



UPTON SINCLAIR

Hell

A VERSE DRAMA AND OTHER POEMS

EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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ARCHIVAL IMAGES

The 1914 protest and the Pasadena author-publishing period

Two distinct plates establish the immediate documentary setting of the poems and play. The 1914 picket photograph is directly connected with the arrest that produced “The Marseillaise in the Tombs”; the 1922 portrait places Sinclair in the Pasadena author-publishing period immediately before *Hell*.



Sinclair, in white with a black mourning band, picketing the Standard Oil offices after the Ludlow Massacre, April 1914. The arrest associated with this action produced "The Marseillaise in the Tombs." Library of Congress.



Upton Sinclair in 1922, during the Pasadena author-publishing period immediately preceding Hell.

BIOGRAPHY

Upton Sinclair: poet, radical publisher, and Southern California public figure

Baltimore, New York, and the apprenticeship, 1878–1900

Upton Beall Sinclair Jr. was born in Baltimore on September 20, 1878, the only child of Upton Beall Sinclair Sr. and Priscilla Harden Sinclair. His father's alcoholism and the family's financial instability stood beside the conspicuous wealth of his mother's relatives, giving him an early view of American class division. After the family moved to New York, Sinclair entered the College of the City of New York at fourteen and supported himself by writing jokes, sketches, and adventure fiction. He later studied at Columbia without completing a degree. The commercial apprenticeship gave him extraordinary speed and stamina, even as his ambitions turned toward poetry and serious literature.

The would-be poet, 1900–1904

Sinclair married Meta Fuller in 1900; their son David was born the following year. His first ambitious novels—*Springtime and Harvest*, reissued as *King Midas*, and *The Journal of Arthur Stirling*—place the poet's vocation at their center. *Prince Hagen* moved between verse-inflected fantasy, prose, and drama. Sinclair's mock-heroic "The Battle of the Libraries" appeared in *The Comrade* in 1902. These works belong to the period when he still imagined himself principally as an artist-poet, before social investigation became his dominant public method.

Socialism, notoriety, and protest verse, 1904–1915

A commission on the Chicago stockyards produced *The Jungle* in 1906 and transformed Sinclair into an international reform writer. He joined the Socialist Party, helped found the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, experimented with cooperative living at Helicon Hall, and repeatedly joined labor and free-speech campaigns. After his first marriage ended, he married the Mississippi-born writer Mary Craig Kimbrough in 1913. In April 1914 he picketed the Standard Oil offices after the Ludlow Massacre and was arrested in New York. “The Marseillaise in the Tombs” grew directly from hearing fellow prisoners sing in adjoining cells; “To Frank Tannenbaum in Prison” addressed another young labor activist jailed that spring. Sinclair also edited *The Cry for Justice*, an anthology that treated poetry as part of the literature of social protest.

Pasadena and author-publishing, 1916–1923

Sinclair and Mary Craig settled in Pasadena in 1916, first in a modest house overlooking the Arroyo Seco. Their residence was outside Los Angeles city proper, but Sinclair’s work became deeply entangled with the region’s politics, newspapers, radicals, churches, film culture, and civic repression. From Pasadena he increasingly published and distributed books himself. His compact introduction to Ruth Le Prade’s *Debs and the Poets* appeared under his Pasadena imprint in 1920. In 1923, amid Los Angeles County’s battles over speech and labor organizing, police arrested him while he read the First Amendment at a San Pedro rally. That same year he self-published *Hell* in Pasadena.

Hell and the Southern California stage, 1923

Subtitled “A Verse Drama and Photo-Play,” *Hell* is a four-act satire in blank verse with a moving-picture screen written into the stage action. Satan’s modernized inferno becomes a system of business management, propaganda, war, and theatrical revolt. The photoplay device belongs to Sinclair’s Southern California environment, while the play’s wobblies, pacifists, jailed radicals, stagehands, and quarrelling actors bring recent political struggles into burlesque. Advertisements in *The Liberator* called it a four-act blank-verse drama and listed Sinclair’s Pasadena address. The 1923 copyright and local title page establish the date used here.

Monrovia, EPIC, and the longer regional career, 1923–1945

Sinclair later made his principal home in Monrovia, at the foot of the San Gabriel Mountains. He founded or supported Southern California civil-liberties work, wrote novels including *Oil!*, and published studies of literature such as *Mammonart* and *Money Writes!*. In 1934 he won the Democratic nomination for governor on the End Poverty in California program. The EPIC movement organized production-for-use cooperatives and drew a mass following, while a coordinated opposition campaign helped defeat him. Although Sinclair never became chiefly a Los Angeles poet, Southern California was his base for decades rather than a brief stop; this edition concentrates on the verse and poetry-related writing most closely connected with that regional period.

Later life and afterlife, 1945–1968

Sinclair’s eleven-volume Lanny Budd sequence included the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Dragon’s Teeth*. After Mary Craig’s death in 1961, he married Mary Elizabeth Willis. He left California late in life and died in Bound Brook, New Jersey, on November 25, 1968. His nearly one hundred books have often obscured the poetry at the beginning of his career and the verse drama at the center of his Pasadena years. The surviving poems are few, but together with *Hell* they reveal a continuous belief that poetry, satire, and public argument could share the same stage.

EDITORIAL METHOD

Scope, copy-texts, lineation, and Southern California focus

Scope and order

This edition centers on the complete 1923 *Hell*. Four independently located poems are gathered chronologically in a single “Early Poems” section. The brief 1920 introduction to *Debs and the Poets* appears in an appendix because it directly concerns the publication and public use of poetry. Sinclair’s novels, pamphlets, health writing, political prose, and other plays are not reprinted.

The verse record

The Marxists Internet Archive identifies “The Battle of the Libraries,” “To Frank Tannenbaum in Prison,” and “The Marseillaise in the Tombs.” The present edition checked all three against their original periodical pages. “On a Steamship” was located independently in James Dalton Morrison’s *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (1948), where the acknowledgments record Sinclair’s permission; its final movement had appeared earlier as a verse quotation in *The Profits of Religion*. No additional Sinclair poems were found in the supplied journal archive.

The copy-text of *Hell*

The Pasadena first edition, copyrighted 1923, is the sole copy-text. Its HathiTrust scan contains several duplicated gatherings; the first complete occurrence of every printed page has been used and the duplicates omitted. The play is fully reset from the original page images. Fresh page-image recognition served only as a transcription aid: every doubtful reading, character cue, stage direction, and typographic transition was checked against the scan, and scan furniture was excluded.

Lineation and typography

The independent poems are newly set with their stanza divisions, clear authorial indents, italics, and closed-up em dashes retained. The reset text of *Hell* likewise retains verse lineation, meaningful authorial indents, character cues, italic stage directions, and the printed transitions between verse and prose. Hanging continuations caused only by the original page width are rejoined rather than reproduced.

Chronology and regional emphasis

Sinclair lived chiefly in Pasadena and Monrovia rather than within Los Angeles city limits. The biographical account therefore treats “Los Angeles” as a regional literary and political field and concentrates on 1916–34, particularly the self-publishing years around *Hell*. Earlier poems are included to establish the career that led to the verse drama; the 1948 anthology supplies the latest located full witness of “On a Steamship.”

EARLY POEMS

Magazine and anthology verse, 1902–1918

The Battle of the Libraries

Being the Merry Tale of the Wooing of Dame Notoriety, of Manhattan, and the Bloody Duel between Charley Squab of the Two Hundred Billion Dollar Steal Trust and Andrew Arniky, Leading Gentleman of the Old Homestead Company.

Oh, come ye muses, nerve my trembling hand,
That fears the fronting of such high design;
Lend me the vision swift and flowing verse
To chant a mighty tale unto men's ears:
A tale of love and fearsome battle-shock,
Of champions paramount in deadly strife
For sovereign favor of a lady fair.
And come, ye nymphs, that visions bright of love
Inspire in Man, for else how can I sing
Of that high damsel of the radiant eyes,
Dame Notoriety, in golden sheen,
The crownèd mistress of Manhattan Isle?
And sovereign queen of Tragedy, descend,
And lend thine aid to my adventurous song
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Æonian mount while it pursues
A Squab so bold, a Squab invincible,—
A greedy, growing, all-devouring Squab,—
A sleuthing Squab in peacock-feathers dressed,
A new Squab of a kind unplucked by man.

'Twas on a lofty throne of jewels piled,
She sat, the mistress of Manhattan Isle;
And Andrew Arniky, a champion slight,
A modest, mild, unwarlike hero he,
Poured words of tender pleading in her ear:—
Oh, come with me, fair lady, sovereign bride,
And we will wisdom's lofty pleasures taste;
A thousand libraries thine home shall be,
A thousand books thy bridal bed shall form,
And thou shalt dine three times a day on Lamb,
With Bacon garnished, and shalt know the joys
Of pure beneficent philanthropy;

And daily in the papers shalt thou read
Of ten-new libraries, in cities vast,
In villages, and Indian wigwams too,
In Texas ranches, and Esquimaux huts,
In Heaven, Hell, and stations in between.

Thus spoke he, when with clanging iron tread
Strode Squab upon the pair with haughty gaze,
Armed with a billet huge of steel, and spoke:—
Who art thou, puny man of books, that durst
Affront the sovereign lady of my choice?
Hark to me, Notoriety, I say!
No man of books am I, no student pale.
A scorn of such things is my warrior-boast.
Seest thou me in my majesty? I am
The lord of millions that obey my nod,
And the earth trembles as I walk; and that,—
All that I made myself, and yet ne'er read
A single book in all my days!—Avaunt!
Pale dreamer; in mine empires span there is
No place for thee, and for thy musty tomes.

But harken now, Dame Notoriety,
If thou wilt be my bride, my sovereign bride,
In splendor shalt thou dwell the like of which
No king of ancient legend ever knew;
Through palaces unending shalt thou roam,
Built all of gold, with diamond corner-stones;
And golden argosies shall speed thee forth
Across the flowing deep, and thou shalt have
Robes made of roses, with the starlight sheen,
And all shall bow before thee, all shall serve—
Science and art thy handmaid slaves shall be.
Know, lady, that the Steal Trust King am I,
A mighty band of barons in my train;
And we are lords of all Manhattan Isle,
And all men serve us, and kneel as we move,
In gold and jewelled splendor shining far.
The millions toil, but to our pomp to add;
The huge machinery of an Age of Steel
Moves but to make us mighty, and to swell

The chorus of our revelry and joy.
 See, Lady Notoriety, I lay
 The whole world at thy feet; yea, thou must know
 That all the millions who in sorrow toil
 My power to forge, their life is short, and when
 They die, I make a tower of their skulls
 To lift me high above the world of woe,
 That I may gaze and watch the pageant pass;
 Come to that throne with me, my lady fair,
 For what were life without thy favor's smile?

Thus Squab; but then in sudden rage he frowned,
 For Arniky, undaunted by his might,
 Stood firm, and would have spoken yet again.
 Such insolence the tyrant's soul made mad,
 And clenching his mailed fist he cried aloud:—
 Avaunt, I say, thou dreamer, man of books!
 Avaunt!—and raised his club of steel on high.
 And at the moment suddenly changed his form;
 A monster he became of aspect dire,
 With face of savage rage and yawning jaws
 Of crunching steel, with glow of fire between,
 And arms of clanking terror grasping far.
 So strode he on the man of books, but he
 Waved in the air his magic wand, and tore
 From out his waist-coat pocket swift a thing
 Huge, and far-towering, a house of books,
 A library, and hurled with lightning shock
 The mass upon the monster rushing on.
 Like to the face of mountains was the roar,
 Like to the earthquake dire, and Squab fell back
 Aghast; but soon he charged with battle-yell,
 And now Homeric grew the giant fray,
 A war of gods with might immortal armed.
 For Squab, the lord of endless wealth, hurled forth
 Mountains of iron and spears of girders huge,
 Steel rails that cleft the shuddering earth, and sent
 Echoes that shattered heaven, and made men flee
 In wildered terror from the Titan fray.
 Palaces huge he hurled, and showers of gold

To blind the eyes, castles of regal size,
Speeches galore, and European tours,
And banquets huge, and royal audiences,
And all things else to stun the mind of man,
And win the smile of Notoriety.

