Poems of a Socialist Priest

Irwin St. John Tucker
POEMS OF A SOCIALIST PRIEST

BY

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THE AUTHOR.

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Irwin St. John Tucker, author of these poems, is a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and is editor of The Christian Socialist, of Chicago. He was for seven years a newspaper reporter, working in many of the large cities of the Middle West and South.

The poems are in two divisions. First, the Lyrics of a Tramp Reporter, containing verses written during this time and published in various newspapers, chiefly the New Orleans Item and the New York Call. The second division, Poems of a Socialist Priest, from which the book takes its name, contains those written since entering upon the profession of the ministry. Many of these have been printed in the Living Church of Milwaukee.
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I.

LYRICS OF A TRAMP REPORTER

DEDICATED TO THE

"ALL-STAR DESK"

And all other companions in the Newspaper World; including

Jack Lawson          Campbell McLeod
Barratt O'Hara       Nancy W. Hinman
Jack Lait            Henry Stier
Billy Hallowell      Duval Armstrong
Tex O'Reilly         Marshall Ballard
Clair Kenamore       Herman J. Seiferth
James E. Crown       Clay Viguerie
Mike Harstone        James Edmunds
Fannie Heaslip Lea   Fred Waltz
Floyd Gibbons        Callie Stith

and many more.
THE SONG OF THE PRESS

'Tis the roar of the hoarse old ocean
When the long swells sweep and boom,
And the white gulls scream and flicker
Where the mist-wet shore-crags loom;
And the deep caves groan and thunder,
And the loose rocks roll and fume.

'Tis the song of a fierce old minstrel
With a harp of a thousand strings,
Who has fed him fat on famine,
And has starved at the board of kings;
And has bathed in the flame of sorrow,
And has wept whereof he sings.

'Tis the call of a strong crusader,
And the boast of a robber knight;
And the song of a questing lover,
And the clang of a distant fight;
'Tis the toll of countless dirges,
And the chime of the joy-bells bright.

'Tis the loom of the whole world weaving
Strange webs of a tangled skein;
'Tis the song of the whole world chanting,
Deep-toned, with a wild refrain;
'Tis the pulse of the whole world, throbbing
'Neath the lash of an age-long pain.
THE SACRIFICE

Like sheep in the shambles that bleed,
   Like rubbish, that roars in the draft,
We are slain on the altar of Greed,
   And burned to the image of Graft.

By wreck, and explosion, and fire,
   By swindlings, and thiefings, and traps,
We are robbed—that a stock may go higher;
   We die—lest a dividend lapse.

A wink, and a jest, and a fee,
   And the State's whole duty is met.
Created for slaughter were we;
   How dare we ask more than we get?

So we scream for an agonized hour
   In the smoke and the steam and the flame;
And the State drops a tear, and a flower;
   "God willed it—why, who was to blame?"

But the sleek, idle money-lord thrives;
   And the vampire broods fat in his den;
So the dollars pour in, what are lives?
   So the gold gathers fast, what are men?
LYRICS OF A

TO A GIRL REPORTER
(F. H. L.)

A slip of a girl, with a tricksy nose,
And a hand that is daintily thin;—
But she shakes one's soul with the truth she knows
Till he scarce dare look within.

An elf of a girl, with a heart warm-wise,
And a laugh like a gurgling spring;—
But the world-fire burns in her wide brown eyes,
And its chords in her low voice ring.

She has gazed in the eyes of Love and Death,
And has laughed at their threat and plea;
And she builds grown souls with an artful breath
As the Lord built you and me.

ELEGY

On the Steps of the Art Institute, Gazing at the Grocer Carts and Their Steeds

The mule's an artist in his line,
As any one can tell.
In fact, his art surpasses mine;
The things he draws will sell.
TRAMP REPORTER

THE COPY READERS

Strong beneath our flying fingers
  Throbs the pulse of all the world;—
War and love and joy and murder,
  All in mad confusion hurled.
Through our mesh of netted lightning,
  Like the spider's quivering strands,
We can feel the earth-nerves tingle;
  Read the hot souls of all lands.

We have tramped the Long Trail over
  From Magellan to Cape Nome;
Circle City, Valparaiso,
  'Frisco, London—are our home.
Earthquake, fever, fire and riot,
  Shipwreck, feud—we've known them well.
For the thing we have not sampled
  You must plumb the deeps of hell.

Out from every wild new story
  Faces look some of us know.
Every flash, though weird and gory,
  Smites some chord of long ago,—
Till the wanderlust comes on us,
  And the fever grips again,
For the plunge in strange tides, rolling
  Through far worlds of deeds—and men!
LYRICS OF A

FESTAL ODE

Old Omar sang of Saki and of Wine.
He loved the ruby daughter of the Vine.
In grass-floored gardens, fragrant with the rose,
Drunk as a lord, he penned his flowing line.

But I sing of Jess and Gertie,
Lizzie, Yetta, Bert and May,
White of cap and neat of apron,
Bearing high the loaded tray,
Where the hot, brown, steaming coffee
Beats Khayyam’s brew any day.

