The Question of the Prisons

Standing amid the realities of the present and viewing with watchful eye the national highway on which we have been traveling we see it strown with the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the struggles and triumphs of the human race. We see the "countless sons of toil" perishing miserably because of unremitting labor we see a favored few intrusted with the themes of justice and holding in their might to grasp the destiny of forty million people. We see children compelled by necessity stern and reluctant as fate itself to make their playground in the gutter and in the tender years of childhood to pass the schoolhouse on their way to the mines and factories then to labor through the long weary hours of the day for barely enough to sustain life. Needy deprived of an education the only means that will ever enable the race to break the shackles that for centuries has bound them to the rock of ignorance and made them the veritable slaves of the millowner. We see men baptized in ignorance and enslaved by superstition. We see the laborers toiling for barely enough.
to enable him to live and toil. Earning five dollars and receiving one dollar. The rich growing richer and the poor poorer. Such has been the condition of the working man for the past quarter of a century. By a judicious use of money in the legislative halls, the iron coats of tyranny have been drawn closer and closer around them until at last in desperation they threw law and order to the winds and rising up in one body they demand that justice, though tardy, shall at last be meted out to them. They exagerate what is commonly called a strike and with what result? The factories that close with the men and unable to obtain work elsewhere many of them perish miserably in the streets. Fathers and mothers look with despair on such other faces as they see their little ones pine and perish for the food which they are willing but unable to obtain for them. Diseases and misery everywhere. The groans of want and poverty came alike from the lips of innocent children and the
Fallow cheek of age. We recognize in these the same influences that
drew Sparta, Persia, Greece and Rome
down to national decay and struck them from the roll of nations.

Well might the spirits of humanity
be represented as looking on with droop-
ing wings and a Countenance of
sighing pity and despair as she
was enacted and re-enacted all
over this broad land. The old graceful
scenes of the Haymarket riot of a
few years ago. But the blood stains
on the pavement stones of Chicago
told their own sordid placard
stare words that Anarchy and in-
justice could never succeed. This
is, and ever must be, the inevitable
result of this system of distress. All
good people must and do deplore
the fact that the laboring man does
not receive the full benefit of his toil,
but they are just as excited in saying
that he can never hope to succeed by
lawlessness and violence. Taught by a
long and bitter experience that such
can avail them little or nothing, they are gradually turning their attention to secret organizations, Trade Unions and such. These oath-bound leagues with their signs, pass-words and grips, meeting in the dead of night and there under the influence of a few unprincipled demagogues they hatch their meagre schemes and concocted with a feeling of ral or vicarious wrong. They met directly from the presence of these men to do their combined will. Under these circumstances is it any wonder that the Cap.

italist refuses to employ the men who are his worst enemies, the men who have destroyed his property and in many cases menaced his very life, who claim it as their inherent right to dictate to him whom he shall employ and the wages he shall pay.

Many and various are the schemes that have been propounded to alleviate all these wrongs, but each in its turn has been found insufficient, until at last the oppression becoming too strong to be resisted he has sought redress in Council, strength in unity,
and harmony in organization, and as a result all over this broad land "reform" has become the keynote of a mighty movement among the masses. A movement founded upon the eternal principle of justice and right, a principle that embraces within its mighty folds the welfare of a whole people. It is a revolution of brains and ballots, the only means that can ever emancipate the toiler, and bring redemption to struggling humanity. The great wave of reform frightened with public opinion, is swelling on and on, with ever-increasing momentum. Animated by progress and combined with the work of millions of others, the laboring man is at last demanding recognition in the legislative halls of our country, because it is upon this broad arena that his battles must be fought and won. Slowly but surely he is receiving the recognition which is due him and I believe I can see the dawn of a brighter
happier day, when under the foreign influence of education and social intercourse the labors will stand each in patriotic mantles, asking and receiving a fair share in the profits of his toil.

Yours Truly,
Robt. Brock.