson's accident.
Mason chasing after Burman,
Gray Fox fighting with the Case,
And the crowd cheered Ralph DePalma,
Who was a hero in the race.

The dust rose again in anger
As the dare-devils hit and spilled;
Then the word was circulated
That Gill Anderson was killed.
Before Rene Thomas won the race
He drove his car up to the pit,
Changed his tires in twenty seconds,
Took on gas and out he lit.

On around the track they thundered
With a burst of flame and power,
With their shirts torn into ribbons,
A hundred and nineteen miles an hour.
The speedway has its fascination,
A grip that drivers can't resent;
They love the game of thrills and spills —
They go the way Bob Burman went.

TENTH CAVALRY

Tenth Cavalry, Tenth Cavalry,
You gallant sons of Ham,
You helped to kill the Indians
For Wall Street and Uncle Sam.
You charged up San Juan hill,
The air was streaked with lead —
They forgot about your valor,
They scarcely mentioned your dead.

Tenth Cavalry, Tenth Cavalry,
You black boys decked in blue —
Why fight for a commonwealth
That gives no credit to you?
You famished in the Philippines,
You felt the gattler crack,
While they Jim-crowed your mother
Because her face was black.

Tenth Cavalry, Tenth Cavalry,
They always put you ahead,
To die upon the battlefield,
To face the steel and lead.

You fight and joke and die,
Your bodies fill the wake;
They hang you without trial,
And burn you at the stake.

Tenth Cavalry, Tenth Cavalry,
You defend the stripes and stars,
While they bar you from the parks,
The hotels and Pullman cars.
While you fought in Mexico,
The picture shows in Cheyenne
Welcomed all the foreigners
And barred the colored man.

Tenth Cavalry, Tenth Cavalry,
Why wear the gray and blue?
Why not lay the carbine down
'Till they stop lynching you?
Look the captain in the face
And bravely tell him why —
If you cannot get a chance to live,
You won't take a chance to die.

Tenth Cavalry, Tenth Cavalry,
Get off the pony's back;
Don't make a target of yourself
Because your face is black.
They deny you equal promotion,
So give them back their reins;
Come home and fight the system
That keeps your race in chains.

SWEAT, DOGGONE YOU ,SWEAT

Sweat, doggone you, sweat!
Voting the Republican ticket yet.
Your master, he keeps cool,
While you keep overheated;
So sweat, doggone you, sweat!

Sweat, doggone you, sweat!
Your jeans pants are ringing wet;
You like to work and grunt,
No use now to fume and fret; :
So sweat, doggone you, sweat!

Sweat, doggone you, sweat!
Still you are a Democrat yet.
Then talk about grub being high
The capitalist holds the net,
So sweat, doggone you, sweat!

Sweat, doggone you, sweat!
On the grindstone your nose is whet,
And you turn it and laugh.
In your head there's rooms to let,
So sweat, doggone you, sweat!

Sweat, doggone you, sweat!
You ain't never woke up yet.
You see quails fly before your eye,
But you keep your powder wet,
So sweat, doggone you, sweat!

FOOD INSPECTOR WILEY

Food inspector Wiley
Lost out on his job
For asserting two percent
Of most corn syrup was but cob.
Wiley divulged the secret
Why so many babies died —
Because bad milk contained
Acid and formadlehyde.

He played the present system
And lost the rich man's favor;
He found poison alcohol
Mixed in vanilla flavor.
He found brands of honey
That didn't come from bees,
And maple-flavored syrup
That never came from trees.

He smashed cold-storage eggs
That lived for many moons,
And southern sorghum molasses
Colored with rotten prunes.
Long hours make dull brains,
When working in the heat,
And Wiley found no cure
In grape nuts and shredded wheat.

He examined rotten tomatoes
Pickled up into red sauce,
And sold cheap to the workers
To enrich the capitalist boss.
And decomposed dill pickles
Ground up into chow-chow,
And yellow country butter
That never saw a cow.