Gray Hafiz told of moonlit meadows rare,
Where frenzied nightingales upon the air
Poured forth the luscious burden of their song,
While that old sinner kissed white shoulders bare.

But I sing the crowded counters
Where the sizzling sausage dies;
And the air is warm and liquid
With the music of the cries
“Fry a half!” “One rare!” “Three scrambled!”
“Four small blacks and two mince pies!”
For poets' eyes may in fine frenzy roll;
These bards may chant rich anthems of the soul;
   And nightingales, and moonlight, flowers
   and smiles
May be the summit of their lyric goal.

But my dreams are not of roses,
   When my stomach's full of dents;
So I sing the dwindling ticket—
   Thirty meals at twenty cents—
That must keep me from starvation
   Till some editor relents!
THE LITANY OF LOVERS

Upon a shady streamlet side
   By sunlit meadows hazy,
She wanders lone and dreamy-eyed
   And plucks a nodding daisy.
With tender pink her cheeks do glow,
   A smile on sweet lips hovers,
The while she chants with cadence low
   The Litany of Lovers.

"He loves me!" and "He loves me not!"
   The Litany of Lovers.

Like devotee who kneels before
   A shrine antique and holy,
Her rosary repeating o'er
   With reverence hushed and lowly,
She tells the charm, while petals fall,
   Which destiny discovers;
That incantation mystical,
   The Litany of Lovers.

"He loves me!" and "He loves me not!"
   The Litany of Lovers.
Like torches on a distant shore
   Across dark waters gleaming,
Her deep brown eyes shine more and more
   With Love's own watchfire beaming;
Till as the last leaves fluttering lie,
   All doubts and fears removing,
She clasps her hands in triumph high,
   In ecstasy of loving;

"He loves me! Ah, he loves me well!"
   The Gloria of Lovers!
Beneath his crimson canopy
  The wise Chief Justice sat.
His compeers blinked in solemn row,
  Some skinny, and some fat.
Large cobwebs draped across their brains,
  But they cared naught for that.

"The case is clear, our finding plain,"
  The wise Chief Justice said.
"In ancient rule and precedent
  Full deeply have I read.
The sacred wisdom of the Law
  Joins with me on this head.

"In this presentment of the State,
  Page fifty, line fifteen,
A comma is inserted where
  A colon should have been;
And here a dark blue ink is used;
  It should have been of green.

"When that sixth juror signed his name,
  He failed to dot the i.
The clerk of court wore crimson socks,
  The Judge, a purple tie;
The jury’s verdict is, then, false;
  The sentence is put by."
His colleagues bent their solemn heads,
In finding all agreed.
The State's attorney rose in haste,
New documents to read.
"This comes from the accused," he said;
"He has confessed the deed!

"He says he shot his saintly sire,
A preacher gray and old;
He slew his wife with boiling lead,
And ere her corpse was cold,
He burned a great asylum down,
With loss of life untold!"

The wise Chief Justice sternly frowned.
"Irrelevant!" said he.
"Such trivial matters vex the court;
No time for such have we.
Your case is full of fatal faults;
The prisoner is free!"

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AN EXAMPLE

Be like the placid football.
It soars o'er strife and mire.
Each time it's downed, it gains a point;
Each kick but sends it higher!
THE OLD DOCTOR

There's a gentle old Doctor can heal every smart
   Any soul ever suffered from yet—
A wound of the mind, or a stab in the heart;
   His name—it is Doctor Forget.

For failures that sear, or remembrance that stings,
   Vain longing, or vainer regret,
There is panacea for each of these things;
   Call in this physician—Forget.

You have not a hurt the old Doctor can't cure;
   His like—ah, the world has not met!
His presence is soothing, his remedies sure;
   His balm is his name; just—Forget!

(There is a doctor in New Orleans by this name. I passed by his door in the French Quarter once in summer. Inside his court was a garden of palms with a cooling fountain; the street outside was loud with the uproar of market traffic.)
MAXIMS FOR A BUDDING YOUTH

Be not like the trolley, my son.
On ways that change not doth it run.
It never gets off of its old beaten track;
When it gets where it's going, it simply turns back;
Be not like the trolley, my son.

Be not like the aero, my son.
It flies 'twixt the earth and the moon.
At times it goes high, at times it goes low,
But when most it is needed, it simply won't go:
Be not like the aero, my son.

But be like the auto, my son.
'Tis built both for work and for fun.
It goes where it's needed, but stays on the level;
It can creep like a snail, or can speed like the devil;
—Resemble the auto, my son!
QUEER, ISN’T IT?

Though my soul is torn with trouble, I perceive
—How strange!
In the earth, and sea, and heaven, while I grieve,
No change.

For the sun and moon and stars shine just as brightly
As before,
And the birds across blue heaven flit as lightly
As of yore.

Since all these move on, and give no sign of anguish,
While I sigh,
Can it be this tide of living would not languish Should I die?

—But I live; and shall I overcast the morrow With a sigh?
No, you fool! since all of these forget my sorrow So can I!
THE DRAMA

Last night, I saw the Play.
From our old seat on yonder pine-crowned height
Across the westward regions of the Bay,
I saw the lurid legions of the Day
Battling for light.

