

# CHICAGO

## A SATIRE

By THOMAS P. JOHNSON.



PRICE, . . . 15 CENTS

Reprinted from THE INLANDER, Ann Arbor  
1901



Garrett Biblios

**SOLD  
G.B.I.**

Evansville, Illinois







“IN THE OLD DAYS, WHEN BABYLON GREW PROUD,  
AND NOISOME ORGY IN HER HALLS WAS LOUD.” P. 13.

# CHICAGO:

## A SATIRE

BY THOMAS P. JOHNSON ✓

Avon and Ayr flow peerless in renown,  
Write in the sacred books of deathless song.  
And yet a wider fame might well belong  
To blue Detroit or Mississippi brown  
Or many-hued Niagara, plunging down  
With roar and rainbow, or those strange waves that mount,  
With upward-flowing currents to their fount,  
In loud Chicago, where the smoke-banks frown.

Give us a poet, and his heart will find,  
Here in the roar of this gigantic life,  
Shut from the eye that gazes and is blind,  
Pathos and laughter, fellowship and strife,  
Songs sweet as Burns' and tragedies as large  
As Shakspeare mused by Avon's lucent maize.

---

REPRINTED FROM THE INLANDER,

ANN ARBOR, MICH.,

1901.

COPYRIGHTED 1901 BY G. A. OHLINGER.  
(ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.)

Garrett Biblical Institute  
Evansville, Indiana

644078



# Chicago: a Satire.

BY THOMAS P. JOHNSON.

"I grieve that thou wilt leave the city, Jack,  
Yet as I love thee would not lure thee back."  
So spoke I, at the station, yesterday,  
To my old friend, in that familiar way  
Which old tried friends sometimes adopt in jest,  
Sometimes to hint affection not expressed.  
"You seek seclusion and the social ease  
Of rural rest, remote from scenes like these.  
I blame you not. I hate this slimy place.  
A city is a wart on Nature's face.  
Better eternal sleep and solitude  
And overalls, with plain brown bread for food,  
Than this discordant roar, this murky glare,  
This dirty linen, this pestiferous air,  
The highwaymen, the odors of the street,  
And the fierce headlines of the yellow sheet."  
"I go," said Jack, "because a man I deemed,  
With all the world, to be that which he seemed,  
A man of honor, proves to be a knave.  
These goods are all that I've contrived to save.  
(He pointed to three boxes scornfully.)  
One day my uncle, joking, said to me:  
'When stocks is watered, somebody gits soaked.'  
Would I had deemed him serious as he joked!"

Then into Jack's great eyes there came a gleam  
That was half wrath and half a genial dream  
Of cows knee-deep in clover and the sigh  
Of rustling woods athwart an August sky;  
And, while dun smoke-wreaths made the train shed dim,  
And the grim girders grew more black and grim,  
And engines panted like impatient steeds,—  
With that dear wrath which wise experience breeds,  
He belched a satire, as a twelve-inch gun  
Belches, with red and white and blue, its ton

Of iron death that flies, and strikes, and leaps  
Into ten thousand fragments, and upheaps  
More than the men who struggle and who slay  
In wonder and confusion and dismay.

First, with fine rage he plied his wordy lash  
On him who had divorced him from his cash :