He told about the trademarks
And italics on the label,
How capitalism poisons
From the factory to the table.
With three percent of solids
And a little butter fat
They make evaporated cream
Unfit to feed an old tom cat.

Vesuvius brand macaroni
Looks good to the longing eye,
But Wiley said they made it
From poison cold tar dye.
They advertise their products
In cheap monthly magazines —
Benzote of soda noodles
And embalmed pork and beans.

When going into the grocery
You look along the shelf —
You'll find a thousand poisons
With which to kill yourself.

We die an early death,
And hawk along the street
Because food is fixed for profit —
They don't make it to eat.

They put rock in black pepper,
And poison the cake and pie,
Then they have the nerve and gall
To blame God when we die.
Overworked, and fed on poison,
Health to man is but a joke.
Cotton seed lard, and rag weed tea —
Wiley knew from whence he spoke.

Cold storage beef, and cholera hogs
Made into New England ham;
Oleomargarine, and pig's feet jelly
Labeled "pure" — just for a sham.
People say God called him home,
When a worker's lamp goes out —
Wiley knew they died from poison,
Eating canned corn and sauerkraut.

THE BLACK SCAB

The master chased the slave
With a hungry hound;
Now the slave gets up early
To run the master down.
He stands outside the factory
And pleads with all his vim,
And goes off sad and hungry
When no one employs him.

Our attitude toward him
Will make him friend or foe —
He will go with the capitalist
If there's nowhere else to go.
And often barred from the Union,
For being a negro, dark and grim,
The reason why he scabs on you
Is because you scab on him.

He don't want social equality —
Don't get that in your head;
He wants equal opportunity
In his fight for daily bread.
You'd better let him in the Union,
Let him vote for delegate;
Let him help solve the problem,
Let him work as well as wait.

He always laughs and whistles,
Though in poverty to the brim,
But he only scabbed on you
After you had scabbed on him.
He never messed with science,
Because science seemed too deep.
He was satisfied with corn bread,
And a trundle bed for sleep.

The white man layed the brick ,
The black man carried the hod —
Believing that his status
Was so ordained by God.
Don't think you are immune
Because he has a curly head —
His poverty breeds diseases
That germinate and spread.

His low wages breed consumption,
And germs from his screenless doors
Are carried by the housefly
To that little child of yours.
He wants class solidarity,
With the many and the few.
As you measure to the Negro
It will be measured back to you.

MASTER AND SLAVE

When the icy winds of winter
Are sullen, cold and bleak,
And the smitten lips of labor
Have no forum in which to speak,

The masters, who own the mills,
Are drinking cocktails and wine —
Their slaves live from hand to mouth
On food unfit for swine.

—At charity balls they dance,—
The workers pine and sweat.
Whenever labor has been stabbed,
Their dagger has been wet.
They are robbers, pure and simple,
Their game is graft and greed;
Our bones bleach on the highway
Where these vultures roost and feed.

These politicians and bankers,
The robbers that gloat on gore,
They gouge the souls of the masses,
They grind the face of the poor.
Capitalism means unemployment,
With poverty that starves and blinds.
Socialism means industrial freedom
In the factories, mills, and mines.

HENRY DUBB

No wonder Ryan Walker
Invented Henry 'Dubb —
The worker who is satisfied
With just sufficient grub
Gets the mis-meal scraps;
Thinks he has the blues.
Satisfied with bib-overalls
And heavy, hob-nail shoes.

Existing in a little shack,
No library or bath tub,
Then votes for Mr. Grab-it-all —
That's certainly Henry Dubb.

He makes the automobiles,
And sweats his ignorant hide;
On election day he votes to walk,
And lets his master ride.

When starving he goes on strike
And gets beat with a club;
In jail, for six long months
They diet poor Henry Dubb.
Satisfied with low wages,
To buy taters and liver to fry,
He tries to drown his troubles
In the vats of rock and rye.