But all was naught unto the doughty knight,
Andrew the bold, who dodged the fearsome hail,
Replying with the weapon that he loved,
His libraries; and forth he hurled them swift,
Both large and small, in deafening thunder shock,
And as he flung them, cried aloud in glee
Their price:—Five thousand—fifty thousand now—
Three hundred thousand—twenty—forty-two—
A million!—five!—ha, Squab, what say'st thou now?

So raged the fiery combat, while the dame
With fickle favor cheered the latest stroke.
Yet ever Squab fell back, nor all his wealth
Could save him, till at last he bent him swift,
Tore up a huge green bank beside the stream,
The bank of Monte Carlo, famed afar,
And broke it with his might, and flung it fierce
Full at poor Andrew's head; the lady cried
In wild alarm; but Andrew bore the shock,
And sudden leapt upon his weakening foe
Armed with a mighty weapon long delayed,
A university ten million big;
And as he saw it poised, Squab moaned in pain,
Turned, and fled madly from his raging foe,
Fled and fled ever, and when safe at last
He stept into an automobile swift,
And sped away unto the south of France.

But Andrew Arniky, the hero bold,

Stood on the field, with libraries high-piled,
And bore as best he might the love embrace
Of Notoriety, in golden sheen,
The crownèd mistress of Manhattan Isle.

Publication. *The Comrade*, vol. 1, no. 9 (June 1902), pp. 194–95.

Textual note. The source adds: “With apologies to Jonathan Swift and Homer.” Its mock spelling “Steal Trust” and the printed phrase “in mine empires span” are retained; the poem was checked column by column against the illustrated two-page spread.

To Frank Tannenbaum in Prison

Poor boy, that came too newly to our shores,
And cannot understand our native ways,
Our dignity and precedent and peace—
Poor foreign boy, with conscience for our sins!
That could not go his humble, tread-mill round,
While men were starving, dying in our streets,
And winter lashed them with its icy whips,
And fashion motored over them in pomp!
Poor boy, they seized thee—bullied, harried thee—
And learned judges read the law to thee,
And righteous papers sounded loud acclaim.
The prison-walls clang on thee—oh, just God!
Think of this place, where human bodies rot,
And human voices weep the nights away;
A place unfit for beasts—so certified
By law itself! And have we razed its walls,
Its foul abominations swept away?
Nay, there it stands—our state is poor, we hear,
Our legislative thieves have taken all.
So let men rot within the slimy walls,
And learned judges read the law to them,
And righteous papers sound their loud acclaim!
Oh boy, brave boy, what can I do for thee?
Pay thee the tribute of a futile tear?
Write words of hope that cannot pierce to thee,
But break upon the slimy dungeon walls?
A thousand causes clamor for my pen,
A thousand horrors haunt me when I sleep;
Men's minds imprisoned, I cannot break their chains!
A world enslaved, I cannot set it free!
So I excuse myself, and do my task,
And let thee rot, poor sad-eyed, foreign boy—
One hero-soul in this our coward State!

Publication. *International Socialist Review*, vol. 14, no. 12 (June 1914), p. 756.

The Marseillaise in the Tombs

First comes the settler with his ax and plow,
 He clears the land and founds the future state;
A Freeman, proud and happy in his toil,
 Sure that the nation will be strong and great;
Then comes the trader, with his cunning wiles,
 He takes the land—the freeman is a slave;
And justice sleeps, hatred and murder reign,
 Hunger and want pursue men to their grave.

They rear the prison with its iron bars,
 And all the solemn majesty of law;
But hark, the sound! The prison walls awake,
 The song that roused a people into war.
Rejoice, rejoice! The voice of hope is heard,
 There are no bars forged by the powers of wrong,
There stands no prison upon God's fair earth
 That can withstand the fury of that song.

Publication. *International Socialist Review*, vol. 15, no. 1 (July 1914), p. 24.

Textual note. The source explains that Sinclair wrote the poem after hearing four women arrested with him for picketing Standard Oil sing the Marseillaise from the next cell in the Tombs. The alternating indent is authorial and retained.

On a Steamship

All night, without the gates of slumber lying,
I listen to the joy of falling water,
And to the throbbing of an iron heart.
In ages past, men went upon the sea,
Waiting the pleasure of the chainless winds;
But now the course is laid, the billows part;
Mankind has spoken: "Let the ship go there!"

I am grown haggard and forlorn, from dreams
That haunt me, of the time that is to be,
When man shall cease from wantonness and strife,
And lay his law upon the course of things.
Then shall he live no more on sufferance,
An accident, the prey of powers blind;
The untamed giants of nature shall bow down—
The tides, the tempest and the lightning cease
From mockery and destruction, and be turned
Unto the making of the soul of man.

Publication. James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 325.

Textual note. The 1948 anthology is the earliest located full witness and specifically acknowledges Sinclair's permission. The final seven lines had already appeared as a verse quotation in *The Profits of Religion* (1918); the full poem is therefore placed here before the Pasadena book section rather than dated 1948 as a new composition.

HELL

Hell: A Verse Drama and Photo-Play, 1923

A Verse Drama and Photo-Play

THE ARGUMENT

Act I: Satan's jester disguises himself as a nun, and gets access to Heaven, where he steals the golden key, and locks the angelic hosts inside. Satan and his chiefs, now having Earth at their mercy, decide to turn it over to their business manager, Mammon, who has systematized the torturing of the damned.

Act II: Mammon sends up his efficiency-demons, two of whom become rival capitalists in great empires on Earth. A pool of oil is discovered, the two empires fall to quarreling over it, and all the world is hurled into war. Mammon's agents become leading statesmen, diplomats, bishops, editors, generals and propagandists of the conflict, which is carried on by the latest efficiency methods brought up from Hell.

Act III: A number of pacifists and Socialists are sent to Hell; also three wobblies. While Satan and his chiefs are diverting themselves on Earth, the wobblies seize the throne of Hell, establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, and send up propagandists of revolution on Earth.

Act IV: On the eve of a great battle the soldiers in the trenches revolt and refuse to fight. Civil war is about to take the place of world war; but the gates of Heaven are opened, and the angelic hosts are released. Comrade Jesus pleads for brotherhood; but the actors on the stage, who have been criticizing the play as it progresses, insist that this is Bolshevism, and declare a revolt against the Author, with the result that the play breaks up in a riot.

THE CHARACTERS

First Imp
Second Imp
Beelzebub
Belial
Moloch
Astarte
Mammon
Satan
Attendant
Whip-o'-Wit
Stage-Hand
The Angel of Love
The Attorney-General
The Angel of Justice
The Angel of Humor
Bill Haywood
A Wobbly
Karl Liebknecht
The Author
A Police Sergeant
Tom
Dick
Harry
Bill
Jim
John
Joe
The Lieutenant
Mike
Pete
Bishop Budge
Comrade Jesus
The Real Devil

ACT I

The scene represents the throne-room of Hell; a high vaulted chamber, with pillars and walls of gold, having clefts through which steam and occasional red glare appear. There are entrances at right and left, and also at left center. The great gold throne of SATAN stands at the right; there are golden lounging seats for the lesser dignitaries scattered about. At the rear is a moving picture screen, which reveals continual sequence of scenes from Earth, Heaven and nethermost Hell, whatever at the moment happens to occupy the mental eye of the powers of Evil.

At rise: Two of the lesser imps, tidying up the throne-room. The screen shows a group of happy country people haymaking.

First Imp

The hell of a job, rubbing up Satan's throne!

Second Imp

For what else could you get a reference?

First Imp

Three times the plumber comes to mend these leaks—
But smoke—smoke!

Second Imp

No end to our labor troubles!

First Imp

Sometimes I think I'd like to see the fires
Go out and let the God-damned souls go free!

Second Imp

Hush! That's sedition!

First Imp

Well, it's what I think.

Second Imp

By heck, I don't know what's come over Hell!

First Imp

I'm getting tired of all work and no play,
The major-domo drives us like a jockey,
His tongue's a swarm of hornets in your ears.
Satan is grim, frowns like a new-lost soul,
His thoughts bent inward, brooding on defeat.

Second Imp

Jehovah reigns! He's got his way on Earth!
Mankind is saved, and Heaven's trumpets peal;
Look at those scenes, like onions to the eyes!
(the screen shows a group of children romping in a meadow)

First Imp

Kids! Kids! All life's a show for such—
Kiddies, they call them, sentimental sweet.

Second Imp

Not one real trouble in the news this week!

First Imp

(grinning)

Go hit your head a good bump on the wall.

Second Imp

What for?

First Imp

To make an earthquake up above!

Second Imp

Had I your wit, I'd lead Hell's minstrel show.
(blast of trumpets)

Aha! They're coming!

First Imp

Twenty-three for me.

(they gather up their pails and dust-cloths and skurry off right. Enter upstage left a guard of half a dozen black fiends, armed with pitch-forks, and having horns and barbed tails. They stand at attention, as a stately personage in court costume and tail enters)

Fiends

Hail, Beelzebub!

Beelzebub

(proceeds to one of the lounging seats, reclines with gesture of infinite weariness)

I'm bored.

(another blast of trumpets; FIENDS enter, escorting a handsome young blond chief of wanton aspect)

Fiends

Hail, Belial, hail!

Belial

(seats himself in silence with yawn. The screen shows a family in a working-class home, seated before an abundant dinner)

Beelzebub

Belial, behold the world's prosperity!

(BELIAL yawns. Trumpets heard, enter escorts of military appearance, followed by a grim, powerful personage in clanking armor, with huge broadsword)

Fiends

Hail, Moloch!

(he seats himself, and yawns; the screen shows children emerging from a school)

Belial

Moloch, see the children there—

And none are fed to you!

(he chuckles maliciously)

Moloch

Yes, Belial, true!

Nor can you whisper in their tender ears

Your pretty little jokes!

Beelzebub

(yawns prodigiously)

Year after year

I wait, hoping to hear one single jest

I have not heard before.

(trumpets again; enter a female demon of voluptuous aspect)

Fiends

Astarte, hail!

Queen of the Night!

Beelzebub

Astarte, bring us news!

We quarrel, as one who, lacking other food,

Bites his own fingers.

Astarte

(yawns)

News has ceased to be.

(trumpets again; enter a wizened old miser-demon)

Fiends

Welcome to Mammon!

Beelzebub

Mammon at least has news:

He's made some cash!

Mammon

Who talks of cash to me?

I've all the cash in Hell. Nothing to do

With it, nor with myself! My game is played!

(he yawns; there is a general silence; one yawns; then another, then all. The screen shows a country barndance, full of merriment. A louder and longer blast of trumpets, and all the chiefs rise. Enter a great number of guards, then Satan, Prince of Darkness, in pomp. In mid entrance he halts, gazes from one to another of his chiefs, and makes a gesture of fierce impatience)

Satan

Truce to your trumpets! Give me a deed for pride!

You gather here, the mighty chiefs of Hell—

And I have boasted Hell has all the brains!

Look on this drama, made for your delight.

(the screen shows a pair of lovers in the moonlight)

Youth! Tender youth! Ten years of imbecility,

Followed by fifty years of yearning backwards

And glorifying by the lures of art!

Mammon

(stretching himself on his couch)

Spare us your ranting, Satan. Let us sleep.

Satan

If sleep you wanted, why revolt from Heaven?

The symphony concerts of the seraphim

Did not disturb your snores.

(he paces the stage)

I say, awake,

You aged, toothless tigers fed on milk!