I saw the Sun grow dim
When his cloud-warriors, whelmed by shattering powers
Fell bloodily across the southward rim;
And crowding from the East, surrounding him,
Swept the triumphant Hours.

But through that red despair,
When the strong hero of our life sank low,
Above him, bright against the blackening air
The Sunset Star struck through the murky glare
With steady, beckoning glow.

I knew them, every one.
Familiar voices through their parts rang true.
I knew the hope my life was shaped upon
Beneath the mask and vesture of the Sun;
The Star—dear, that was You.
SKIES
Shallow the skies of noon above us bend
Placid and low,
With lazy drifting clouds, that pile and rend
As the winds blow.

But through the midnight gloom what glories burst!
—Steep beyond steep
Splendid in awe, in shadowy light immersed,
Fathomless deep;

So when I look, Dear Heart, in your deep eyes,
—Eternity
Looks back, as that rich love, which in the
lies
Lays hold on me.

MY LADY CONSOLATION
Out of the deep I cried
Where sodden darkness, writhing in wild forms,
Smothers in glaring horror, dumb and wide,
Souls overblown by storms,
Into its pit who fall.
You heard my strangling call,
And like an angel, cleaving from God's height,
Untouched, that hideous gulf of midnight gall,
You drew me to the light!
DEEPS

"Deep calleth unto deep."—Leaping on high
The gray sea thunders toward the upper bound,
And vaulting heaven answers that strong cry
With solemn silence, deeper than all sound.

There is a call that thunders in my soul
'Deep than ocean, sheerer than the sky.
Waking or still, its echoes through me roll
Beneath all passing sounds that melt and die.

It is my heart that calls, nor will be dumb;
It is your love that answers, hour by hour;
It is my life that thrills, now you have come,
More than my heart, as spring is than the flower.
SEA-CAVES

As in some green sea-cave rich music rings
With rise and fall of gem-incrusted tides,
Where every wave a surging ballad sings
And every wandering wind a secret hides;—

So in the love-bound cavern of my heart
The strong tides rise and fall with thoughts of you;
My dreams leave sweet sea-music as they part,
And every whispering hope their strains renew.

How could I know such ceaseless music dwelt
Within me, as awakens to your eyes?
How could I know, who dreamed, but had not felt
The Great Deep shake beneath, how deep it lies?
OVER THE HILLS

Over the hills, beyond the snow-crowned height,
That mocks, O Love, from earth thine ever-shifting stars,
My Lady sleeps; sleeps through the summer night,
    Beneath the Southern moon,
While Auster from his oceans to her bears
In perfumed wealth his rich Aeolian airs;
From their wide wonder-eld he weaves, in mystic rune,
    Peace, round my Lady, sleeping.

Yet more than ice-crowned rocks between us lie,
Barriers I cannot scale, nor Love command away.
For frosty wills in scorn; the irony
    Of circumstance and fate,
Doom us to drag apart the weary day,
And night of lovelier heaviness away.
—Asleep, what dost thou dream, while I for nothing wait?—
    Sweet be thy visions, sleeping!
Yet more than iron will My Lady keeps,
Yet even more than fate's blind, causeless mockery.
Beneath the Southern moon My Lady sleeps,
  Beneath the summer sun,
  Through all the winter years that are to be
   -Cups, brimming cups of timeless misery—
Until this vacant show of hollow shades be done
  For me, beside her sleeping!
CHIVALRY

When Arthur Pendragon in Britain was crowned,
'Twas a turbulent, quarrelsome realm that he found.
As a feasible means of preserving the peace,
He started a squadron of mounted police.

By woodland and highway they rode far and near.
No blackguard, nor baron, nor witch did they fear.
They cleaned up the land in a vigorous way,
And they held a big dinner each Pentecost day.

O Launcelot, Galahad, Tristram, Geraint!
They hunted for trouble, and sang as they went.
They rescued fair princesses, slew giants grim,
Each keen on the job that the day brought to him.

Now the glamour of chivalry's vanished away.
Round Table reunions are not held today.
But the age of Knight Errantry shall not be o'er,
Till the need that created them, calls them no more.

For the blood of the heroes still burns in us all,
And the fire still leaps white, where the sudden sparks fall.
We lack but the chance to be all of one piece
With King Arthur's Invincible Mounted Police.
BALLAD OF A BLIND REPORTER

Ah, the aching in the temples
And the stinging in the eyes
And the heart in hot rebellious anger burning!
But vague darkness shrouds and tombs me,
And the gray ghosts grinning rise,
And my heart near breaks with hopeless, endless yearning.

Gone, the noise and rush and clatter;
Still, the ringing, rattling roar;
Dead, the shouting and the laughter, and the swearing;
While the sizzling, spitting arc-lights
On white-paper drifts no more
Cast their heavy shadows, purple-gray and glaring.