He goes to war with two good arms
And comes back with a nub;
Thinks he's fighting for his country —
That's certainly Henry Dubb.
He votes for the capitalist class,
Then wonders why he's poor;
He never gets a vacation
Till the crepe hangs on his door.

A poor wage slave for forty years,
In debt his life was spent,
Trying to feed the little Dubbs
And pay the landlord rent.
Finally he falls beneath the load
And is buried beneath a shrub
Out in the county potters' field —
The unsung, ignorant Henry Dubb.

THE EVOLUTION OF MACHINERY

The automatic machine
Has taken the glass blower's pipe;
Like the poor hand-printer
Who cursed the linotype.
The all-around boiler maker,
The brick, layer with his trow,
Are driven out by machinery,
Like the farmer with his plow.

The ditcher with his shovel,
The waiter with his tray,
Have had their ranks invaded —
They all have had their day.
The blacksmith with his hammer,
The machinist with his wrench,
Have had their colors lowered
Like the cobbler at the bench.

The cotton gin, by Whitney,
And the printing press, by Hoe,
Have not shortened the journey
The wage slave has to go.
We beg and look for work
Where waresheds groan with grain;
We let them own the tools
Then grumble and complain.

THE PRISON

I saw the old turnkey,
With keys of every kind,
Within the mills of Mammon,
That punish, sweat and blind.
I saw the convicts dine
On spuds, and punk for bread,
Along the narrow table
With sheared, uncovered head.

I saw the small cell house
With narrow bunk for bed,
With no carpets on the floor,
With no pictures overhead.
We passed another cell house
With ceiling not so low —
They had carpets on the floor
For the thieves in bankers' row.

I passed the drawn curtain,
Where the death watch was kept,
But I did not see the dungeon
Where the solitary wept.

Thus I followed the warden,
With still and bated breath;
I beheld the electric chair
Where he put his man to death.

I saw the gray-haired forger,
Sentenced to prison for life;
He had a fond expression
That blossomed out of strife.
The lonely hours of labor,
Amid the gnashing gears
Where jailers mock at pity,
Where hangmen laugh at tear.

I heard the hot iron splatter,
I saw the victim sweat,
I smelt the black clay coffee
From the cups at Joliet.
An institution without pity,
As far as I could see;
A prison with rocks of ages
Which did not cleft for me.

THE NEEDLES EYE

The Titanic hit the ice,
She slowly, but surely, sank,
Taking our great millionaires
Of Wall Street fame and rank.

A few poor Chinese coolies
Were murdered by the mate,
While rushing to the lifeboat
To save them from their fate.

The senate investigation
Proved this, and nothing more:
That lifeboats were lowered
For the rich — not for the poor.

The passengers from the steerage
Were busy with their prayers;
The lifeboats soon departed
With the wives of millionaires.

“Nearer My God to Thee,”
They began to plead and cry,
And offer up their gold
To get through the needle’s eye.

WASHINGTON AND ROOSEVELT

Booker T. Washington was speaking
To an audience in the South —
The people all applauded him
As words fell from his mouth.

When he had finished his oration,
After a long two-hours’ run,
“Of all the speakers,” said a man,
“There is none like Washington.”

“But you must consider Bryan,”
Said Washington, with a smile.
“Bryan ain’t in it,” said the man,
“You have him beat a mile.”

“Have you considered Roosevelt,
You must give him his due.”
The man said, “I have hated him
Ever since he dined with you.”

PREPAREDNESS

“The Battle Cry of Peace” —
Did you ever see the show?
Financed by the Navy League
To help shoot up Mexico.
Gun makers spent their thousands
To make this lie immense,
To tell us about Preparedness
With battleships for selfdefense.

It showed New York by night,
After Broadway closed her eyes;
The enemy sent her aeroplanes
And bombs rained from the skies.
The Flat Iron building fell,
And submarines went on a spree;
I saw the Liberty statue fall
And crumble into the sea.

An aviator dropped a bomb
On the Singer building head —
The twisted girders tumbled down
Like a million tons of lead.
The Woolworth building had collapsed
Across the choked subway;
The Golden Gate was being smashed
From San Francisco Bay.