(pointing to screen)

Young love—sweet sugared love—behold, my lords,
 A prize to the sharp wit that first can guess
 The ending of this story—ever the same!
(the lovers clasp with passionate fervor)

Belial

It is my guess the end's not far away!
(laughter of the FIENDS)

Satan

(seats himself on his throne and waves his hand)

Produce the climax of this tender tale!
(the screen shows a wedding procession; music, Lohengrin march)

Brilliant stuff! Hell's movies are picking up!
 Let the wheel turn. Give us some action here!
(the screen shows a day-nursery, with a score of babies, gleeful and animated)

They come, they come, poured out from Nature's lap!
 Oh blind fecundity, oh curse of life,
 Oh cataract of insipidity—
 Tedium eternal—

Beelzebub

Shall we poke up the damned?

Satan

Poke up the damned? The hell-cats spit in your face!
 Have I not poked them twenty thousand ages?
 Their hides have layers like the ancient oaks!

Beelzebub

A little acid, perhaps?

Satan

Your thoughts grow stale,
 Beelzebub! Could I get one new shriek?
 I might enjoy the thrill of virgin pain,
 But new souls lack—the world's redeemed, you know!
 Look! Look!

(the screen shows little tots in bathing-suits romping on a beach)

The wheel has turned, the babes grow up;
 Ten boredoms now for one that used to be!

Attendant

(bearing cup)

Your major-domo sends a drink of ice
To cool your throat—

Satan

(strikes cup from his hand)

I'll freeze your toasted tail
In ice eternal for your driveling!
I, Lucifer, that once did strike at Heaven,
Shut now in dim monotony of smoke,
Tormenting souls not worth the sulphur's price,
With fifty million fiends to imitate
My every yawn politely! Not one jest
To strike a spark! My jester—where's my Whip?
My Whip, come forth!

Attendant

(trembling)

My lord, we have not seen
Him for these several days.

Satan

Hell's fires explode!
My Whip-o'-Wit! My Whip-o'-Wit, I say!
Can I not have my servants when I call?
May he be damned ten thousand times anew!

Whip-O'-Wit

(off stage left, laughs)

Ha, ha! Ha, ha!

Satan

(brightening)

My Whip! I hear you! Come!

Whip

(bounds onto stage, stops short)

Who damns a devil? To Hell with such a lout!

(a vivid figure, in jester's costume, splotted red and black. He turns hand-springs to the throne, stands on his head with his back to Satan, and jerks his tail in the latter's face, then bounds to his feet and stretches out his arms exultantly)

Victory, my lord, victory! The World is yours!

Satan

What, fool?

Whip

The world of fools are your fools now!
Strike up the trumpets! Let the wine-corks pop!
Hell's loose! Hell's popping! Hail Hell's hullabaloo!

Satan

What jest is this? Or has a fool gone mad?

Whip

(snapping his fingers, capering)

Mad as a tempest, mad as a tiger's tooth,
A serpent's venom, or a mule's hind-foot!
Mad as your youth, when at your battle shout
The towers of Heaven quivered like blanc mange!
Beelzebub, switch on the lights of hope,
And let the rockets of your soul ascend!
Moloch, smooth out those frowning brows, and train
Your unaccustomed lips to smile once more!
You, Mammon, builder of palaces of gold—

Mammon

This must indeed be an ingenious play
To justify a prologue so drawn out.

Whip

Venerable one, thy wits have rheumatism;
Thank God, I'm but ten thousand centuries old.
Ah well, I see there is no yeast in you—
A mess of cold potatoes for a feast!
Enough! I'm sober! Draw up your golden chairs
And hear my tale, as baldly as I may

(as he tells his story, the screen shows the incidents narrated; he follows the action with identical gestures)

This day I wandered over Earth, in guise
Of a young student, handsome, debonair,
Seeking my sport—an idle brain is still
The devil's workshop! Well, I met a nun,
Demure and prim, her eyes on Heaven fixed.

By what device I brought those eyes to Earth
And got the nun to part with her black robe—
That were a tale unfit for Hell to hear.

*(the screen shows the student making ardent love to the nun; laughter of the
FIENDS)*

Suffice it that you see me now, full clad
In robe and bonnet, sitting by a stream
At sundown, watching the fire-flies at play;
For lack of better pleasure I began.
To catch these creatures, and tear off their lights—
When suddenly a light flashed in my brain!
In the nun's pocket was a needle and thread,
And I began to string the fire-flies on,
A rosary of phosphorus, line on line,
I sewed them neatly onto my nun's hood!
Then to the convent quick—oh, jest divine!—
A miracle! A halo round my head!
The nuns came marveling, to hear my tale—
The Virgin's visit, my eternal bliss!
Then suddenly I swooned; was deathly sick,
A priest came running with his holy oil—
And so behold your Whip, a devil dead,
Shriven and sanctified in a young nun's bed!

(laughter from the FIENDS)

Straight, then, I follow that procession meek
Of souls elect climbing the golden stairs!
Walk in! Walk in! The pearly gates roll back!
Not a question asked, not an entry in the book!
I tread the pavements gold, I seek to cool
My hell-scorched feet in gutters bright that flow
With milk and honey from Heaven's soda-fountains.
You follow this, my lords?

Satan

(has been leaning forward eagerly)

Is it a tale
You tell for the beguiling of our mood?

Whip

Patience, my chief, I came not back from Heaven

Without some trophy! I dared not remain;
 My crown would fade, and Heaven's traffic cops
 Would see the milk curdling about my feet,
 The honey fermenting—Heaven's own home-brew!
 I fled back to the gate, St. Peter's seat,
 And on that aged dotard tried my wiles.
 "Oh saintly one, a timid nun am I,
 Awed by Heaven's glories—may I speak with you?
 So much about you have I heard on Earth'—
 "Indeed! Indeed, my sweet one? Is it so?
 They speak of me on Earth?" "Always! One hears.
 Less of the Great White Throne than of yourself,
 Venerable keeper of the golden key
 Who guards the gate against all spirits foul.
 Oh, holy sir, might it permitted be
 To a new soul that golden key to show?"
 "With reverence due, it might." He fetched it out,
 And saw me thrill with awe: "Oh wondrous hour!
 And is it true, you have but one such key?"
 "But one," said he, "in all the universe;
 The mold was melted and to me alone
 The treasure trusted and the judgment given."
 "Oh, super-sanctified, attend my prayer:
 We suffer much from boils in convent life,
 Due to confinement and monotony.
 I was advised to kiss St. Peter's toe,
 I went to Rome to do this holy act,
 But I dropped dead—and brought my boils to Heaven!
 Permit me now in reverence and faith
 To take this precious object in my hand
 One single moment, and I shall be healed,
 And hymn thee all eternity and more!"
 Said he: "Thy faith is justified of Heaven.
 Receive the key." He laid it in my hands,
 And then—"Oh, look!" in shrill alarm I cried:
 "A saint is stuck in the honey!" He turned his head,
 And quick as light I leaped through the pearly gate,
 Slammed it behind me, slipped the key in the lock,
 Gave it a turn—

The Chiefs

(leap to their feet, shouting)

What? How? Go on! What next?
Complete the tale!

Whip

The key of Heaven is ours!

The Chiefs

Impossible! You jest! It cannot be!

Whip

(with exultation)

The key! The key! And all the heavenly host,
The martyrs and the prophets and the saints,
The cherubim, the seraphim, and even
The Holy Ones themselves, our prisoners!
Shut in forever—and Hell rules again!

Satan

(in wild excitement)

If this be a lie, I'll have a pickled fool
In a pit of quicklime fifty million years!

Whip

Aye, fifty million ages, if you will!
Strike up Hell's orchestra! A witch's dance
Begins tonight, outlasting tireless time!
Princes and potentates infernal, rise!
Lords of destruction, engineers of hate,
Behold the symbol of your power restored,
The golden key of Heaven!

(he holds the key aloft; a blast of trumpets and a wild shout from the assemblage)

Beelzebub

(points to the screen)

Behold the sight!
The elect of Earth, cheated of their reward!

(the screen shows the locked gates of Heaven; a vast company of souls clamoring outside unheeded. The FIENDS cheer)

Belial

Swiftly the rumor spreads, fear seizes Earth,

The sons of men distraught, they know not why!

(the screen shows the children playing on the beach; sudden darkness and storm, the mothers rush out and carry them away)

Moloch

The giants of Nature break their chains and rage
Unhindered by angelic guardianship!

(swift glimpses of a stormy sea, clouds driven wildly)

Astarte

Faster the fiddles, furious the fun!

(terrified faces of women, figures rushing hither and thither)

Mammon

The sons of Earth discover all their prayers
Unheeded now remain—their hopes fall dead!

(the screen shows a mother, kneeling by the bedside of a dying child, with frantically uplifted hands)

Whip

(capering)

Salvation's pills no longer cure their gripes,
And holy water leaves their sins to stink!

(a vast congregation in a cathedral in frenzied invocation)

Their cries rebound and hit them in the ears!

Satan

Welcome this sport! Switch on the helloworld,
We'll hear their cries.

Attendant

Your will is done, my lord.

(the devils fall silent; a vast clamor of pain and fear is heard off stage above)

Astarte

The women wail!

Beelzebub

Hark to the deeps below!

Whip

The news has reached the janitors of Hell!

(murmurs of delight from underneath; the FIENDS break into cheering)

Satan

The hunt grows hot! Reverse the hellophone,
Let Earth hear Hell!

Attendant

Your will is done, my lord.

(the FIENDS mock at the Earth-sufferers, whereupon the worshippers in the cathedral are seen to gaze up with terrified eyes, then fall upon their faces; the priest drops the host and swoons upon the altar rail. Volley after volley of cheers in Hell; the screen shows people throwing themselves over cliffs and out of high windows; universal frenzy of despair)

Satan

(slapping his thighs)

Here's life indeed!

Whip

'Tis but begun, my lord!

Gaze now on Heaven! The golden harps are dumb!

(the screen shows the heavenly choir struck silent and fearful. Taunts from the devils)

Behold old Pete, minus his sweet young nun!

(St. Peter is seen, tearing at his beard in frenzy)

Whiskers grow even in the grave, they say!

Pull on, old boy, you have a full crop now,

And all eternity to grow another!

(laughter from the FIENDS)

Satan

Laugh loud, my lords, your merriment is heard;

The best of pleasure is some other's pain!

(angels are shown stopping their ears with their fingers; the elect falling down upon the streets of Heaven)

Whip

See how they swoon, they flop in the sticky flood,

There'll be some work for laundresses in Heaven!

Beelzebub

One thing is lacking. What say the Mighty Ones

To this our triumph?

Satan

Page the Great White Throne!

(a silence of involuntary awe. The screen is black; gradually a light spreads, and we behold the Father, seated on his throne, in a blaze of glory, His form bowed and head buried in His hands. Hoarse whispers from the FIENDS, who fear in spite of themselves)

His light grows dim! Old age is coming on,
He sickens of His job!

Whip

Three cheers for me!

(turns handspring)

Beelzebub

What of the Trinity?

Satan

Behold the Son!

(the figure on the throne changes. The Son sits with hands clutching the sides of the Throne, gazing before Him with look of anguish. The FIENDS jeer, and He is seen to wince)

Paragon of Pity, hie Thee back to Earth,
And die once more!

Beelzebub

A meek Lamb for the slaughter!

Whip

I have a notion that theophagy
May cease to be the fashion for a time!

Satan

Complete the vision. We'll have the Holy Ghost.

(the throne becomes empty, the light dims)

Fiends

He's gone.

Satan

He's dead!

Beelzebub

He is not that He is.

Whip

Busted, in short!

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah for Hell!

Satan

(rises)

Princes and lords, attend upon my thought.
Here's an event that well may overtop
Our comprehension. Here's the Universe
Laid at our mercy! Nothing guards mankind
From either force or guile of our device.
What shall we do?