I’m an exile from my country;
From the strange mad lands I loved
Of adventure, toil and frolic, feast and starving;
Light of foot, and heart, and pocket,
’Cross the continent I roved,
With my pencil and my wits a passage carving.

Friend of felon, judge and jailer,
Tramp, archbishop, sport, and sage;
Murky wisdom of the streets in dark ways gleaning;
—I have set whole cities chuckling;
Roused up mobs to white-hot rage;
Caused a myriad eyes to fill, with piteous meaning.
Ah, the price of too much seeing!
Through these bandaged eyes of mine
Hundred thousand other eyes have looked,
and wondered,
On life's pain, and joy, and sorrow;
Desperate hate, and love divine;
Passion swift, and long slow strain of fond
hearts sundered.

Heavy price of too much seeing!
Now my forehead throbs in pain
In the dead, dull sickroom silence, dark and
smelling;
And the eyes behind the bandage—
Will they ever see again?
God have mercy on a fool!—There is no telling.
THE ANSWER.

Ah God, that I might speak! I hear, I see
Thy surging soundless deeps, through clouds
thy light again;
Now on me dawns Thine ageless mystery
Of mysteries the key.
The tuneless groaning of the sons of men
Thy chord of Love resolves to Love again.
Could I unfold what dreams Thy spirit bids
me see
—Lo, world, thy destiny!

The thunder of my meaning drowns my speech.
They will not sound through clay, these messages of light.
The splendor of their substance, cannot reach
Into this grime and rust.
Drunk with pure glory, from that aery height
To stumbling earth brought down, and choking night,
I cannot solve the strife, nor clear the strangling dust,
—Nor dry—Oh God!—the tears.

If I might speak, O Lord; if I might tell
The utmost word, but once, of aught that I would say;
Sound forth the cleaving truth that should dispel
One fearful fantasy—
Sin's farthest debt could I triumphant pay;
Send thy white fire and burn my sin away!
Death could I overcome, and shake eternity,
—Thy fire, Lord;—here am I!
II.

POEMS OF A SOCIALIST PRIEST

DEDICATED TO

My Father,
My Mother,
My Wife, and
My Bishop.
POEMS OF A

FOAM

As forms the fretted foam-lace
On yonder restless sea,
O Thou eternal Ocean,
So foam the worlds, from Thee.

Thy waves that toss and thunder,
Thy winds that hurl and sweep,
Thy leaping shoreless borders,
Thy currents, strong and deep—

These ply one on another;
And from their striving spun,
Leap forth, one winking instant,
Our systems, and our sun.

THE SINNER

Where shall I hide from Myself? Or where shall I flee from the presence
Of this unchangeable Sin that fronts me, un-winking and livid?

" 'Tis but a small thing," thought I;—and lo,
how it looms black above me!
Hideous is heaven through its murk; it walls me apart from all living.

"I will fight God and be great; proud, though defeated," I boasted;
—Naught but this corpse and myself, chained, naked, twixt desert and Heaven!
IN CHAPEL

(At the General Theological Seminary, New York)

The voices of forsaken years
Ring through the storm of chant and prayer,
And drown this worship to may ears;
“What, kneeling yet? How came you here?”

By saintly forms of carven stone
An alien pageant dances by,
That hides the peace of Paul and John;
And part of each wild scene am I.

(The tramp-fires gleam by track and stream,
The wet road winds afar.
With iron clank and hiss of steam
And long, dull shuddering jar,
The long freight trains still plough the plains,
Men crouched in every car.)

But here the chimes call thrice a day.
Our studious feet move to and fro.
On cloistered shelves, in grave array,
Rich wisdom broods in many a row.
The candles’ pure and holy light
Upon our ordered reverence glows;
Each jewelled window in its height
With dawn’s faint reddening dimly shows.

(Yet still with groan and grinding roar
The presses whirr and spin;
The desk, where once I wrote and swore
In all the rush and din,
Still knows the tales, all told before,
Of wreck, and filth, and sin.)
They call me from the elder years.
    Strong is the pull of other days.
The life I knew and loved appears
    And calls me back to trodden ways.
But all the war within me stirred
    Stills at the touch of His calm hand;
The sound of one well-knowing word
    Dispels the wild and ghostly band.

(For now I walk with a wander-mate,
    Who roved through Galilee;
The chief who stormed, alone, the gate
    Of hell’s black demonry;
Who wrote the shame of the whole word's blame
    In His blood, on the bark of a tree.)

It breaks the knees of steel-built men
    To follow where His feet have bled;
It trips the skill of the richest pen
    To tell the stories He has said.
It strains the nerve of hearts sworn true
    To march with Him to the black end.
I have seen Him fight; I have heard Him, too;
    Enough for me. I know my friend!