The Brooklyn bridge had disappeared —
I saw the cable snap;
The enemy was about to blow
Long Island off the map.
The Capitol was battered down,
The White House was not spared.
The horrible picture tried to show
That America was not prepared.

When they called for volunteers
The weak could not resist;
They hypnotized the working man
And urged him to enlist.
Then Congress spent a million,
And we swallowed hook and bait;
They ordered from Schwab and Morgan
More defective armor plate.

They showed a hundred battleships
Shelling the Panama canal —
They knew of no such danger,
But they had armor plate to sell.
They passed a military law
To draft men to be shot —
Now each worker is a soldier
Whether he wants to be or not.

ROCKEFELLER AND BOUCK WHITE

They were striking in Colorado
For more stale daily bread,
When Rockefeller's gunmen came
And shot them full of lead.

The King sat on his throne,
Stubborn hearted, glutton-like;
He said he would spend millions
Before he would loose the strike.

The next Sunday, in New York,
The people serged and thronged
In front of the cathedral
Where the oil master belonged.

Bouck White went into the church
To defend the homeless poor;
The detectives knocked him down
And dragged him from the door.

Six months on Blackwell's island —
They bowed his noble head
For saying for those miners
—What a rebel should have said.

HEADS AND HANDS

The hoarding capitalist class
Have a system, cut and dried,
How to rob the working people
And then keep them satisfied.

This country with its classes,
With poverty north and south —
We sweat from morn till night,
Then live from hand to mouth.

We fight and strike for dollars,
Then go vote for dimes, instead;
The capitalists call their gunmen
And shoot us full of lead.

Why should the masters fear
The slave that will not fight?—
No one respects the under dog
That will not bark and bite.
How long will the working class
Support their schemes and plans?
As long as they use their heads,
And we just use our hands.

WAR

War is the God of mammon,
War is the outlaw of stealth,
War is the dream of a savage,
War is the glutton of wealth.
War is the dungeon keeper,
War is the forger of chains,
War is the cunning assassin,
War is the poisoner of brains.
War is the prayer of the looter,
War is the bottomless well,
War is the base of the baseless,
War is the foundation of hell.

HEREDITY

They were burning at the stake,
A delicate woman stood near by;
Her child was born half-witted,
And she often wondered why.
The embryo that is carried,
Assimulates each wish and vow;
The impression will develop,
Sometime, somewhere, somehow.

From the cradle to the coffin,
All through life's vast unknown,
More than all else, man is guided
By the marrow of the bone.

THE BETTER WORLD

A world with more justice than charity,
A world with its thinking cap on,
A world with more brotherhood in it,
A world with the brimstone all gone.

A world without the penniless widow
Weeping on a fresh-made grave;
Without the millionaire and the begger,
A world without master and slave.

THE UNION OF BRAZIL

Down in Brazil, Indiana,
Where I lectured in a hall
To clay workers then on strike,
Mostly Socialists, but not all,
Some union men turned traitor
When bread and meat got slack —
The few of them that scabbed,
Not one of them was black.

Aunt Dinah took in washing
To help encourage Ike,
To keep him in good spirits
And help him win the strike.
But suppose this fighting union
Of which I speak about,
Would have been a scab union
And kept the blackman out.

Would you not feel like scabbing,
If you were in the negro's place,
If a union turned you down
Just for the color of your face?

When white men go on strike
The capitalist sends to Mobile
And get colored mechanics
With muscles as hard as steel.

They come and take your job,
They work, and sing, and sweat;
You call them dirty scabs,
But maybe you forget
That they would join your union
And help you win your fight,
But you draw the color line —
You only take in white.

So when one takes your job,
Don't curse his race and pout;
You belong to a scab union
Or it would not keep him out.
I am not seeking for equality,
For the races to wed and woo,
But I am fighting for his right
To make a living, the same as you.