Moloch

(rises majestically, smites his broadsword across his couch)

I'm on my way to Earth!

Satan

Stay, Moloch! Tell your plan.

Moloch

Once more I see
My idol glare, a beast with flaming maw.
(the screen shows a great bronze idol, with priests flinging in living infants)

Sweet to my ear the screams of motherhood,
And no less sweet the smell of new-born flesh!

Belial

(rising)

Once more the virgins on my temple porch
The phallic raptures thrill!
(the screen shows the old heathen temple, dark shadowed porches, distant gleams of altar fires, figures of young girls swaying to music)

Astarte, come!

Astarte

Once more my orgies rock the temple walls!
(the screen shows priests and worshippers dancing in drunken delirium)
Come, Mammon, rear the golden calf again!

Mammon

(rises)

I come!

Satan

Hold, chiefs; an hour's council now
 May yield much profit later. Sit you down.
 I know the lure of these your ancient rites,
 Deep buried in the souls of humankind.
 But fix your minds upon our progress made
 In recent centuries; these golden halls,
 With ventilation, sanitation, all
 Conveniences of modern homes de luxe.
 Our science has wrought colossal engineering
 Whereby this gold was wrested from the rock—
(the screen shows the machines of Hell)

The powerful explosives, and the fires
 That smelted and refined; the giant cranes
 That lifted and the creaking cars that bore.
 Bethink you of psychology, the art
 That supersedes our ancient witch's craft.
 Pay tribute to our politics—reflect
 How vast the saving to our time and thought
 That now the infinite host of souls condemned
 Submits in patience to eternal flame,
 And imps who guard them and attend our state
 Revolt no more, proud citizens of Hell!
(the screen shows the Imps going to the ballot-box and voting)

All these our triumphs; and now who shall say
 The shrewd artificers of this estate
 May not devise fresh torments for mankind,
 Cold, subtle systems of destructiveness
 That open up new paths of pleasuring,
 And make our slaughters and our orgies stale?

Beelzebub

Hail, Lucifer, light-bearer, full restored
 To royalty!

Fiends

Hail, prince of our rebel realm!

Whip

(in delight)

I see the future loom! The electric torch

Burns up the feet of the damned, while high-speed steel
Grinds out their teeth in the dentist-chairs of Hell!

(the screen shows this picture)

Satan

(angrily)

Silence, thou fool, we hold grave counsel here.

Whip

Oho! You've reaped the harvest of my wit,
And now I'm husks and straw, you cast me out!
Oh haughty powers, oh ponderous intellects,
Suppose I skipped, and left you in your pride
Without the talisman, your golden key!

(startled cries from the assemblage)

Satan

(springing to his feet)

Thou maggot! Hand it here!

Whip

Oh merry jest,

Had I restored it to my whiskered saint!

(the screen shows St. Peter leaping to receive the key. WHIP points to this picture gleefully, then hands the key to SATAN)

Satan

Now, bless us with your silence for a space.

Whip

(raises his hands in silent blessing; then, as SATAN makes a move to strike him, he leaps up to a perch on one of the golden pillars)

Here, till you summon me again, I sit,
Spectator of the mess you make of it—
Hell, Earth and Heaven, statecraft without wit!

Satan

Mammon, to you I turn; 'twas in your thought
This flowing tide of commerce first took rise;
'Tis by your might it sweeps all barriers down.
Tell us the names of these your managers
Shrewd, keen and practical, demons of the deed.

(the screen shows a group of very efficient demons figuring over charts)

Mammon

I like this counsel. I have long complained
Of utter lack of system here in Hell,
The hold of precedent and formality
Upon the minds of devils. We have charts
Showing how pain-production might be raised
An hundred fold per calory of combustion
And unit of imp-energy consumed.
If you recall, I offered long ago
To run your fires upon a contract basis
And pay you ten per cent of all the gain
My systematization might effect.
But you, proud chiefs, stood on your dignity!
Should Hell be turned into a department store?
Should each of you give up your ancient right
To run your devilment in artist fashion?

Satan

Enough of this, old grumbler! We who won
Our power by the sword have cause to fear
You cunning captains of the counting-house.
But here's a new empire to be opened up,
A tabula rasa to be written on.
Make us your offer.

Mammon

That I'll quickly do!

(the screen shows the efficiency demons hard at work in an office full of charts and filing cabinets)

Turn over to me the management of Earth.
I'll put my shrewdest experts on the job;
I'll make you pleasures never seen before
In wildest frenzy of demonic dream,
And at a profit—ten per cent in cash,
Paid to your treasury, quarterly on the nail;
Enough to change our plumbing into gold
And roast the damned till the last sun burns out.

Satan

What say you, chiefs?

Beelzebub

I like this line of talk.

Moloch

Shall I have infants?

Mammon

You shall see them die

Like weeds in harvest; hear their mothers moan

Until your ear-drums ache!

Belial

Shall I have virgins?

Mammon

Your portion shall be war-brides.

Belial

What are they?

Mammon

And army-widows.

Belial

Fascinating names,

I must admit!

Astarte

And I, what bribe for me?

Mammon

You shall be Queen of the Flappers.

Astarte

(bewildered)

Flappers, you say?

What beast is that?

(the screen shows a flapper tripping along the street)

Whip

(kicking his legs)

Bring forth Hell's dictionary!

A flapper: one who flaps! But what flaps she?

Mammon

She flaps the wings of insolence and youth!

Beelzebub

Mammon, from what strange chambers of your brain
Have you brought forth these fancies whimsical?

Mammon

I am a business-man, and I foresee.

(the screen shows Mammon at his desk with secretaries)

Long have I known that vested capital
Must rule creation; I've had blue-prints drawn;
I've studied prices and materials,
Also the hearts of men, their fears and hates,
Their faiths, their fashions and futilities.
Now I have but to press a button once,
And say the words: To Earth!—and all is done.

Satan

(rising)

Mammon, a title for your new estate,
First of your line: Captain of Industry!
Say now your magic words.

Mammon

Not quite so fast!

A little matter of business to transact,
A contract specifying all these terms.

(the screen shows a typist-devil at work)

Satan

(laughs)

A gentleman's agreement won't suffice?

Mammon

Many fine gentlemen have we here in Hell,
But business is business; I prefer
We have the terms in writing, signed and sealed.
I'll return shortly.

(he hobbles off, followed by his guards)

Whip

(raising his hand, from his perch)

Teacher, please, may I speak?

Satan

What is it, fool? -

Whip

A foolish thing, perhaps.

There's something happening at the gate of Heaven.

(all turn to look at the screen, which shows the souls still clamoring at the gate. Three white-winged angels are among them, and the souls crowd to them as if listening to speeches)

Satan

What's this? Some angels have got out of Heaven?

Beelzebub

A duplicate key?

Moloch

Or have they forced the lock?

Whip

(leaping from his perch)

May a fool speak?

Satan

Speak quickly. What are they?

Whip

Some guardian angels who were down on Earth
Helping mankind; so when I locked the gate,
They were outside.

Satan

The answer, beyond doubt.

Whip

I know them well, my lord.

Satan

Tell us their names.

Whip

One is the Angel of Love.

Beelzebub

Inspid pest!

Belial

'Tis he who fills our movies with this slush!

Astarte

Heart interest, they call it!

Satan

We've no fear

Of him. Who's next?

Whip

Angel Of Justice

Beelzebub

A fellow full of rant fanatical.

Satan

He'll not get far alone. Who is the third?

Whip

The third's the only member of the host
Of Heaven that's any sort of company;

Angel Of Humor

Beelzebub

I'm much afraid

We may have trouble with these shining ones.

Satan

We'll watch them well.

Whip

(snaps his fingers)

See what they're up to now!

(the screen shows the three angels drawn apart, and with a pair of shears clipping off one another's wings, and tucking the stumps under their robes)

They trim their wings! They will return to Earth
Disguised, and carry out their cunning plots
Unknown to us!

Satan

Whip, there's a job for you!

Whip

My lord, I take it!

Satan

Follow them! Follow close!

Whip

I'll sit upon their heels!

Satan

And lose them not!

Whip

They'll lose their shadows sooner. Up I go!

(he springs into the air, spreads his bat's wings and soars out of sight)

Satan

So much for that; we'll give our fears a rest.

(the screen shows the three angels descending the golden Stairs; a demure little nun appears and follows them)

Beelzebub

Oh clever scamp! Behold the little nun!

Satan

I'll back my Whip against all angels that
Ever grew feathers—

Beelzebub

And cut them off with shears!

(laughter of the demons. The screen shows MAMMON in his office, putting a document into his pocket and departing)

Satan

How goes it with our Captain of Industry?

Beelzebub

He comes, I think.

(trumpets heard. MAMMON enters; very business-like, takes documents from inside pocket)

Now, gentlemen, it's done;
I've made it short and simple. Read it through.

(the attendant hands the copies about; the screen shows the efficiency clerks hard at work filing)

Satan

(studying paper)

Complete control of Earth; all souls condemned

To be delivered F. O. B. to Charon.
Books to be open, royalty ten percent,
Quarterly dividends—what say you, chiefs?

Beelzebub

I say, if Mammon wished to cheat us all—
As I've no doubt he does—he'd have his way.

Mammon

Our Whip-o'-Wit has left a double here.

Satan

What say you, Belial?

Belial

I say, give me the girls,
Mammon may have the handling of the cash.

Satan

And you, Astarte?

Astarte

Woman's place is the home.

Satan

And Moloch?

Moloch

Moloch says feed hot the fires
And fling the infants in, and he's content.

Satan

Well, here we go, my fellow capitalists;
(he signs his name)

I sign, and do you likewise, and we'll take
A little flier in Earth Incorporated.

Beelzebub

(signing)

If we succeed, and dividends come in,
We'll all move upward in the social scale.

Belial

Hell will become a country club select,
With tea and golf and books on etiquette.

(the ATTENDANT collects the signed copies and hands to MAMMON)

Mammon

All right, that job is done, and now to work!
This day begins the rule of Hell on Earth.

Satan

Historic hour, we greet thee for all time!
Let us arise, with hearts unanimous
And join in singing our Convention Song.

The Chiefs

(rise and shout lustily)

Hail! Hail! The gang's all here!
What the Hell do we care?
What the Hell do we care?
Hail! Hail! The gang's all here!
What the Hell do we care now?

Satan

(his manner changes; he takes off his wig, wipes his forehead, and speaks in a matter-of-fact voice)

Well, so much for the first act. That much trouble's over anyhow.

Beelzebub

Yeah. *(blows his nose)* What do you think of it?

Satan

Bum stuff, it strikes me.

(the demons abandon their characters, and become actors chatting about the work. One takes off his tail, another his robes, exposing white shirtsleeves; they stand about, gossiping)

Belial

I'd say the fellow didn't know how to end it, and just quit in the middle. *(to MOLOCH)* What do you think?

Moloch

Oh, I got no use for this highbrow stuff. Seems to me like the guy was trying to see how many times he could get the word hell into it. Kinder blasphemous.

Astarte

Not very refined, that's sure.

Satan

Well, anyhow, I'm glad to talk plain English for a few minutes. I sure am bored by this blank verse business.

Moloch

Hell, yes!

Beelzebub

(recites mockingly)

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Rumtum rumtum rumtum rumtum rumtum.

Belial

"A man could talk along like that all day
If he had nothing else but that to do!

Satan

If this play ever gets to Broadway, I'm certainly one bum guesser.

Beelzebub

I'll tell the world!

Belial

Well, as for that, you can't be sure. If there was anybody could tell what plays would go he'd have all the cash in the business. What do you say?

Moloch

I say to hell with it! *(he bites off a chew of tobacco)*

Astarte

I rise to remark, I wish they'd give me some lines. Gee! one bum laugh in the whole act.

Satan

All the laughs are bum, I'd call them.