“I do not love you, James, I must confess.  
You have my money ; I have no redress.  
If Robert Ingersoll should ever feel  
Your genial touch in some financial deal,  
That sweet and dear experience would compel  
Even him to admit the utility of hell.  
The wily papers, when you pay them dear,  
Call you promoter, deacon, financier ;  
But we who know you, knowing to our grief,  
Know that you're nothing but a clever thief.  
One thousand dollars ! How I toiled to hold  
That meagre hoard of toil-extorted gold.  
My first one thousand dollars ! Twenty years  
I wrought in rain and sunshine, mirth and tears,  
Before I had laid by that slender store.  
I trusted you, because, forsooth, you bore  
An honored name. You taught me, in a school  
Of merciless rigor, how at least one fool  
And one knave more than I had known before  
Were still at large this side the Stygian shore.  
I said one fool. Nay, deacon, there were two.  
I was a poor one, but a poorer you !  
You sold your honor, your good name you sold,  
All for a few bright pieces of thin gold.  
You're hard upon yourself ; your dearest foe  
Had never dreamed of rating you so low.  
You've fleeced the widow and the widow's child ;  
The toiling artisan you have beguiled  
Of savings hoarded through years manifold :  
I wonder if you shiver when they're cold.  
James, do you sleep at night ? Can you frequent  
Without loud bursts of tuneless merriment  
Or flaming cheek the holy house of prayer ?  
Awful ! O James, your sanctimonious stare !  
Dare you with serious front pretend to teach  
Your sons to live with no offensive breach  
Of human rights or ordinance of God,  
Treading the paths that true men aye have trod ?  
Your sense of humour is as obsolete  
As the lean cur's that yelps along the street,  
A tin can tied to his reluctant tail  
And twenty urchins hot upon his trail,  
Or else your talents for the stage surpass

Nat Goodwin's bluffing and Dick Mansfield's brass.  
And yet I would not change my lot for yours.  
My loss is brief; your infamy endures;  
I am more rich than you with all your gold;  
I have what you have in your folly sold,—  
A heart untainted and a soul unflecked,  
Peace, honor, pride, and stainless self-respect.

“Farewell, Chicago! Ruin fall on you!  
I hate, despise, and loathe you through and through.  
I hate the tricks of this intemperate clime,  
The dust in summer and in spring the slime;  
Nature is here on one perpetual spree;  
She shifts from hot to cold with devilish glee;  
From flare to frost so quick the vile jade turns,  
Your left hand freezes while your right hand burns.  
Sometimes you stroll forth, May in all your veins;  
You turn a corner and December reigns.



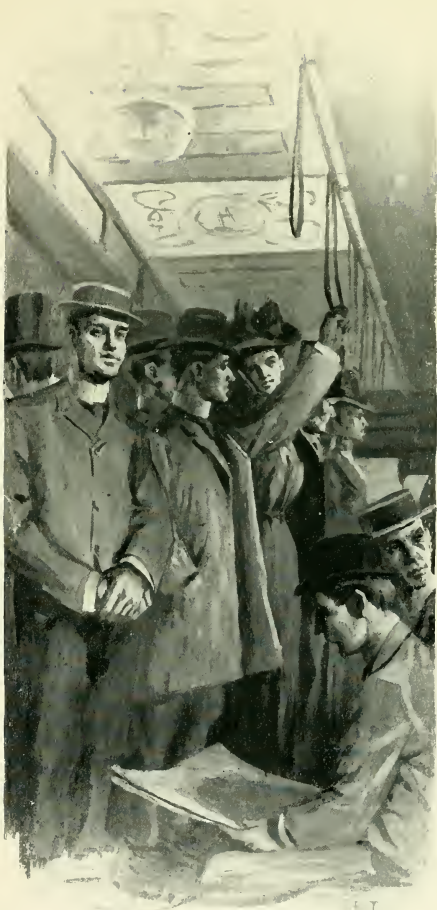
Piled cloud-banks, too, continually frown  
Nature's contempt on this be-smutted town;  
Even when she smiles, the smoke-banks hide her face,  
And no good comes from her infrequent grace.  
If dread of rain your hope of baseball blight,  
Look at the lake. Behold! the sun is bright,  
And happy diamonds on the waves proclaim  
The gods' displeasure and the city's shame.  
By one thing only is this smoke-curse thinned,  
A right Chicago gale of howling wind.  
When this Aeolian daimon holds his sway,  
He sweeps hat, happiness, and lungs away,  
Blinds eyes, packs ears, disturbs the living wire,  
Sends sacrilegious shivers up the spire,  
O'erthrows the cyclist, beats the chimney down,  
Tears the umbrella, dallies with the gown,  
And fills the air with ancient filth, brick-bats,  
Dread thoughts of perished and decadent cats,  
And evil visions of the knives that gleam,  
The hecatombs that bleed, the vats that steam,  
The belching chimneys, and the reeking mould,  
In that great temple of the god of gold,  
Which spreads Chicago's fame across the seas  
From Viti Levu to the Orcades.  
(Thence rises heavenward a fume more vast

And more nutritious than all those which passed  
In the old days from Grecian altar rites  
To hungry gods upon Olympian heights.  
When starved Chicagoans in the morning wake,  
(A gust of this serves them in lieu of steak.)