(I had seen the truth I sought for, glow
    In the grace of the morning skies;
I had heard a call as the winds swung low,
    Or the tempest wrecked the skies.
A joy shone too, in the morning dew,
    And a hope in the young moon-rise.)
I heard my name said oft and clear,
    But knew not who had called to me.
I followed till I found Him here,
    In His own self, past mystery.
Here lies the key of life and death,
    This broken Bread, this Wine outpoured.
The rocks may melt like passing breath,
    But Thou and I have spoken, Lord!
AT NAZARETH

In Joseph's shop at Nazareth
How swift the shavings flew!
When o'er the fragrant cedar-boards
The plane of Jesus drew,
And fashioned for his Father's eye
The long planks trim and true.
Round Mary's door at Nazareth
   How clear the singing rose!
When, weary with the long day's toil
   They grouped at even's close,
And the strong sound of David's hymn
   Swelled ere they sought repose.

The synagogue at Nazareth—
   How bright its stillness grew!
When through the portal Jesus brought
   James, Joseph, Simon too,
And led their voices in the psalm,
   And watched them in the pew.

The tidings flew at Nazareth
   Through white streets, quick and wide;
"Annas hath taken Mary's son,
   And he is crucified!"
While old men wagged their wise gray heads.
   "What said we? Hah!" they cried.

Behind the town of Nazareth
   The hill stands, steep, and high
Where furious neighbors dragged him once,
   While kinsmen shouted, "Die!"
And now, while heathen hail him Lord,
   Shall Christians crucify?
In temples of cedar and stone
Would ye kennel Me down?—saith the Lord.
The vault of the skies is My throne,
The wind and the seas are My own;
Shall I crouch to these holes, at your word?

In vanity built ye these towers;
For pride have ye tinted this glass!
There is blood in the heart of the flowers
That nod on this altar of yours;
Would ye bribe Me with tinsel and brass?

In kennels of cedar and stone
Will ye chain Me blindfold?—saith the Lord.
Shall I dwell through the week here, alone,
Bribed, bound, while ye plunder mine own,
Fooling Me with your seventh-day word?

Hark! the screams of the widow and child
Ye have slain—drown your hymns!—saith the Lord.
This “holy place,” gilded and tiled,
With the blood of My poor is defiled.
Kindle fire!—I must cleanse!—Bring the Sword!
“Why can’t I have a Christmas tree?”
The little fellow cried.
With wistful eyes he snuggled close
Up to his mother’s side.
She drew her tattered shawl more tight,
But never a word replied.

Shop windows blazed with twinkling lights,
Heaped high with Christmas joys,
Rich treasure for the gladdened eyes
Of happy girls and boys;
But if a waif no home possess,
What need has he for toys?

Chill winter winds with blustering sport
* His ragged clothes bite through.
His face, with hunger pinched and wan,
With cold is drawn and blue.
His mother grips his shivering hands
And chokes a sob or two.

“I wish we had a Christmas tree,”
He murmured, very low.
“The Christ child sure would send us one
If he could only know.
His cradle was a manger once,
But there, there was no snow.”
"If I kneel down," he said again,
  "Here on the street, and pray,
I wonder if he'd send us one,
  One tree, on his birthday?
You told me once the Tree of Life
Blooms in his home, alway."

Down in a corner, dark and cold,
  He drops on weak, numb knees.
She spreads her shawl, to hide him there;
  No eye of mortal sees.
"Dear Jesus, send a tree," he prays,
  "If you can spare one, please."

She cannot see the sleety way
  For blinding, burning tears.
And choking sobs that shake her form
  Deafen her muffled ears.
The Christmas hymns, at midnight chime,
  Swell glad;—but neither hears.
THE UNEMPLOYED WORKER

To the Preacher of the Gospel

'YOU never hunted, hungry, for a feed,
YOU never felt the Gray Wolf growl and bite,
How can YOU preach a starving Saviour's creed,
Or shelter famished souls from storm and night?

But I'm a homeless hobo,
Unvalued and unpriced;
I roam the land from town to town
The same as Jesus Christ.
"The foxes have their holes," said He,
"The bird of the air a nest;
"But the Son of Man hath not a place
To lay him down and rest."

YOU never dined from some smoke-blackened can
On hidden coals, beside a weary road,
—How can YOU know that homeless Son of Man
Whose tired feet bled, whose pillow was the sod?
But by the hope above us,
   And by the hell below;
By Christ, our First Great Comrade,
   Whom we—not YOU—well know,
The Son of Man shall judge you,
   And this shall be the test;
"Took ye, as Christ, the Hobo,
   And gave him of your best?"

Saw you that bread-line shiver in the sleet?
   Cold winds, through tattered rags, bit legs half bare.
Huddled amid their ceaseless-shuffling feet,
   JESUS OF NAZARETH stood and trembled there.

"Yea! as ye treat these homeless,
   Ye have treated God most high.
And where one stand in shame and want
   Look well! for there stand I.
The foxes have their holes," said He,
   "The bird of the air a nest;
But the Son of Man hath not a place
   To lay his head and rest."

The least of these, his brethren—that was He!
   God crucified looked through a lost boy's eye.
The fur-clad pastor glanced disdainfully;
   "Incompetents!" said he, and hastened by.
SOCIALIST PRIEST

Your Progress and Inventions

They steal our daily bread.

Your profits grow by ten times ten,

But we lie down unfed.

You herd us into kennels,

You club us into jails;

And your machine guns mow us down

When your lordly patience fails.