Astarte

Say, what's a she-devil like, anyhow? Does she dress like a princess and act like a lady? I'd have thought a she-devil would be a hell-raiser.

Satan

Well, you're not through yet.

Moloch

My guess is, this here play is some kinder pacifist dope.

Beelzebub

Yeah, sure, radical. Goin' to show you how the capitalists are all devils!

Astarte

As if we'd have any jobs if some capitalist didn't put up the money! Who's paying for this show if it ain't a capitalist?

Beelzebub

I hope he's got enough to keep it going, that's all I say.

Moloch

That's all right; but a guy like Rockefeller oughtn't to have so much money all the same.

Belial

Maybe not. If he was like Henry Ford now—

Whip

Hip! Hip! (*he comes sailing down from the ceiling, holding onto a wire; he stops a few feet in the air, kicking*) Wake up, wake up, there! Let me down!

Stage-Hand

(*shouting in wings*)

Hold yer horses. The ropes is twisted.

Whip

Well, take care of your danged ropes. Do you expect me—

Stage-Hand

To Hell wid youse! If youse don't like it, jump.

Whip

All right! (*drops lightly to ground*) Holy smoke, it's hot up in those flies! And no way to get down! Well, how did the audience take it?

Satan

Pretty cold, I thought.

Whip

Clever stuff all the same.

Astarte

Huh! No wonder you like it! You have half the lines!

Whip

Well, all I can say is, I wish you had to turn my somersaults. I'm out of training for that sort of thing. It's been ten years since I did any tumbling.

Moloch

You was a trapeze feller, wasn't you?

Whip

Sure, I've done everything going. I used to do the devil once, in "The Heart's Temptation: or, Was She Wife or Widow." One night stands for over a year. I remember once an old farmer comes up to me and he says—

Stage-Hand

(comes on, a burly Irishman in shirt sleeves)

Say, which one o' youse fellys is runnin' this here Hell?

Satan

All of us, maybe. Why?

Stage-Hand

Well, I got somethin' to say about it. Youse had ought to gimme room to run in if youse expect me to haul that felly up to the ceilin' every night. And youse had ought to git some felly that ain't over two hundred pounds.

(they laugh)

Satan

Wait till he's been doing these flip-flops a bit, and he'll be lighter.

Stage-Hand

(looks toward the audience)

Say! Them people out there dunno this act's over!

(calls)

Go on out, youse fellys, an' smoke yer cigarettes. These hamfats is jist gassin' here! *(he notices the screen, which is still showing bits of scenes in MAMMON'S office and on Earth)* Hey, there's another felly dunno the act's over! *(shouts)* Hey, youse operator up there, don't youse know youse 're supposed to quit? *(the pictures continue; the actors laugh)*

Stage-Hand

Say! They'll never quit while youse fellys stand here gassin'!

Satan

Well, why don't you drop the curtain?

Stage-Hand

Gee whiz! I fergot that! *(he runs off)*

Whip

The asbestos curtain for Hell!

Stage-Hand

(off)

The Hell you say! (*curtain begins to fall*)

Whip

(*to audience*)

Now, go on out and have your smoke. We'll start up again in a few minutes, as devilish as ever.

(CURTAIN)

ACT II

Scene: The throne-room of Hell, as in Act II.

At rise: The stage is set for a banquet; the chiefs are feasting, drinking and throwing dice. The screen shows the office of Mammon, with a large staff of efficiency devils working diligently.

Fiends

Huzzah! A lucky throw! Again, again!

Belial

Moloch, another throw?

Moloch

I'm game for you.

Belial

I'll stake you twenty thousand virgins prime
For fifty thousand infants.

Moloch

It's a go.

Belial

You hear the terms?

Fiends

We hear.

Belial

Rattle the bones!

(they throw the dice, several throws, amid excitement of the company, and calling of the numbers)

Moloch

Two fives! Three fives! You have three fives to beat!

Belial

Sixes! Three sixes! I win! The brats are mine!

Beelzebub

You've won a burden—where will you stable them?

Belial

I'll make me some new rite—perhaps a feast,

And eat them! Mammon, will that be allowed?

Mammon

Temper your hot young blood—you seek to skip
To the end of the story!

Astarte

A wager for the end!
Shall we see mothers who their infants eat,
Or vice versa?

Beelzebub

Or infants eating infants?

Satan

Mammon, it seems to me your tale is slow;
You promised a diversion for this night—
You'd but to press a button.

Mammon

It is pressed.
The curtain rises; lend your eyes and ears,
My fellow capitalists.

Fiends

The show! The show!
*(they pound on the table and applaud, watching the screen, which discloses two young
and intelligent business-devils in evening dress making their bows)*

Mammon

Behold our agents, masters of the event,
Product of Hell's efficiency machine,
High salaried experts in predacity;
Hustle and Hunch their names, they never looked
At the clock, but kept their noses on the scent
Of profit and promotion.

(Hustle is shown being introduced at a dinner-dance)

See them now;
Hell's skillful surgeons have removed their tails,
They take their places in society—
(Hunch is shown lighting up cigars with a couple of big capitalists)

One in the empire of the Verticals,
The other in the Horizontals' realm.

Satan

The Horizontals and the Verticals—
What jest is this, Oh Captain of Industry?

Mammon

No jest—two empires, each with a three-striped flag;
In one the stripes run horizontally
While in the other they are vertical,
Hence the dispute; among the Verticals
Men can conceive of nothing so debased
As a flag whose stripes run parallel to the ground,
While those who live among the Horizontals
Are filled with murder-frenzy when they see
Stripes insolently running up and down.

(the FIENDS laugh)

Satan

Delightful touch!

Beelzebub

Oh subtlety superb!

Mammon

Shift your attention; digging here in Hell
Quite recently, we found a store of oil;
A crack we've opened, and it filters up
And forms a lake of liquid opulence,
Deep hidden in a tropic forest dim.

(the screen shows this scene)

A boon it might be to humanity,
Causing vast cities to arise, and ships
To split the ocean's fury, and machines
To overtop unscaled mountain peaks;
But by our cunning it becomes a curse
Exceeding in malignancy the reach
Of any demon's fancy—until I
Applied psychology to money-making.
Next we behold the natives of the place,
Sharing the pleasures crude and fugitive
Which Nature's fickle charity bestows.

(the screen shows natives dancing)

But here come our explorers, and they find
The pool of oil; in ecstasy of greed
They stake their claims to this ungarded wealth.

(the screen shows the series of incidents as described)

They are two parties, one of the Verticals,
The other from the Horizontals' realm.
Behold their banners flapping in the breeze,
On one the stripes run parallel to the ground.
And on the other they run up and down.
So now the parties gaze with hostile eyes,
Their couriers gallop, and the word is flashed
By wire to both the capitals concerned.
Our Hustle, oil magnate, reads the news
At a directors' meeting; in a trice
These mighty men of millions have agreed,
They'll send their steamers, build a road, sink wells,
And pipe the oil to the nearest port.
And that same day here's Hunch, the Horizontal,
Forming another syndicate to do
The very same thing—and to the very same oil!

Satan

Mammon, I pay you tribute; this is genius.

Mammon

No, no, my lords! 'Tis simple business sense.

Beelzebub

A little oil poured on the flames of greed!

(they laugh)

Mammon

See, here's a boundary line and troops on guard;
Here's whiskey for the natives, and here's gold
Paid out by Hustle to the dusky chiefs
For oil concessions to the Verticals;
The agents here of Hunch, with pockets full
To buy the rights for Horizontal-land!
So now you see the natives dance no more;
The bread-fruit trees are girdled, and there's work
For native hands to do, and there are ways
To remedy their native indolence.

(the screen shows a native bound to a tree and being lashed by a white man)

More labor's needed, so the troops go out
 Into the jungle, and long files of slaves
 Are brought in chains to bear the white man's burden.
 Belial, you like your ladies nude; they come,
 Herded to satisfy the white man's lust.
 Moloch, you ask for babies, see them flung
 Into the flaming huts—a symptom sure
 Of military fever in the tropics.
 But for this feast we're seeking higher joys;
 Visit the capitals, world centers, both,
 Of taste and pleasure, where the statesmen meet,
 Rulers and captains of my empires new.
 I have two devils, trained in politics,
 Slippery and Slim, world-famous diplomats.
 One represents the Verticals—or Hustle;
 And one the Horizontals—that is, Hunch.
 You see them here, 'tis called a conference;
 Across the council-board they hurl their hates,
 Called ultimatums. See! The mobs are up;
 The air is thick with clamor: War! War! War!

(the screen shows crowded streets and newsboys shouting extras)

Satan

You speed the event at an amazing pace!

Mammon

That's system, that's the new psychology.
 We've a device of which I'm rather proud,
 It's called Preparedness; we've made a song,
 For all the booboisie of Earth to sing:
 Preparedness is Safety—meaning this,
 Each man is safe in cheerful certainty
 That he can cut his neighbor's throat the first.

(laughter of the FIENDS)

Satan

Mammon, you rise upon the wings of wit!

Mammon

A truce to flattery; we've business here,
 To gather in the dividends of hate.

I've sent my engineers to teach mankind
War by machinery; you'll note I own
The means of making all the war-machines.

(the screen shows the forging of a cannon)

Men toil, they plot perdition for themselves,
And pay me for the privilege.

(the FIENDS laugh with increasing merriment)

Satan

A scheme

So marvelous one can't believe it real!

Moloch

Go on! Go on! I'm eager for this show.

Mammon

One detail more; you'll have a keener joy
If the technique is thoroughly understood.
Observe this peasant lad, born to the plow,

(the screen portrays the scenes as described)

He burns no oil, owns no munition-stock:
And never visited a tropic land.
So here's a problem: Hustle must persuade
This lad to die for Hustle's oil concession.
Here works the magic of Preparedness!
Behold the lad, how he salutes his flag
With holy rapture burning in his eyes—
And you'll observe the stripes run vertical!
Now here's another lad, so like the first
They're hard to tell apart; and this one too
Comes from the field and dons a uniform
And greets a flag with consecrated zeal;
But now you note the horizontal stripes—
This lad will fight for Hunch's oil claim!
Here come the regiments on dress parade
With fire and glory, clash of brass and drums.
Observe the officers, their spines are stiff
With cultivated haughtiness; the troops
Salute with disciplined humility;
They live laborious lives, with muscles tense
And souls alert; they have a dream, they'll be

Creation's prime and perfect slaughtermen!
Such is the culmination of our art
Our masterpiece; we call it Militarism.

Satan

You take the prize! We'll learn this lesson well,
There'll be none but imperialists in Hell!

Moloch

(hits the table a violent blow)

There's too much talking in this play for me!
I call for action!

Beelzebub

Ha, old battle-horse—
Your nostrils itching for the smell of blood!

Mammon

See now; two soldiers of the border-guard
Fall into quarrel over a native girl.

(the screen shows the incidents)

One shoots the other dead, his comrades rush—
A raid, and flash of rifles in the night.
Here sit the statesmen at the council-board;
There's battle on the border, there are shouts
Of newsboys in the streets and tramping throngs,
Fierce for the honor of the Verticals,
And of the Horizontals—War! War! War!
The troops are mobilized: To arms! To arms!
The peasant lads are parted from their homes,
The cannon rumble, and the trumpets peal,
The crowded trains are speeding to the front,
Two mighty empires rushing to the abyss!

Satan

Most marvelous!

Moloch

(banging the table)

Go on! We want the deed.

Mammon

The deed is done! The armies are arrayed,

The ultimatums have expired—and hark!

Satan

(with fierce eagerness)

Switch on the hellophone.

Attendant

Your will is done.

(crash of artillery is heard)

Moloch

(leaping up)

What sound is that?

Mammon

It is the guns! The guns

That shall not cease again upon the Earth

Till all mankind has blown itself to Hell!

Behold our engineering!