“When first, a boy, I viewed these dark retreats,  
These half-built houses and these half-paved streets,  
They gave my being an unpleasant jar,  
Like the first cocktail or the first cigar.  
The hideous squares of shameless wood and brick  
Made me with a mysterious terror sick ;  
I seized my nose, for fear lest fell disease  
From the thick air upon my spirit seize.  
But when one comes amid these scenes to dwell,  
At first he tolerates, then loves them well.  
Foul though she be, this Circe tames his heart,  
By some rude charm or some seductive art.  
Chicago, he discovers, is like Vice ;  
He needs must love her who accosts her thrice.  
Pope’s musty line exactly hits her case :  
‘We first endure, then pity, then embrace.’

“In early days, upon a swamp undrained  
The city stood and furious agues reigned.  
Today the fell plague’s course is not yet run,  
But now the ague is a moral one.  
The people shake with what they think is mirth  
At vice triumphant over fallen worth.  
All crimes are winked at. Slander, steal, and lie,  
For you may do so with impunity ;  
The law will touch you not, unless, at night,  
You chance to ride your wheel without a light.  
There *is* a frame of law to hold in check  
The lawless men whose passions rage and wreck ;  
There *is* a Civic Something to o’erawe  
The lawless men who guide this frame of law ;  
The watchers watch the watchers at their task,  
But who can watch the watchers, let me ask ?  
The people laugh the marriage-vow to scorn.  
At night two meet ; they wed the following morn ;  
And on the third day shake the dice to see  
Which one shall start the suit that sets them free.  
So runs the rude jest, but the facts attest  
A tragic levity too sad for jest.  
Of every four for whom the knot is tied  
One, by the book, commits Hymenicide.

“For dwellers in this desert vast and drear  
There is no use for such a word as ‘near.’  
Howe’er your bosom swell with worthy pride



"YOU'RE FORCED EACH DAY ON CLOSE-PACK'D CARS TO RIDE."

You're forced each day on close-pack'd cars to ride,  
Whereon, for weary miles, you jerk and grind,  
Hanging to straps, squeezed, trampled, unresigned.  
Sometimes the odors make you long to die;  
Sometimes a manhole blows you at the sky.  
Perhaps you sit beside the motor man  
To get a whiff of fresh air, if you can.  
Brief your escape from grief. He chews the weed,  
And, as you dash along at cheerful speed,  
At the onrushing air, guileless and gay,  
Belches defiantly a showery spray.  
Back in your face the air, insulted, flings  
The flock of brown expectorated things.  
Withal the pace is like a snail's. Because  
Cowed politicians dare not mend the laws,  
The track is blocked by teamsters, who refuse  
With insolent speech to clear it till they choose.  
Thence volleyed oaths, in many-languag'd flight,  
Amaze the simple and the bad delight.

“Sometimes fierce storms of sand and dust prevail,  
Sometimes the cars through little oceans sail.  
Sometimes small children in these pools are drowned;  
Choked by the dust, dead, sometimes, they are found.  
But with this drouth the people boldly fight,  
And now, look where you may, drink is in sight.  
Here swing the golden words: *Zur Stadt Bierstein*;  
There Toney Sulevano hangs his sign:  
And yonder, with a genial dago leer,  
Pat Maladetta sells Milwaukee beer.

“Ah me! The soiled humanity one meets,  
With heavy heart, upon these sordid streets!  
The child weak from his fathers' sins; the hag  
With painted face and weary feet that lag;  
The sot whose soul, filled full of shame and fright,  
From his soaked body took long since its flight;  
The starved attorney, like a carrion crow,  
Eager to batten on his fellow's woe:  
The parson frothing at a look or word  
That hints the tale of Jonah is absurd.  
Knaves are but knaves, howe'er they masquerade;  
A fool is still a fool, whate'er his trade.