All day long he swings the hammer,
As sweat drips from his chin —
Capitalists know they cannot loose
If they im—port colored men.
The Negro will take your job
If you strike when times are hard —
He has knocked upon your door
And he could not get a card.

They have babies in their cradles,
They have many mouths to feed;
Now should they let them starve
To maintain a job-trust greed?
They would help you win your strikes,
They would picket, and live on swill,
Were they admitted to your union
As they were down in Brazil.

CAPITAL AND LABOR

A million tongues are calling for my pen
To fight the foe that fills the earth with tears
By slick, soft-handed, robbing bucanears.
Daily I see them slave against their will,
With salt sweat ever oozing from each brow,—
They feel the pangs their ignorance did endow.

Whipped by hunger and driven to the mill —
Wages enough for grub it only buys;
Where no rest comes to sooth their weary eyes.
Driven by poverty in the damp and den,
Eyelids weighted down with fetid dust —
Deck hands on the ship of hope and trust.

A lifer serving in the endless strain —
Bovine contentment that overlooks the end,
Lips that twitch and backs— that ever bend;
A mind which shows only part of human care —
The sense that is appeased by food and clothes;
Invisibly chained, the contented toiler goes.

A tenement where the children cry and fret,
A neighborhood where weeds grow fat and choke,
The house tormented by the hammer's stroke;
Where the sarved scoch collie comes and grieves.
The guy ropes of their minds are held by force
Until labor from its master gets divorce.

THE REBEL

Let the spot light penetrate
And watch the glutton flinch;
We won't retract a single word
Nor retreat a single inch.
The Rebel will say his say,
And fight, and take, and give,
To make this world a better place
For the working class to live.

We rent hovels on back streets
With vermin in their walls,
Then go and fight their wars
Whenever the bugle calls.
Where orators, on Labor Day,
Shed tears about the flag,
We vote for the profit system
And protect their loot and swag.
They hypnotize the working class
And chloroform their brains,
They seek to keep them satisfied
Then let them hug their chains.
Our class will live in poverty,
And our children, that we adore,
As long as we strike against the rich
And then vote against the poor.

SOCIALISM AND THE NEGRO

Where Socialism is the strongest
There the Negro fares the best —
This rule always holds good
In any country, east or west.

The Negro, in the southland,
Can work at most any trade,
But can never tell the moment
When a mad mob will invade.

But over there in the north,
Where mobs are less intense,
They may not like the Negro,
But they use more common sense.

Socialism is not so strong
In Georgia, and Tennessee,
Where negroes are disfranchised
And they possess no liberty.

But in New York and Illinois,
Where the Socialist vote is strong,
There seems to be less friction
And the two races get along.

In Michigan and Pennsylvania,
Where the Socialists put in Mayors,
Seldom they have race riots
Or mix up in such affairs.

In Kansas and in Ohio,
Where industrial unions grow,
They are lending a helping hand
To the Colored man down below.

But in Carolina and Mississippi,
Where liberty does not exist,
If the Negro has any friends
They are among the Socialist.

The Socialist over in Germany,
Australia, France, and Japan,
Have never raised their hands
To hinder the poor Colored man.

Go travel the whole world over
And search from east to west —
Where Socialism is the strongest
There the Negro fares the best.

THE FALLEN WOMAN

Where the fallen woman goes

To sell her body for bread,

Is called the underworld

By the world up overhead.

The fallen woman is your sister --

The whole world is all akin;

To support one fallen woman

It takes fourteen fallen men.

ORGANIZE

In the dreary, dark ages gone by,
The workers, oppressed by knaves,
Often scorned their benefactors
For fighting for them as slaves.
The colored wage slave of today,
Like the white man, he complains,
And supplies the iron and anvil —
With them they rivet his chains.
Superstition set up for science,
Few good books on their shelves,
They repair a windowless prison
In which they punish themselves.
Their chances paralyzed by fear,
Half educated, and then underfed—
They must get busy and organize
Or be counted out with the dead.

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