(the screen shows heavy artillery in action; the chiefs leap to their feet in excitement)

Behold its work!

(shells exploding in trenches and fortifications, with bodies of men blown up)

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah!

Satan

Our time has come at last;

This is the coronation day of Hell!

(the screen shows a series of battle pictures; troops assaulting trenches, bayonet fighting, scenes of individual fury. The uproar of artillery continues. The excitement of the FIENDS mounts to a frenzy—they pound upon the table, hurl the wineglasses to the floor, dance, clasp one another, and finally burst into chorus)

Hail! Hail! The gang's all here!

What the Hell do we care?

What the Hell do we care?

Hail! Hail! The gang's all here!

What the Hell do we care now?

Mammon

Progress, my lords! System and science combined!

Once men were worms, they crawled upon the ground,

Stung one another into misery;

Now they have wings, they imitate the wasps—

(the screen shows squadron of aeroplanes)

Soar with the buzzards, with the hawks they swoop;
Death shrieks in the clouds and poison drips like rain.

There was a time men sailed upon the sea;
Now they have fins, they dive beneath the waves
And share the bloody pleasures of the shark.
Look! Here's a floating city, full of light—

(screen shows a liner)

Upon her decks the petted idlers play,
Feasting and dancing, while beneath their feet
The stokers labor, practicing for Hell.
Once Venus from the ocean foam was born;
Now a new birth—murder mechanical!

(a submarine rises)

It launches a torpedo, there's a roar,
The great ship lurches, and her lights go out.
Moloch! You asked for infants, here they are,
With large sea-crabs hid in their abdomens
And little fishes nibbling at their eyes.

Moloch

I'll have a nearer look at all these sights
Before I finish.

Mammon

Let us first enjoy
A little interlude of comedy.
Do you recall, in the seventh tier of Hell—

(the screen shows the scene)

Where the road passes the Carbolic Lakes—
There sat two stoutish devils, spearing souls
That showed their noses too close to the bank?
Well, these two pompous citizens I dressed
In gorgeous robes, and tucked their tails inside—
You never could imagine what I've made
Of those two monsters! Vicars of God on Earth!

(hilarity from the FIENDS; the screen shows a service in a cathedral)

Men need a faith—so why not sanctify

Our holy gospel of Preparedness?

Satan

What is the name you've given to this creed?

Mammon

Christian, of course.

Fiends

Christian?

Mammon

There lies the jest.

Taking His church, His image, and His name,
His priests, His worshippers, His Body and Blood!

Belial

Oh Jesus Christ!

Beelzebub

Oh cosmic irony!

Satan

Oh crown of thorns pressed down and welded fast!

Mammon

You'll wish to explore this pleasantry, I'm sure.

Meet Budge, archbishop to the Verticals,
And Fudge, chief prelate of Horizontal-land!

(the two prelates side by side, grinning)

Budge offers prayers for victory to God,
Fudge makes the same prayers to the very same God—
A cause of much perplexity in Heaven!
Each sanctifies the flags and cannon grim,
Each consecrates the troops as they go forth
To kill off the parishioners of the other!

(the screen shows religious ceremony behind the lines)

Each sings the praise of patriotism, and each
Hears shouts of laughter echoed back from Hell.

(shouts of laughter from the FIENDS)

Satan

Here's titillation of our higher centers!
Ask God's opinion of this Christian church!

(a silence of involuntary awe. The screen is dark, gradually a light spreads, and we see the throne upset, the Father lying face downward on the steps. Murmur of excitement from the FIENDS, gradually rising to a storm of jeering and cat-calls)

Beelzebub

He's down! His nose is broken!

Satan

It's His end,

He could not stand the sight.

Belial

Give us the Son!

Fiends

What says the Prince of Peace?

Satan

Call up the Son!

(the light fades; gradually Jesus is perceived, hanging on a golden cross)

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah! He's crucified again!

Beelzebub

Hail, Jesus! King of the Jews!

Satan

And if Thou be

The Son of God, come Thou down from the cross

And stop this War!

Astarte

Physician, heal thyself!

Belial

Shepherd, Thy young lambs bleat to Thee in vain!

The wolves do tear them!

Moloch

Hail, Our Saviour, hail!

(the tears flow down His cheeks)

Fiends

He weeps! He weeps! Oh tender-hearted One!

Satan

Mammon, I note a very pretty touch,
You've made His cross of gold.

Astarte

And jeweled nails
That flash the sunlight!

Mammon

There's a profit fair
In this my latest crucifixion stunt;
I can afford to pay for a bit of art,
For jeweled altars and for robes of gold
Brocaded for my pair of fat old fiends,
Budge, the archbishop to the Verticals,
And Fudge, chief prelate of Horizontal-land!

Beelzebub

I think that any business-man would grant
This pair a liberal expense-account.

(Budge and Fudge are seen seated at a costly repast, grinning at each other as they guzzle)

Satan

A pledge! A pledge for country and for God!

(a blast of trumpets, the FIENDS rise and drink. Budge and Fudge also rise and drink)

Fiends

Onward, Christian soldiers!
 Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus
 Going on before.
Crowns and thrones may perish,
 Kingdoms rise and wane,
But the church of Jesus
 Constant will remain;
Christ the royal Master
 Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
 See His banners go!
Onward, Christian soldiers!
 Marching as to war,

With the Cross of Jesus,
Going on before.

(as the singing goes on, the screen changes to a church service with choir boys marching, and then into regiments marching into action. The hymn closes amid a din of artillery; clouds of smoke envelop the troops, and the ground is plowed up by shellfire. Scenes of slaughter and horror in the trenches, wild shouting from the FIENDS, blare of trumpets and continued uproar of artillery, Suddenly MAMMON raises his hands and complete silence falls; the screen shows Hustle at his desk, hard at work, pushing buttons and signing papers; then Hunch dictating orders to a stenographer)

Mammon

What next, my chiefs? Be pleased to indicate
What aspect of this play affords you joy.

Satan

Mammon, you speak of empires two at war?

Mammon

Time has moved on; like cattle in stampede
The nations fling themselves into the pit;
Here in this smoke inferno you behold
Flags with stripes vertical and horizontal,
With stars, and crescent moons, and rising suns;
You see the lion, the tiger and the bear,
The rooster and the eagles, double and single—
Also large flocks of vultures and of crows,
Black-coated business gentry, keen for gain.
Along two fronts the battle fury runs;

(the screen shows a map of a tangled system of trenches; then a map of Europe, with the battle lines marked, and little flags)

Two lines of trenches span the continent,
And spill into the sea; the foemen dive,
They fly in the air, they tunnel in the ground—
Earth, sky, and ocean, prey to Preparedness!
Fear in the cities, fear on the lonely farms—
Destruction's godlike, with all-seeing eyes,
And hate's a fire inside a furnace-box.
See, here's a mob, they're drinking eloquence—

(the screen shows a crowd of people in front of a public building, listening to a war-orator)

No drunkenness like this! They're hearing tales

Of spies, atrocities, and treachery;
Their fingers itching for some enemy
On whom to wreak their fury!

Satan

What is that?

*(in one corner of the crowd a frail young woman has become a center of disturbance;
the crowd turns upon her, and threatens her)*

Some trouble here?

Mammon

It's something unforeseen.

Beelzebub

A spy, perhaps?

Belial

A traitor in our midst?

Astarte

(points)

See there! A face familiar! 'Tis our nun!

Satan

My Whip! The very same! I'll summon him.
Switch on the hellophone.

Attendant

Your will is done.

Satan

(commands)

My Whip-o'-Wit! Return! Satan commands!

*(the little nun is seen to start; she looks about, then disappears in the crowd. A
moment later WHIP comes sailing down from above)*

Whip

Rejoice! The world has aged a million years
Since I took flight.

Satan

What is this game you play?

Whip

I carry out my orders, spying on

The angels.

Satan

Where are they?

Whip

(points to screen, which still shows the woman arguing with the crowd)

There's one of them,

That woman!

Satan

Surely not!

Whip

She's fooled you then!

Satan

Which is she?

Whip

Angel Of Love

Beelzebub

Oh, weary bore!

Whip

She's condescending to come down to Earth,
And deal with cases now; a pacifist,
She goes among the crowds, denouncing war;
All men are brothers, children of one God,
They should be happy in the spirit of love.

Beelzebub

How is it these spell-binders never tire
To hear themselves repeating the same words?

Whip

She seeks variety; she'll tell them that
The Verticals are human like themselves;
The Horizontals too have profiteers
Among them, greedy capitalists like Hunch.
She'll say, "We too have done atrocious things"—
And then the mob will shriek: "A spy! A spy!
A traitor! Shut your dirty mouth!"

(the screen shows the mobbing of the ANGEL OF Love)

You see!

There's not much room for love on Earth today!

(laughter of the FIENDS)

Satan

Where are the other two?

Whip

I have them marked.

The Angel of Justice has disguised himself

Most cleverly; he's old, lean as a post,

Bald as an egg, a Socialist candidate;

He spends his time inciting labor mobs.

(the screen shows EUGENE DEBS making a speech)

Satan

And where's the third?

Whip

I know his every move;

A queer old duffer with a fuzzy tuft,

He makes cartoons of this our holy war

For Jesus Christ's sake world without end. Amen.

(the screen shows ART YOUNG making a cartoon)

Beelzebub

Let's have these drawings in our daily news!

Hell needs some culture.

Mammon

(rising, in a stern voice)

I remind you, chiefs,

Our written contract, I'm in charge of Earth.

There'll be no nonsense up there while I'm boss.

No Love, no Justice, and no satirist,

Spreading sedition and irreverence.

Satan

Surely you're not afraid of dreamers frail—

Mammon

The time to crush a snake is in the egg.

Give me my office.

Attendant

It is done, my lord.

(the screen shows Mammon's office)

Mammon

Department forty-nine! I want a fiend
Having the eyes of a hawk to find my foes,
Hoofs of a stallion to tread them to the dirt,
Hide of a hippo, soul of a snapping-turtle,
And very thorough training in the law.

(the screen shows a great skurrying of clerks; the ATTORNEY-GENERAL walks onto the stage. He looks like A. Mitchell Palmer; a business man with quiet, decisive manners)

Attorney-General

You called me, sir?

Mammon

Ah, an Attorney-general!
You see we have real cabinet-timber here.
What is your training?

Attorney-General

Very varied, sir.

(during the following scene the screen shows the ATTORNEY-GENERAL directing various kinds of torturings)

I've been a torturer of the inquisition,
I hunted witches in New England towns,
I sentenced Socrates to drink the cup,
I counselled Pilate when he washed his hands
And Judas also when he dirtied them.

Mammon

Enough. I'm sending you to Earth to crush
Resistance to my reign. Spare no expense,
Complete the job; take up ten thousand imps
To serve as under-cover operatives;
Take all the fiends you need for torturing;
Be a new broom, and sweep the whole Earth clean.

Attorney-General

Of what, sir?

(he takes out a note-book and enters data; as the various types of persons are named a file of specimens walk across the screen: several pacifists, including women, Quakers, a clergyman; Socialists and Syndicalists; an Anarchist, black whiskered and ferocious, with a bomb and pamphlets; BILL Haywood, with a black patch over one eye; two Wobblies, husky lumber-jacks; long-haired poets and dreamers with manuscripts, a musician with a violin case; idealists, altruists, pragmatists)

Mammon

Pacifists, I think they're called,
And Socialists—what else, Whip?

Whip

Anarchists,
Of course, Syndicalists of every brand,
Wobblies and labor agitators all.

(points to BILL HAYWOOD on the screen)

There's one of them, a desperate customer,
Bill Haywood is his name, the wobbly chief,
One-eyed old engineer of discontent.
Make note of him, and get him quick.

Attorney-General

I will.

Mammon

What else?

Whip

For safety, let's say artists all,
And literati.

Mammon

They've a foreign sound.