“When forced by want or righteous wrath to roam  
The wretch of every land here finds a home.  
When Susette grows distasteful to Monsieur  
She seeks subsistence and has welcome here.  
Here India's dotting faith secures a place;  
Egyptian dancers writhe with venomous grace;  
And German sausage-makers, round as hogs,



“ THERE TONEY SULLIVANO HANGS HIS SIGN.”

In more than one sense treat their wives like dogs.  
The actor, egged from London and Paris,  
Here fills his pockets with exuberant glee.  
The stage is ruined. Fame is bought and sold.  
If talents win praise, they're composed of gold.  
The age, degenerate, loves true art no more;  
Shakespeare and Sheridan are deemed a bore.  
All that the people can with pleasure hear  
Is some loud coon song, odious to the ear,  
The jests of idiots, the resounding crack  
As board strikes fool on cranium or back,  
Or noise, like carpets beaten, as gloves smite  
On pillowy gloves in sham but furious fight.  
The play that pleases is the play that shows  
Not life and character but silks and hose.  
The dry-goods merchant, not the playwright, now  
Draws the huge check and wears the laurelled brow.  
Write, if you can, three acts without a trace  
Of nature, wit, morality, or grace,  
From which no character could be cut out  
Without improving all beyond a doubt,  
And houses packed with 'ladies and with gents  
Will make Modjeska look like thirty cents.'

"The Sabbath, sacred to our strong-souled sires,  
No more high aim or holy thought inspires.  
It only means, to those who huddle here,  
A vacant space to sleep or guzzle beer.  
Where is the spirit fled that made this land  
Strong and sufficient, envied, proud, and grand?  
Where is the virtue fled that won the West?  
Where the great heart that beat in Lincoln's breast?  
Our sires, inferior to their fathers, bore  
In us a race that is corrupted more,  
And we shall shortly boast posterity  
Less active, brave, and virtuous than we.  
They say more Germans dwell amid this din  
Than any city boasts except Berlin;  
And that Chicago has more Scots than Ayr,  
More French than Nantes, more Irish than Kildare.  
I only know that in these confines dwell  
More sinners than in any place but hell.

"Sometimes I almost long for monarchy.  
He knows not who believes that we are free.  
The cross-legged Turk one tyrant has, no more;  
We have a hundred, nay, a hundred score.  
If I must bow, I'd rather bow to kings  
Than thieves, barkeepers, gamblers, and such things.  
However hungrily he grasp and rive  
One cannot steal as much as twenty-five.



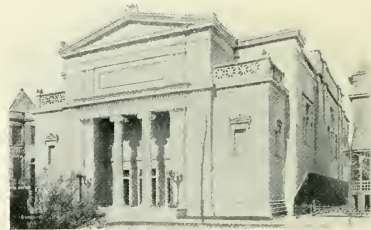
I am a Yankee. My forefathers bled  
At Bunker Hill and I was born and bred  
Complete American, both man and boy,  
Here in the genial lap of Illinois.  
I can't forget my race. I will not bow  
To Jew or Celt, to Dutch or Dago now.