Yet our Great Comrade’s spirit

Shall tear off every crown;

Shall seize this world, and shake it loose,

And turn it upside down.

Then share with us that spirit

That dies to set men free;

That makes the whole wide world a home

For men like Christ—and me!
THE PRICE

As she dreams on the play with a tender face
My Lady is wondrous fair;
Mid the billowy grace of her foam-like lace
And the jewels that gleam in her hair.

(They were bought by her sire from the half-paid hire
Of the girls he had starved into shame;
And that gossamer, spun like a web in the sun,
From the Loom of the Lost Souls came.)

'Tis a placid prayer that My Lady tells
As she kneels in her pew's dark hold;
And the Cross that dwells where her white breast swells
Richly gleams with its rubies, set in gold.

(They burn dark red with the cheap blood shed
On the teeth of a flawed machine,
Where the weary girls stand, with their lives in their own hand,
All day, with no guard between.)
Like a perfect flower My Lady grows,
Bowered soft from the storm and the cold;
And her sweet soul glows like a priceless rose
Whose petals sweet honey-dew enfold.

(But the nectar she sips, with contented lips,
Drained many a life’s cup dry;
And the rich mould-heap where her roots strike deep,
Is the hell where her stricken sisters lie!)
POEMS OF A

SACRAMENT

(In the Seminary Chapel)

Round yonder tall black chapel tower
   Now joyous dawn appears,
And tinges with transforming power
   The icicles' bright spears;
Young winds, that hymn the morning hour,
   Sing keenly round my ears.

Now cassocked forms, by two and one,
   With grave, expectant eyes,
Come forth, to greet upon his throne
   The Maker of the Skies,
Where He, that spins the Stars and Sun,
   A pleading victim lies.

But from this glory of God's day
   Within why should I go?
To kneel amid that long array
   In flickering candle-glow,
And penitent confessions say,
   With voice subdued and low?

Here from no lace-fringed altar height
   My Lord looks down on me,
But from the flushed exquisite light
   Of cloud-wove tracery;
From ice-gems glittering boldly bright,
   From many a frosted tree.
For eyes that will to look and know
Here is His glory shed.
To ears that hear, He speaketh so;
Here are His hands outspread.
Who tuned the breeze that sings so well,
Smiling to hear it true?
Who calls, in yonder triple bell,
The names of me and you?

The worlds and all that in them lie
Are Sacraments of God.
But fainting souls reach not so high;
Bruised feet must feel the sod.
Therefore, O Light of cloud and sea,
An inward dawn Thou makest:
To multitudes astray for Thee
Unfailing bread thou breakest!

Inconstant smiles the budding day;
Black winds may rave full soon.
If in bright dawns my faith I stay,
New gods must save at noon.
Except the sun within me shine,
Rare morning flame in vain;
If wells of hidden joy be mine,
Splendors suffuse the rain.

Within! Within! Thy presence there
Shall never scorch nor leave me.
Tempests may fright the riven air,
Winds veer, and clouds deceive me.
But if thy life, O God, I share,
Not death, nor hell, can grieve me!
THE CHALICE

From many a trade and venture
   On every clime and sod,
We throng before the altar-rail
   To drink the Blood of God;
That wine, whose burning crimson
   Sets puny souls aflame,
And blinds them, with its mounting fumes
   To fear, and death, and shame.

Through world-veins dry and weary
   That quickening current flowed
Since His great heart, that pulsed it,
   Broke on the splintery rood.
Men drank, and rose immortal;
   In His death found their life,
And sprang, suffused with mighty song
   To join His world-long strife.

They have pulled down the mighty
   From many an ancient seat,
And on the neck of lord and king
   Have set the Laborer's feet;
They scourge forth shark and slaver,
   And cleanse the vampire tryst;
They build on old slave-markets
   Cathedrals of our Christ;
SOCIALIST PRIEST
They move against an empire
   In bands of three or four;
They die in rack and torture,
   And still press on the more—
Filled with that high unreason,
    The madness of the saints,
That scorns to reck of let or foe,
    That stumbles not, nor faints;

Stung by that ancient fury
    That hungers hard to die;
That recks the thing impossible
    The one thing fit to try;
That loses life to gain it,
    That conquers by defeat,
Whose hardest foe is victory;
    Whose hunger is its meat.

In yonder silent chalice
    What rushing torrents lie,
That blazed through veins a-quiver
    With mortal ecstasy!
Caught in that soaring current
    Of souls to God swung free,
—How small a thing seems Life-and-Death,—
    How great, His friend to be!
A LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

For Memorial Days

"And I saw under the altar the souls of them that had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a great voice, saying:

"How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell in the earth?"—Revelation 6:9.

Every year the nation strews flowers upon the graves of those who died in the Civil War. These men endured at most four years of hardship. There is another war, whose victims suffer as keenly and far longer. It lasts, not for four years, but until the world shall be changed. Its heroes are the wounded and the slain in the army of Labor; and it is they whom we commemorate today. Join with us, then, in remembering the victims of the war of Money against God.