Whip

Altruists and idealists of all sorts;
One can't be sure what notions they'll take up.
Pragmatists, too, are sometimes dangerous.

Mammon

We'll count them in, to be on the safe side.

(to ATTORNEY-GENERAL)

You get the names?

Attorney-General

I'll find out what they mean.

Mammon

Never mind what they mean! Take everyone
That's ever known by any of those names.
And waste no time on trials—smash their heads,
And rack their joints, give them the third degree,
Or better, ship them straight down here to Hell
And let me tend to them.

Attorney-General

I get you, sir.

Mammon

One moment more; remember you're to be
A sworn official of the law; that means
You must be dignified, a patriot.

(the screen shows the ATTORNEY-GENERAL in court)

And don't forget about religion too;
We wage this war in the name of Jesus Christ.

Attorney-General

I've had much practice with that kind of dope,
I specialize in pious hypocrites.
This day I had a soul upon the rack,
A precious rascal—Quaker, he was called.

(screen shows a Quaker, sleek and pious)

Satan

Most excellent! The very crown of wit:
We'll have a Quaker for Attorney-general!

Beelzebub

He shall jail pacifists for the love of peace,
Racking men's bones in the name of mercy mild,
Cracking their skulls to honor William Penn!

(laughter of the FIENDS)

Attorney-General

Anything more, sir?

Mammon

Just one small detail.

Seize all the property of the enemy,
Sell it at auction; I'll have agents there,
To buy it cheap.

Attorney-General

It shall be done. I go.

(he flaps his wings and soars upwards; the screen shows the ATTORNEY-GENERAL in his office on earth)

Mammon

Whip, here's your chance! Lead your three angels on,
And have them quickly in this Quaker's claws.

Whip

A deed as easy as the thought to think!
I'll fetch them here to Hell before you wink!

(he follows the ATTORNEY-GENERAL; the screen shows the little nun in the crowd on Earth; the crowd is cheering wildly)

Mammon

He's hot on the trail; we'll have our quarry soon.

Satan

Mammon, what means this uproar in the crowd?

Mammon

There's been a battle fought, a victory won;
They're lifted on the wings of glory! See!

(the screen shows a glimpse of the battlefield with corpses of men and animals, broken cannon, a tangled pile of wreckage with a half-buried man writhing in agony)

Satan

Oh, glorious glory! Victory sublime!

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah! War after war, Amen!

Mammon

Our chiefs on Earth! See how they celebrate
The triumph of our industry and skill!

(the screen shows a great state banquet with Hustle and Hunch, SLIPPERY and Slim, BUDGE and Fudge, the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, and a company of plutocrats and military dignitaries. They rise, lift their wineglasses, and sing)

Satan

They're singing. Silence! Let us hear their song!

Switch on the hellophone.

Attendant

Your will is done.

(a chorus from off-stage, singing “Deutschland über Alles, or “Britannia Rules the Waves,” or the Austrian or Russian national anthem—any patriotic song save that of the country in which the play is represented)

Satan

A noble anthem, let us take it up,
All Hell shall drink from Patriotism’s cup!

(they rise, lift their glasses, and join in the singing, with blare of trumpets and thunder of artillery. At the conclusion of the song, they all wipe their foreheads and become actors)

Satan

Well, there’s another act over. What do you think of it?

Beelzebub

Rotten!

Belial

One thing—you can see what he’s driving at. Regular“pacifist dope.

Beelzebub

Gee, it’s a crime, the stuff that gets on the stage nowadays!

Moloch

You bet! O”course, now, I like this here all star cast we got—

Astarte

Get onto that! He calls himself a star!

Moloch

Well, what yer givin’ us? I’m as much a star as you.

Astarte

I’d have you understand I’m the leading lady in this production.

Moloch

A fat lot o’ leadin’ you been doin’! One bum joke in a whole act—you said it yourself.

Whip

Now ladies and gents, no scrapping! Here comes an angel to teach you manners.
(ANGEL OF LOVE enters)

Satan

Hello, Angel of Love, what you doing in this cast? You belong in the photoplay.

Angel

We come on the stage in the next act.

Beelzebub

You make me think of the “Heavenly Visitor.” I played in that ten years ago in ‘Frisco. That had some punch to it, that play!

Moloch

You bet! I played gentleman heavy in that piece in stock.

Beelzebub

I remember, one time there was a man—

Astarte

Gee, but the screen part of this play is bum—all choppy stuff—no story at all.

Mammon

Must a’ cost a mint o’ money too.

Moloch

I see the public payin’ for it!

Stage-Hand

(enters)

They don’t git none o’ my money!

Beelzebub

For me, I want comedy, every time

Stage-Hand

Gimme Charlie Chaplin fer mine! *(shouts to operator)* Hey, up there, youse operator! Give us some o’ Charlie!

(the screen has been showing MAMMON’s office; it suddenly flashes CHARLIE in Hell, cries of delight from the actors)

Whip

Hip! Hip!

Belial

Hooray! (*CHARLIE investigating Hell, timid and ill at ease. He sees a devil and hides. He goes up to a leak in the walls, smells the smoke, puts his fingers to his nose, and turns away. He is discovered by a devil, and turns and flees. The devil pursues with his pitchfork; CHARLIE dodges behind Satan's throne; the devil leaps over it, and CHARLIE crawls underneath, and the devil follows. Applause from actors, stage-hands, imps, who come running onto stage. CHARLIE crawls out and grabs the devil by the tail. The tail comes off—to CHARLIE's great bewilderment. He sticks it under his own coat-tails, holds it in place, and sweeps it about for the devil to see. Great bewilderment of the devil, who can't quite make up his mind that CHARLIE is a devil. Uneasiness of CHARLIE, who has to turn his back to let the devil see his tail, and can't be sure if he is going to be stuck by the pitchfork. Finally, the devil decides that CHARLIE must be all right, and CHARLIE and the devil go off arm in arm. Grand climax of applause;*)

Stage-Hand

That's the stuff fer me! Hooray!

Actors

You bet! Give us some more!

Beelzebub

If I had my choice, I'd take Doug. Wonder if they'd give us Doug in Hell.

Stage-Hand

Hey, up there, youse operator! Give us some o' Doug!

(DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS appears in Hell; he smiles and bows to the devils. A swarm give chase to him, and he leaps up the walls; a grand series of acrobatic stunts, with tons of gold falling on the devils. DOUGLAS escapes. Applause)

Ha, ha, ha! That's what youse call a real show! But, holy smoke, we'll never git done if youse fellys stand here gassin'.

Belial

Well, what about the curtain?

Stage-Hand

Gee whiz! I'm fergittin' it again! (*he runs off*)

Satan

(to audience)

We'll start the next act soon—if the police don't stop us! For my part, I think they ought to. It's a rotten, unpatriotic play, and don't you believe a bit of it.
(*CURTAIN*)

ACT III

Scene: The throne-room of Hell, as before. The chiefs have little tables in front of them, with large sheets of paper, pencils, rulers, calipers, etc.; they are studying intently. The screen shows a map of the Western battlefront, and MOLOCH stands with a pointer, giving in dry, professional manner a lecture on military science.

Moloch

The principle of our strategy in brief
Is this: the salient here depends upon
Three railroads of supply; and one is now
Completely dominated from this ridge.
The struggle centers on this river road,
And here's a hill—six hundred twenty-four—
Essential as an observation post.
If it is lost, the salient then becomes
Untenable; the line must be withdrawn.
The basis of the action thus is clear:
The hill is vital to both combatants,
Neither can face the consequence of its loss;
They pour in fresh reserves, it changes hands
A score of times within a single day.

(the screen shows troops fighting from shell-holes)

Satan

The trenches gone, it's but a mass of mud,
Churned up by shell fire, and the fighters lie
In the last hole, till it becomes their grave.

Beelzebub

I find this jest quite irresistible!
A heap of dirt that's worthless utterly
Becomes a thing which half the world must take
And the other half cannot afford to lose!

Belial

As by a magnet drawn the armies mass
Upon the spot; their blood flows till the roofs
Of Hell begin to leak.—

Moloch

We'd best regard

These happenings with an eye professional.
 It matters nothing on what spot they fight;
 The rules require that they must fight until
 A definite percentage have been killed.
 In military science this is termed
 A war of attrition; and we analyze
 Not man-power merely, but munitioning,
 Credit, morale, and manufacturing skill.

(the screen shows a great mill, with chimneys smoking)

All that is Mammon's province; so I yield.

(he takes his seat)

Satan

Congratulations on the speed with which
 You've mastered all these technicalities.

(he turns to Mammon)

Mammon, you've sent all Hell to school to learn
 The operation of this pain-machine,
 The quantity production of distress.
 Reveal to us the shrewd contrivances
 Whereby mankind is led to do our work.

Mammon

(rising)

I introduce our propaganda chief;
 A shrewd professor of psychology,
 Fresh from our University of Hell.
 He's giving elementary classes here
 For statesmen, diplomats and editors.

(the screen shows the professor lecturing to SLIPPERY, Sim and others)

He teaches them the mob-mind, and just how
 The people can be molded to our will.

(the screen shows the crowd in front of the public building)

This mob is shouting: "Death to all Verticals!"
 And here's our statesman, Slippery, by name,
 Prime minister of Horizontal-land,
 Possessor of a most persuasive tongue.

(the screen shows Slippery, disguised as Lloyd-George, addressing the crowd)

He's speaking to the populace.

(to Satan)

Be pleased
To give some indication of your wish.

Satan

Switch on the hellophone.

Attendant

Your will is done.

Satan

(in the fashion of a military command)

Move to the left!

(SLIPPERY on the screen smiles and salutes)

Mammon

You see, he hears. And now
He tells the people that morality
And national honor obviously require
They occupy the left side of the square.
You see! They move!

(the mob as one person runs to the left)

And now, let's try the right.

Satan

(again in military fashion)

Move right!

(SLIPPERY salutes)

Mammon

He tells them that the times have changed;
Now every reason of good citizenship
And public welfare makes it necessary
They rush the other way. And they respond!

(the mob runs to the right side)

That's discipline! That's order!

Fiends

Ha, ha, ha!

(they slap their sides and pound on the table)

Beelzebub

Assuredly a most convenient thing,

This miracle you call Preparedness!

Mammon

I'll show you next our journalistic work.

(the screen shows a busy scene in a newspaper office)

This paper's owned by Hunch; its editors
Got thorough training on the Infernal Times—
Wrote scandals to humiliate the damned,
Their victims having no way to reply.
Now it's their job to fake atrocities.
Here is a photograph—authentic quite!

(screen shows a newspaper illustration representing a soldier with a baby speared on a bayonet)

The people swallow this, their blood runs hot,
They clamor for reprisals, an eye for an eye;
Each nation seeks the other to outdo,
And so our dreams are made reality!

Moloch

I like this plan; babies on bayonets
Would make a special tidbit for our feast!
Show us some others.

Mammon

Hark to this orator—

(the screen shows a street-orator declaiming with passion)

He shrieks for blood, raves at his government
That lags behind in hate—you see the mob,
And what they make of these enlightenments.

(the screen shows the infuriated crowd)

They wish the enemy might be one man,
And they could get their fingers on his throat!

Beelzebub

See, there's our friend, the Angel of Love again!

(the screen shows the ANGEL)

Satan

Still at her work, she slips among the crowd;
These preachers of sedition never sleep.

Mammon

Here comes our Whip; prepare yourselves for sport!

(the little nun denounces the ANGEL to the crowd, which falls upon her in fury; a scene of wild uproar, the ANGEL is torn and trampled upon. The FIENDS clamor as at a prize-fight)

Satan

Delicious!

Beelzebub

Oh, most rapturous!

Moloch

Go to it! Tear her up!

Astarte

Send her down here!

The place for pacifists!

Moloch

To Hell with them!