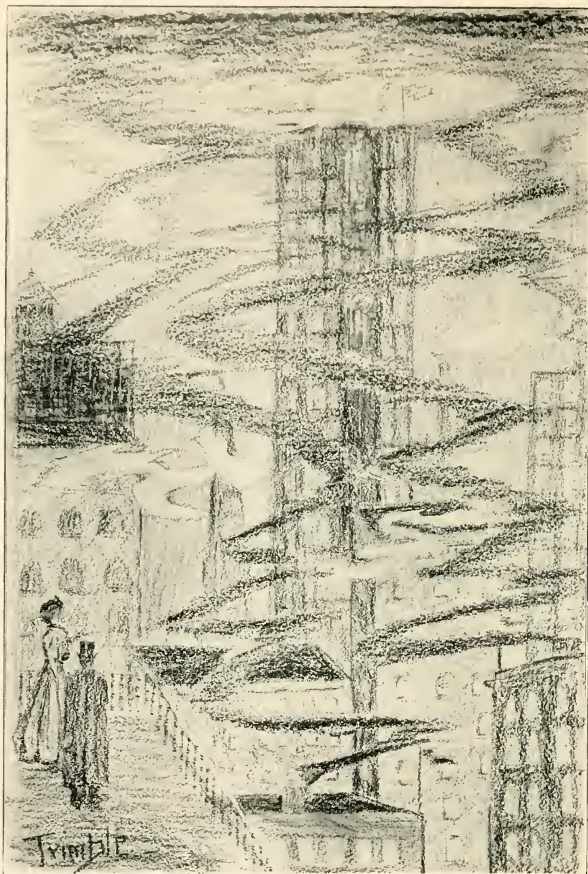
“Even language crumbles in this atmosphere.  
But yesterday it was my lot to hear  
A Latin teacher to a pupil cry:  
'John, either give that book to Jane or I!'  
A preacher Sunday seared my heart with this:  
'Each one in Heaven will find their proper bliss.'  
Patois and slang usurp the rights of speech;  
An act's a 'stunt,' a beauty is a 'peach';  
No word of sense is read, unless it come  
In the cheap metaphor of sport or slum.  
Our schools are upside down. They're doubly curst.  
College and kindergarten are reversed.  
The child of six 'takes sociology';  
At twenty, in the university,  
The freshman finds, and his disgust is great,  
That he must learn to spell and punctuate.

“We scorn the classics, but we still adore  
Half of the deities we deem a bore.  
Athene grows a myth, and Dian strays  
No more amid the forest's murmurous ways;  
Zeus is forgot; Apollo pipes no more;  
No longer Neptune shakes the sounding shore;  
But Plutus has his votaries as of old;  
The charms of Venus still fire and enfold;  
Bacchus is still the living god of wine;  
And Mercury's powers are still esteemed divine.  
These are thy gods, Chicago; tithe and vow,  
With no feigned zeal, are paid them here and now.

“Religion even is no longer free  
In these confines from thrifty quackery.  
Huge Grecian temples rise, to mark the way  
The prophets hustle and the people pay.  
With what in heaven may medicine the soul  
They strive on earth to make the body whole.

To wretches, maddened with long grief and pain,  
When torture cleaves the heart and wrecks the brain,  
To drones, who think they worship the Most High,  
When all they worship is tranquility,  
And to sweet souls, who, stern old faith being dead,  
Still love the corpse, although the spirit's fled,  
They sell for gold a philosophic brew  
Of ancient wisdom mixed with follies new.  
Hashed strangely there are mangled Hebrew bard,





“HERE, TOO, AS THERE, IN MAMMON’S CULT BUILT HIGH,  
UNLOVELY TOWERS, ASPIRING, TOUCH THE SKY.”

Spinoza chopped, the stoic Zeno marred,  
Plato's supernal poetry awry,  
And Bishop Berkeley minus mouth and eye.  
*There is no matter and therefore no pain:*  
This is their maxim; this their whole refrain.  
Cut off their legs; perhaps they still can walk;  
Cut out their tongues, I wonder will they talk;  
At least on paper they will yet declare.  
While they can breathe, there's no such thing as air.  
Their children writhe and scream in agony,  
But still they push kind anæsthetics by;  
Ask them to give for gracious charity,  
They say there's no such thing as poverty.  
In one real thing, however, they believe:  
Pay them with air, if you would see them grieve.  
The touch of gold makes all their theories thaw;  
Refuse to pay, and lo! they rush to law.  
Nor do the numbers of the sect grow less,  
Though often, mad with unrelieved distress,  
With knives that have no entity they slay  
What they consider non-existent clay,  
Or with imaginary guns blow out  
Brains that are non-existent, past a doubt.

