

# The Labor World

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## A Feel in the Chris'mas Air.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

They's a kind o' feel in the air, to me,  
When the Chris'mas times sets in,  
That's about as much of a mystery  
As ever I've run ag'in!—  
Fer instuncce, now, whilse I gain in weight  
And ginerall health, I swear  
They's a goneness somers I can't quite  
state—  
A kind o' feel in the air.

They's a feel in the Chris'mas air goes right  
To the spot where a man lives at!—  
It gives a feller a' appetite—  
They ain't no doubt about that!—  
And yit they's somepin'—I don't know  
what—  
That follers me, here and there,  
And ha'nts and worries and spares me not—  
A kind o' feel in the air!

They's a feel, as I say, in the air that's jest  
As blame-don sad as sweet!—  
In the same ra-sho as I feel the best  
And am spryest on my feet,  
They's allus a kind o' sort of a' ache  
That I can't lo-cate no-where;—  
Bu it comes with *Chis'mas*, and no mis-  
take!—  
A kind o' feel in the air.

Is it the racket the children raise?  
W'y, no!—God bless 'em!—no!  
Is it the eyes and the cheeks ablaze—  
Like my own wuz, long ago?—  
Is it the bleat o' the whistle and beat  
O' the little toy-drum and blare  
O' the horn?—No! no!—It is jest the sweet—  
The sad-sweet feel in the air.

## Minnesota State Federation.

The Minnesota State Federation of Labor held its fourteenth semi-annual convention at Assembly hall, St. Paul, Dec. 13. The meeting was called to order by the first vice-president, J. P. McAulay, of St. Cloud. On behalf of the St. Paul labor organizations President E. Christopherson of St. Paul Trades Assembly, delivered a short welcome address. Mayor Doran followed by bidding delegates welcome to the city. Among other things he said that the greatest menace to this American republic, and the working classes, was the combines, more commonly known as trusts. He also pointed out the dangers, as he saw them, on the part of labor. He said it was possible for them to go too far. Labor should be careful that it does not form another trust. He thought the Federation platform a most dangerous one, in that portion where it reads: "Liability of employers for injury to health, body or life, whether caused by the negligence or incompetency of employes or not." That a person or persons should be held responsible for a

wrong, not of his own committal, Mayor Doran considered unjust. Such measures tend to frighten capital and drive the laborer out of employment.

The mayor favored compulsory education and concurred in all educational movements. He advised legislation, etc.

The speaker complimented the delegates upon the good work they were doing and asked, that, if, at any time he could give assistance they would not hesitate to call on him.

A committee on credentials was appointed which consisted of the following: John Spubler, of Winona, W. S. Chisholm, of Minneapolis and J. D. Hayes, of Duluth.

While waiting for the report of the credential committee, Hon. W. W. Erwin, who was present as a delegate from the barbers' union, of St. Paul, was called upon for a speech. Mr. Erwin made an eloquent address as only "Bill" Erwin can. He said: I believe in my best thought the time has come when it is of the utmost importance to the republic that the laboring men federate en masse. The conditions that confront us today are most terrible. This nation is on the verge of national bankruptcy. It seems that the commercial world has reached its height. There are few people who understand fully the extent of this universal ruin. Take any department of the industrial world; consider it wisely, and you will see they are on the verge of bankruptcy. The homes of America; the farmer, are hopelessly engulfed in debt. The report of 1890 gives the value of all homes at fifty-six hundred million. Since that time that amount has depreciated 50 per cent, but at the same time the mortgages amount to twenty-one hundred million. Thirty-five per cent of the proposed value in mortgages. If it be true the value has depreciated 63 per cent of the homes are mortgaged.

It is very easy to understand that all other departments are the same. Take the railroads. Their value is fictitious. They are bonded for twice their value in stock. An amount twice the value they could be re-built for today. The banks,

we are taught are safe and reliable, are in the same condition. The manufacturing departments have been compelled to enter into trusts. Those who did not have been wiped out. Articles have gone down close to the cost of production.

Some think this can be remedied by shutting out competition; others by letting the world walk in here.

We have come to the end—the crisis—and so has the whole world. We have come to that condition where the laborer is denied the reward of his own labor. The steady march of evolution is constantly increasing the poor and the means of human happiness in the hands of a few.

The injured ones have tried, by rude efforts, to right their wrongs. The time to right these wrongs will confront the American people in less than ten years.

I believe some power or sentiment will override the storms. There will be no destruction. Neither do I believe theism will be destroyed. Christianity when properly understood, is a union of conscious and the mind.

The people in the pulpits are no longer speaking for the Lord. They have struck. Those of the learned professions have struck, and are in a more despicable condition than the mechanic. The press have found themselves compelled to work for those who can pay. All this points to one logical truth. If fraternity and brotherhood is the logical end, it must be brought about by the suffering of the brothers.

There is no power, no force, to save America but the God above and the workingmen of America.

The jealousies and personal aims of individuals should be pushed aside, and at the earliest date create some great sentiment, and all act in unite for the protection of this country and the glory of God. I do not know how it will be brought about but I hope some member, some delegate, some one, will express some desire or resolution which will unite all, compelling peace, until we obtain justice.

Mr. Erwin's speech was greeted,