A LITANY OF REMEMBRANCE

Remember, friends, the burning pit at Ludlow, and the slain in the Rockefeller war; the explosive bullets, and the armored train; the children who were killed, and the children who were orphaned; the stockades, the jails, and the silent graves;

We remember!
Remember the slain in Calumet; remember the Christmas Tree at Hancock; remember the women widowed and the children made fatherless in the mines; the men wounded, crushed and starved, to make idlers rich;

We remember!

Remember the strikes at Paterson, at Little Falls, at Lawrence; remember the scourges and the jails; the picket line, and the Black Cossacks; the children starved, the men and women slain;

We remember!

Remember the horrors of West Virginia; the children starved, the men and women thrown into foul cells, and slain;

We remember!

Remember the Triangle Fire;

We remember!

Remember the millions of our little brothers and sisters, condemned to a life of toil in mill and mine; deprived of childhood's right of play, for the profit of owners and masters;

We remember!
Remember our sisters, compelled by the heavy lash of poverty to work in department stores at exhausting toil, for starvation pay;

We remember!

Remember our sisters, forced upon the streets by lack of life's substance and joy;

We remember!

Remember our brothers, trudging the streets in weary search for work, homeless and helpless; creatures who once were men, robbed of their humanity to be serviceable slaves of an evil order;

We remember!

Remember our brothers, condemned to the pauper's grave;

We remember!

Remember the homes broken up by Capitalism's power;

We remember!

Remember the homes made impossible, the lives made unfruitful, the loves blasted, the souls lost, through the worship of the devil and Mammon;

We remember!
Remember the black curse laid across the world by the greed for gold;

\textbf{We remember!}

Remember the babies doomed to life-long imprisonment or early death in slums and tuberculous tenements, for the sin of poverty in their parents;

\textbf{We remember!}

Remember the children poisoned by impure food and drugs, adulterated for profit;

\textbf{We remember!}
Remember our brothers slain in industrial diseases for lack of safeguards by profit-hungry masters;

We remember!

Remember our brothers and sisters killed in needless railroad accidents, for the profit of dividend-takers;

We remember!

Remember our brethren entombed in the mines throughout the land;

We remember!

Remember the heroic firemen killed in the endeavor to save lives and homes from the flames;

We remember!

Let us pray:
O Lord God of the Battle-Line, nerve our arms with thy power, our minds with thy wisdom and our hearts with thy zeal; that we may go forth to break down the kingdom of sin, Satan and death, and build here upon earth the Democracy of God, for the hope whereof our First Great Comrade gladly died, Jesus Christ, our Captain and our Brother. Amen.
CHRISTMASTIDE

Through wintry ways at Bethlehem
The weary strangers go,
A bearded man, a shrinking girl,
With bleeding feet and slow.
But every door is locked amain,
For full is every home;
The tribes crowd here, from far and near,
To yield the tax of Rome.

Warm splendor decks the Roman hall
Where drunken Caesars sleep;
But through cold streets, with wolfish eye,
The plundered tribesmen creep.
Through every inn the reeking mobs
In packed discomfort lie;
And Mary, in a freezing cave,
Stills Jesus' new-born cry.

Now all the world with pealing bells
Hails that remembered night,
With chant and prayer and incense sweet,
Music, and hallowed rite;
While starving, freezing, terror-torn
Beneath an iron sky,
In cellar, slum and huddled hall
His stricken people lie.
For crafty Caesar vows to Christ
   The shrines his plunder built;
And while God's prophets share his spoils
   They glorify his guilt.
Outside their thousand steepled fanes
   The Holy Family cowers,
And icy death draws grimly close
   As clang the brazen hours.

In barren attics, winter-swept,
   The hungry Christ-child cries,
While Mary-Mother's hopeless tears
   Blind toil-inflamed eyes.
By club and lead and harlot law,
   By cruelty and shame,
The world still hounds the Christ to death
   That flaunts the Christian name.

Homeless He faints in every street,
   And Christian doors are barred
By them he branded hypocrites
   To Him they hail as Lord.
O mockery of Chrismastide,
   O blasphemy of lies!
The Babe you praise with costly choir
   Behind you starving dies!
MOTHER

Upon your brow hath gentle Time
Another year's rich jewel set,
Its luster adding to the rime
Of that most queenly coronet
Which sparkles on your matron hair,
And sheds a silver splendor there.

Age cannot chill, nor falling years
Unyouthe the heart in love secured.
Elixir of unselfish tears
Wells in your soul, whose youth endured
The autumn weight of grinding care,
But laughed away its own despair.

Girl-heart within a matron breast,
Spring laughter in storm-cleared eyes,
Young arms, whose haven of deep rest
Bear now their second lullabies
—Mother most dear, sweetheart most true,
How shall we show our love to you?

Teach us your youth as old we grow;
Teach us to laugh away despair;
To face away temptations, show;
To love away the grip of care.
These favors on this birthday, do;
Your children ask, less young than you.
FATHER

(Rev. Gardiner C. Tucker, St. John's Church, Mobile, Ala.)