"In the old days, when Babylon grew proud,  
And noisome orgy in her halls was loud,  
Almighty God hurled down her crescent towers,  
Confused her speech, and overthrew her powers.  
Here, in despite of His divine command,  
The gabble and the cant of every land,  
Though cloven once by Heaven's revengeful steel,  
Are reunited in a hideous peal.  
Here, too, as there, in Mammon's cult built high,  
Unlovely towers, aspiring, touch the sky,  
Piled by the hands of those who never soar  
In thought above the twenty-seventh floor,  
And climbed by sinners glad to be as near  
As this for once to some celestial sphere.  
Seared, but not purified, by searching flame,  
*Down, DOWN,* Chicago sinks in filth and shame,  
Unmourned, unsung, unspeakable, unblest;  
The tottering Babylon of the crime-stained West.

"For these, and some twelve thousand reasons more,  
My days in this disgusting hive are o'er."

So Jack. I, moved, amused, and edified,  
But disagreeing, with some wrath replied:

"Whom have you been about, what have you read,  
To put these pessimistic notions in your head?"

If we were not school friends, I'd swear you'd dwell  
Where soap's corrupting foam is never smelt,  
Or else had slumbered, all your previous days,  
In super-arrogant scholastic haze.  
The actual marrow of the thing you've missed:  
You're half a pedant, half an anarchist.

"You deem the faults of youth the sins of age.  
Unjust your censure, farcical your rage.  
This boy is growing at so fast a pace  
He has no time as yet to wash his face.  
But though there's smut upon his forehead now,  
You talk—I have no words to tell you how.  
Among the cities of this world of ours  
He is the tall young man. His new-blown powers  
Are not the Amazon's, but the true might  
Of a fierce youth whose face is black with fight.  
And those who draw Chicago as a maid,  
Albeit her face is fair and unafraid,  
Albeit *I will* is written on her scroll,  
Are far from guessing what is in that soul.  
Therefore I love him as I love a boy  
Whose golden ore is hardened with alloy,  
The genial ways, the manners free, the slip  
And the repentance and the fellowship.  
I love him, for I know him, waxing strong.  
In days to be the poet's cordial song  
Shall rise, a gleaming fountain, and disperse  
This dust of censure with a dew of verse  
That shall display him, lovely, and upraise  
In his behalf a thousand buds of praise.  
Sweet, gracious, mighty, splendid, brush and brass,  
As the long lines of secular glories pass,  
Shall teach the world that cavils and is blind  
To know how keen his eye, his heart how kind.

"I grant you that in this rude clime we miss  
The wealth of August and the Maytime's bliss;  
But genial Nature makes amends for all,  
When ripened summer mellows into fall.  
Our mild September's aromatic haze,  
October's leaves. November's quickening days,  
Where can you match them, madman? When they wreath  
Their golden hours, 'tis joy enough to breathe.  
In August seek the rocks of Mackinac;  
When March makes all the cheerless heavens black,  
Flee Tampa-ward; but in the golden time  
Of Indian summer, this, Jack, is *the* clime.  
The melancholy days of Bryant's song  
Come seldom here, nor do they tarry long.  
The stern northeasters, which you so despise,

And even this filth, are blessings in disguise.  
The former drive the weak forth in dismay ;  
The latter keeps the gilded drone away ;  
Hence our proud energy, our manners free,  
Our ways of kindly hospitality.  
This is no place, my boy, to whine or shirk ;  
This soil is sacred to the god of work.  
The deep low song the laboring city sings  
Is full of discords to the ears of kings.  
I love the people's insolence and pride ;  
Long be the rich by their stern hate defied.



Free men are more than pavements swept and clear  
And hearts unwrung than spires built high in fear.

“Two-thirds of all you've said is due to spleen,  
And just as true of Boston or Racine.  
There's no more pressure here of want or sin,  
To the square inch, than in Duluth or Lynn.  
The difference, which you'll concede is clear,  
Is simply that there are more inches here.  
Faults should be weighed proportionate to grace ;  
Goliath's boils would cover David's face.  
The evil's mighty, but the good is, too ;  
Judge by what's done and not by what's to do.  
More toilsome sweat each precious month flows here  
Than Cincinnati suffers in a year ;  
Each year more bricks go up and asphalt down  
Than decades compass in St. Louis town.  
We turn the river backward to its springs ;  
Our trains fly where naught flew of old but wings.  
For every shack that stands in Buffalo,  
Chicago can a stately mansion show ;  
For every mile Detroit boasts of street  
We have a mile of boulevard complete.  
Paris, remember, boasts two thousand years ;  
We fifty ; yet we rank among her peers.  
Ere fifty more shall wax and disappear  
A nobler Paris shall shine farther here.  
You're simple, Jack, if you expect to see  
The polished wit and wise urbanity  
In this raw youth which forty does not give  
To one in thousands of the men that live.

"They call this mixture here of joy and woe  
 A black and seething chaldron; be it so:  
 When chaldrons seethe they do not seethe for ill;  
 Pestilence rises from the pool that's still.  
 And this commixture of the false and true,  
 Of East and West, of ancient and of new,  
 Howe'er it leap and bubble, fret and stink,  
 Howe'er you babble and whate'er you think,  
 Some not far day will cool and clear, and then,  
 By all the wonder-stricken eyes of men,  
 There will be seen a strong new race arise,  
 Fire in their hearts and morning in their eyes.  
 You love to wander through the central roar  
 Of homogeneous London and deplore  
 The mixture of the scum of many a race  
 That eddies here but yonder has no place.  
 Remember that there flows in English veins  
 The blood of Romans, Saxons, Celts, Norse, Danes;  
 And that these grew one race in sheer despite  
 Of all that hate availed to disunite.  
 Thence, in just pride of power and sense of worth,  
 Uprose the haughtiest people of the earth,  
 But not so haughty as the stock to be,  
 When time and peace, beside the inland sea,  
 Shall bind all men, that gaze upon the sun,  
 In chains of brotherhood, and make them one.  
 In their clear eyes, where kindly humours melt,  
 The honor, wit, and courage of the Celt;  
 In their strong hearts the Saxon's patient power;  
 In their hard heads the Scotchman's golden dower  
 Of thrift and prudence; in their dauntless souls  
 The hate of tyranny that fills the Poles;  
 Sweden's industrious zeal; French eloquence;  
 The Spaniard's chivalry; the German's sense;  
 The Hebrew's love for ancient precious things;  
 Italian ardour for whatever flings  
 The mantle of rich colour and the grace  
 Of glorious outline over Nature's face:—  
 But still one race, proud, gentle, brave, and new;  
 Not Scotch or Irish, German, Slav, or Jew;  
 Not Saxon more than English now is Dane;  
 The race that with a finger humbled Spain;  
 The race that thwarts the tyrant's haughtiest plan;  
 What word befits it but "AMERICAN?"  
 In future years its splendour shall not fail:  
 Our sons' achievements shall our fathers' pale.

"Sometimes I'm tempted, as I dream, to dub  
 This town a vast unlovely giant grub.  
 It is a chrysalis; dull-eyed it creeps;  
 Earthy its ways; its better nature sleeps:

But soon, upon the cheered and quickened eye,  
Shall burst the glories of the butterfly.  
Nay, even now the slough begins to break :  
Each day new beauties gleam, fresh colours wake.  
Wood, avenue, lawn, temple, statue, glow ;  
A hundred stately fountains foam and flow ;  
Pictures there are to cheer the humblest sight,  
And books to aid the mind's supremest flight ;  
A thousand gems of architecture shine ;  
The lodge of learning and the sacred shrine,—  
Where wise and willing hands and tender heart  
Forgive the sin and subjugate the smart,—  
Comfort the body and refresh the soul ;  
And wondrous music, with its thunderous roll  
And tender fantasies learned in joy and woe,  
Awakes the heart and makes the spirit grow.