He fights front-ranked with that stern group,
   Rock-fast against the howling sea,
Who guard God's banner, lest it stoop
   Before the hate-wild devilry.

No need has he of trump and plume,
   Nor peals the pompous battle-lay.
Close-pressing foes will spare no room;
   He saves his breath, and smites to slay.

With ensign high, at jingling pace,
   White squadrons, cheering, form and wheel;
He wipes red sweat from scar-grimed face,
   And, wearied, grips and swings his steel.

They see him not, so deep is he
   Beneath the clang of whirling blows;
But lo, the black-browed Enemy
   Salutes him as they cross and close.

Ranging the field, his Captain's eye
   Is caught, and dwells, and looks again;
Christ turns and smiles, with tears, on high,
   In thanks to have such fighting men.
Arise, O God, in splendor!
That all the world may see
Like dust before the storm-wind
Thy foes far-scattered flee.
Lift thy right hand, Almighty,
   And whet thy glittering Sword,
That heaven and earth again may shake
   To thy tremendous Word!

For to the tent of meeting
   The loud war-trumpets call,
And all the tribes their elders
   Send to the council-hall.
God stands among the princes
   And calls them, each by name,
To voice his saints with thunder,
   And clothe his priests with flame.

"Gather my saints together
   That sacrifice for troth;
The Lord God hath a quarrel
   With them that sware his oath.
For if ye be partakers
   With usurer and thief,
How can ye teach My covenant,
   Or stablish My belief?
"If prophets preach by favor
   And make God out a liar;
If shepherds bend to alien greed
   And hold their trust for hire;
If priests profane My altar
   With gifts that reek of wrong,
How shall they spread My gospel,
   Or lift My vengeance-song?

"No way but by a miracle
   May Dives win my door;
Woe, woe upon your riches!
   My nation is the poor!
Their souls beneath the altar
   "How long, O Lord?" do cry.
By fire and sword My kingdom comes—
   Proclaim this, lest ye die!

"The hireling and the stranger
   My foes oppress in toil;
The child they crush to labor,
   The widow they despoil—
Take ye their cause for conflict
   Beneath My conquering sign;
Preach ye the word I gave you,
   Else are ye none of Mine!

"The world in turmoil hearkens
   To hear My trumpets thrill;
If ye who bear it, sound it not,
   Must I send them who will?
Below, the rocks are riven;
   Above, the vault is rent;
I rise, I rise to judgment!
   My Kingdom Comes!—Repent!"
In yonder garden dim I see
    New-budded censers swing;
While brightly burn on bush and tree
    Green candle-flames of Spring;
And to the dawn-wind's minstrelsy
    The waking warblers sing.

Now holy water, fresh and pure,
    Asperges from the sky;
Old Earth receives that cleansing shower
    With new-forgiven sigh,
And her deep prayers, told hour by hour,
    Float visibly on high.

Yon little herald morning-star
    As acolyte appears;
The world with silence spreading far
    His heraldry reveres;
And each of all the things that are
    For miracle prepares.

Now filmy curtains of the East
    In splendor wide unfold;
The Sun appears, a royal Priest
    In vestments white and gold,
His solemn daily Eucharist
    Triumphantly to hold.
And lo! That Life whose will and power
   The Universe sustain,
That speeds the pulse of age and hour
   And throbs in wind and rain,
Incarnate is in grass and flower,
   In Tree, and Grape, and Grain!
HUNGER

A mischief-maker rears his head,
Howling against the sky;
And empires, shaken by his tread,
Totter, and fall, and die.
    HUNGER is his name;
    No fear he knows, nor shame;
    Except he soon be satisfied—woe! woe!
        the blood and flame!

From plenty that themselves have made,
    A million hands are barred;
Ere long the Law, that Food forbade,
    Shall feel these hands—how hard!
    Law is on Plenty Built;
    But HUNGER knows no guilt;
    Except he soon be satisfied—woe! woe!
        what lives are spilt!

All vain the might of Sword or Crown
    To still his fearful cry;
He rouses powers that will not down
    Till they that roused him—die!
    No bolt nor bar nor steel
May stand against his heel.
He stamps his Guards to crimson mire—
    oe! woe! the pains they feel!
Down the ways we'll go together,
   Pal-o'-mine;
Sunny days, and evil weather,
   Storm or shine.
Tiny hand upon my arm,
   Brave eyes smiling;
Heart steel-true, and lips love-warm,
Scattering trouble with their charm,
   Woe-beguiling,
   —Pal-o'-mine!

Deep you've drunk the cup of living,
   Heart-o'-mine;
Little joy, much sorrow giving,
   Gall, for wine;
Yet no bitterness you know;
   But, love distilling,
In your eyes, burnt wide with woe,
Wondrous cordials richly glow
   My soul a-thrilling,
   —Heart-o'-mine!
Nearer now than sun or sorrow,
    Wife-o'-mine;
Dearer now than past or morrow,
    Hope, or sign;
Closer, truer, more—O best
    Beyond all telling;
Stormy petrel, seeking rest,
Harbor here upon my breast,
    There indwelling,
—Life-o'-mine!