“Once, in the western land of cloudless skies  
Far-stretching sands, and golden mysteries,  
I rode beside a coal-stained engineer  
Down shining rails that seemed to disappear  
Between red walls of painted cliff and leap  
Into unmeasured depths of night and sleep.  
The quivering decapod delayed and blew  
And grieved, till wonder seized my soul and grew  
And vexed, and I this weak enquiry made :  
‘Why does she puff so on the downward grade?’  
The man of oil and overalls laughed high  
And laughed again, till tears bedimmed his eye.  
At last, his bulk still touched with tremors gay,  
Words, interwove with snorts, found out their way :  
‘When this old girl of mine begins to fret,  
She ain’t agoin’ down hill, you kin bet.’  
So here. We’re on the grade of gain and hope.  
We’re on the rising, not the falling slope.

"Do you recall that sweet bouquet of verse  
 I made last year on the half-liquid curse  
 Men used to call Chicago River? No?  
 This is the way its odorous numbers flow :  
 'The sewer to the oozy river creeps,  
 Which, like a venomous serpent, rots and sleeps,  
 And, big with poison, winds its horrid coils  
 Where man in millions congregates and toils,  
 Until, o'ergorged, it belches in the lake  
 A filth to make a grampus heave and quake.  
 This dire quintessence of decadent stink  
 The people in their need or folly drink.  
 Fierce microbes thence smite artery and vein,  
 Corrupt the heart, and honeycomb the brain.  
 Pretty, *nicht wahr?* The verses liked me well,  
 And there were offers if I wished to sell ;  
 But ere the printers had the grace to pay  
 The curst canal took all their point away.  
 No nostril now those emerald ripples wrong ;  
 The town is saved, but ruined is my song.  
 I grieved but learned a lesson that I prize :  
 This tale is typical ; it purged mine eyes.  
 To answer hard words with a mighty deed —  
 This is the essence of Chicago's creed.  
 In '59 he issued from the mire ;  
 In '71 he stood the test by fire ;  
 And, proudly happy, took his third degree,  
 Amid the world's applause, in '93.  
 An evil rears its head ; today's endured ;  
 Tomorrow hated ; and the third day cured.  
 Mighty indeed must be that satire's pace  
 Which can Chicago's mighty strides outrace.

"Ten thousand poems, execrably bad,  
 Were made and sung before the Iliad ;  
 Ten thousand temples, hideous and bald,  
 Repelled before the Parthenon enthralled ;  
 Ten thousand foolish fads abroad are blown  
 Before one solid truth is caught and known.  
 Time, with sure aim, strikes down unworthy things ;  
 On folly's ruins blossomed wisdom springs.  
 Before one eye see where our true worth lies,  
 Ten thousand Stubbs and Kiplings must arise.  
 Their blame in fifty years will mean no more  
 Than ocean's blundering on a granite shore ;  
 Even while they scold, their facts take wings and fly ;  
 What yesterday was true, today's a lie.  
 Take heart. Have faith. Our blood is red and strong ;  
 The spring is early and the year is long.  
 I see a May-tide rich in gentle hearts ;  
 A June made glad by sweet unselfish arts ;  
 A month of Julius bright with bird and bee  
 And honey-sweet with dear tranquility ;



An August blest with herds and yellowing corn,  
Hands quick to aid and hearts exempt of scorn;  
A noble city, as the days increase,  
Flash like a gem upon the brow of Peace;  
And when the year shall whiten to its rest,  
A happy people gazing on the West.  
A kindly power prevails; the god of morn,  
Free from a touch of horror or of scorn,  
On park and slum, on ditch and lake and lea,  
On tramp and king, with sweet amenity,  
His golden shafts and glittering diamonds flings;  
From blackest soils the tallest corn upsprings."

By this the day was done, the sky was black,  
The train men shouted, and "Farewell" said Jack.  
I wrung his hand, and, while the engine bell  
Began to swing, cried, with full heart, "Farewell."  
The strong-souled kindly monster heaved and blew,  
And, slowly first and very gently, drew  
Jack and his wounded heart, in hastening flight,  
Out to the earthy fragrance of the night.