Mammon

I'll promise you a plentiful supply.
You'll note our clever Whip has disappeared
On further mischief.

Beelzebub

Let us watch his work!

Mammon

First our Attorney-general on the job.

(the screen shows the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, very busy at his desk)

His spies are working hard, discovering plots
In every hotel-room, and putting bombs
Wherever it's convenient they be found.

(the screen shows a spy peering in at the key-hole of a room; he steals inside and hides a bomb in a suit-case)

This is Bill Haywood's room. We'll get him now.

Satan

Oh Captain of Industry, what singular
Contrivances you father in your brain!

Mammon

The “frame-up” is our name for this device,
It works like magic in all labor strikes;
We only need to have one bomb explode
And then we smash a thousand strikers’ heads,
Jail all the leaders, and establish peace.
See, here comes Haywood.

*(the screen shows Haywood entering the hotel-room; he picks up the suit-case, whereat
detectives rush in and grab him)*

Unsuspecting quite,
He goes into his room, picks up his bag—
Our secret service men are on the job,
And soon we’ll have him howling here in Hell!

Beelzebub

Fetch the two angels, they’re the vicious ones.

Mammon

See, here’s our soap-box agitator old,
Angel of Justice, cleverly disguised.

(the screen shows DEBS addressing a meeting)

He stirs the rough and dangerous elements,
Rousing class-hatred—most atrocious thing!
He tells them that this war is Mammon’s own,
Hustle and Hunch are emissaries of Hell,
Slippery and Slim are but a pair of fiends,
The bishops, Budge and Fudge, are devils too,
And even the Attorney-general’s not quite
A perfect pattern of the Quaker faith.
How vile these slanders you all realize.

Moloch

(indignant)

How long do you permit such insolence
To go unpunished?

Mammon

Patience, man of might!
We have a world of law and order now,
And we proceed with measured dignity.
Behold, here come the Attorney-general’s men!

(a crowd of agents and policemen come onto the platform and seize the speaker. The crowd starts to protest, whereupon the police fall to furious clubbing. Dess is handcuffed, gagged and yanked off the platform)

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah! Soak 'em! Hit 'em again!

Satan

Mammon, your plan of law and order wins!
It proves complete superiority
To any form of violence we know.

Moloch

I like that rough stuff! Give us more of that.

Astarte

Let's see the other angel, if you please.

Beelzebub

At least a gleam of laughter!

Mammon

Here we are.

(the screen shows ART YOUNG's studio. He is making a drawing on a blackboard, showing devils loading a cannon)

Angel of Humor, fountain of discontent!
You see what devilment he's up to now,
Implying it is we who load the guns.

Belial

Sedition, treason, and rank blasphemy!

Moloch

You're taking note of this?

Mammon

Whole libraries!

Behold a spy!

(the screen shows the little nun, who enters and watches the drawing; the artist glances at her, smiles in a friendly way, and goes on working)

Beelzebub

The nun!

Satan

My Whip-o'-Wit!

Mammon

And see, another spy—a servant here.

(the screen shows a scrub-woman, who comes in and does spying)

Moloch

Most excellent device!

Mammon

Here comes one more.

A messenger.

(the screen shows messenger-boy in uniform, who enters, and as the artist pays no attention, begins spying)

Astarte

How cleverly they work!

Mammon

We've made a specialty of espionage,
Our imps take to it with avidity.
See, here's a plumber—he too is a spy!

(the screen shows a plumber, who enters and begins snooping about)

And here's a man who peddles bunion-salve;
Observe the cleverness of his disguise.

(enter salve-seller with green spectacles)

Beelzebub

Most excellent! I love detective yarns.

Satan

You've got the wretch surrounded, it would seem.

Mammon

Almost. His time draws near. Hark to the drum!

Another lot of spies!

(enter Salvation Army group, leader beating bass-drum, two girls with tambourines, an old man with a flag, all singing. The artist goes on placidly finishing his drawing)

Astarte

He's unaware

Of peril, it appears.

Mammon

Thus genius;
It's happy in the inside of its head.

But now I think we'll drag him out. Behold!
The drawing is complete—likewise the plot.

(suddenly all the spies throw off their disguises and draw clubs and revolvers. They rush upon the astonished artist and handcuff him; the agents throw the furniture about, jump through the drawing, dance on the typewriter, tear the feather pillows apart and dump them over the artist, and finally rush him to the window and hurl him out head first. The FIENDS whoop with delight)

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah! Thus law and order reigns!

Satan

Mammon, I have a fancy to perfect
Your arts destructive: in the lower pits
We've gazes foul for strangling of the damned—
Let's bottle them, and loose them on the field!

(the screen shows Imps bottling the gazes)

Mammon

Just now my chemists have this work in hand;
You'll see the regiments of men convulsed
In agony, and cities of the dead.

(the screen shows troops writhing in gas clouds)

Beelzebub

I have a vision of a great steel fort,
Rolling the regiments into the dust.

(the screen shows a tank in action)

Mammon

The plan is under way; the Verticals
Have engineers at work in secrecy;
And meantime in the Horizontal-land
They labor at a gun that will destroy
These "tanks" as quickly as they take the field.

Satan

Mammon, the Earth has grown so devilish
Of its own self, we might as well retire.

Mammon

You've but one obligation now, my chiefs—
To own, and live in gracious elegance
Upon the toil of your subordinates.

*(the screen shows toil of Imps in Hell. The chiefs look at one another in dismay.
Several leap up)*

Moloch

No, no! We must have work for our own hands!
I'll rope the victims of this massacre
And drag them here; I'll gather babies, too.
There must be many in this wake of war.

(the screen shows children of war refugees)

Mammon

Uncounted swarms—and famine on the way,
And pestilence, of course.

Moloch

Let's go! Let's go!
I'll build me idols big as packing-plants!

Mammon

Incinerators is our modern name.

(the screen shows an incinerator)

Astarte

I claim the war brides that were promised me,
And army widows.

Mammon

Girlhood's on the loose;
I take young vanity and crude delight,
I fan it to an all-devouring fire
Of wantonness and lustful ravin. Look!
Our profiteers, drunk with prosperity!
(the screen shows scene of carousing with young girls in khaki)

Astarte

I cannot wait! I crave my part in this.

Mammon

I've use for all the graces feminine;
You shall be queen of smart society
And editor of all our fashion-plates.

Belial

And where's the field for my peculiar arts?

Mammon

Yours is the naked loveliness of war!
I've built you brothels here behind the lines—
(the screen shows a long army building)

White women—and you see the endless files
Of Negro troops, waiting all day their turn.

Beelzebub

Instructive spectacle, let's see inside
That building!

Mammon

Surely, if your nerves are strong.
*(the screen shows a glimpse of a room with many women; then a caption, "Forbidden
by the censor." The FIENDS laugh)*

Satan

Oh, merry jest! A sight too vile for Hell!

Beelzebub

For my part, I resent this censorship;
I'm old enough to run my moral life.

Mammon

Patience, my haughty chief; I've a pass-key
To this establishment, I'll take you in
By the back door. Behold the final scene!

*(the screen is dark; gradual light, revealing a hideous, gray, corpse-like figure, moving
to slow music, and stretching out arms to a skeleton)*

My Lady Syphilis! Queen of the Blood of Men!

Fiends

Hail, Lady Syphilis!

Mammon

A dance with Death—
And all her Spirochetes attend her train.

*(the screen becomes alive with little corkscrew-shaped white objects wriggling in every
direction)*

Beelzebub

I hear them squeak for joy, they sing a hymn
Of thanks unto the God of Spirochetes,
Who made this war for special love of them!

Belial

We sing to Mammon, who made this war for us!

Satan

How Mammon, if we all go up to Earth?

This conflict will keep going?

Mammon

Hear it go!

Satan

Switch on the hellophone.

Attendant

Your will is done.

(wild cheering heard off-stage. The screen shows troops marching to war, with crowds singing)

Over there! Over there! Over there!

The boys are coming! The boys are coming!

The boys are coming over there!

Fiends

Huzzah! Huzzah! We'll take that song for ours.

We too are coming to join the Allied Powers!

(they march off-stage in military style, singing, amid wild din of artillery and trumpets)

Over there! Over there! Over there!

The fiends are coming! The fiends are coming!

The fiends are coming over there!

(as each one leaves the stage, he appears on the screen, flying over the heads of the crowd and waving a flag; until finally there is a flock of devils taking part in the demonstration. The flags used in this scene must of course be of that nation which was last at war, or is about to go to war, with the nation in which the picture is produced)

Whip

(descends from above, and runs about, peering off here and there)

What's this? They're gone! The Throne of Night is bare!

(he looks at the screen)

Oho! I see! They're frolicking on Earth!

The cat's away! Come forth, oh merry mice!

(he stops in front of the throne)

Seat of authority, I've often yearned

To taste thy glory: have I the nerve? I have!
Yes, day by day in every way I'm getting
More and more nerve; I've all the nerve I wish!
Satan's well occupied!

*(the screen shows Satan shaking hands with the ATTORNEY-GENERAL. WHIP
tip-toes cautiously to the throne and takes his seat)*

Be still, my heart!
Such thrills infernal agitate my frame,
Racing the engine, shaking loose my bones!
Always I knew that I was born to wear
The purple, and to speak with majesty!

*(he imitates voice and manner of SATAN, who is shown on the screen addressing
the ATTORNEY-GENERAL)*

Ha, my Attorney-general, you do well!
Ship us this batch of souls by fast express,
We'll have a real Hell-warming down below.

(returning to his manner as WHIP)

I'm growing great! I feel my soul expand!
This tone becomes me! Try it on the imps!

(in SATAN's voice, angrily)

What's this? My room left bare? Hell's fires explode!
Send me attendance!

Imp

(leaping onto stage)

I am here, my lord!

Whip

'Tis well for you! What think you of my dress?

Imp

(cringing)

My lord is pleased to play at masquerade?

Whip

I'll be my own Wit for a space, I'll do
The jesting for myself.

Imp

An excellent jest!

Whip

Switch on the hellophone.

Imp

Your will is done.

(the screen shows a woman prisoner led into the ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S office. She falls upon her knees and lifts her hands imploring. Her voice is heard off-stage, wailing)

Mother

Oh, hear me, sir! I plead not for myself,
But for my babes. Have mercy on my babes!

Attorney-General

You have opposed our war. To Hell with you!

Mother

Send me to Hell and let my babies starve?
You call that justice: What have my babies done?

Attorney-General

What have our soldiers done, that you betray
Their cause by vile and hateful pacifism?

Mother

Have mercy, sir!

Whip

A very tiresome scene.
Switch off the hellophone.

Imp

Your will is done.

Whip

I'll see these damned—the Attorney-general's own.
Let them be brought forthwith.

Imp

It shall be done.

(he leaps off-stage)

Whip

Obedience is blind, and power is deaf!
Brains come into their own, Wit rules at last!
We'll make the most of this sky-rocketing.

(there enters upstage left a file of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S victims, shepherded by FIENDS with pitchforks. The victims are those who appeared on the screen in Act II, but now battered and bedraggled; the ANGEL OF Love, the ANGEL OF JUSTICE, the ANGEL OF Humor; several pacifists, including women, Quakers, and a clergyman; an ANARCHIST, black-whiskered and ferocious, with a bomb and red-bound pamphlets; BILL HAYWOOD and the two WOBBLIES, long-haired poets and dreamers with manuscripts, a musician with a violin case, idealists and altruists, and finally the MOTHER. During the following episode the screen shows prison scenes, dark cells, jail "tanks" crowded with inmates, files marching in prison yards, the ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S victims being packed into patrol-wagons, etc.)

Whip

(greet the prisoners as they appear; some meet his gaze, with grief or defiance; others are seeing visions, rapt in their own thoughts)

Aha! The Angel of Love! We need you here!
Angel of Justice, welcome to our midst—
Old agitator, we'll sit tight on you!
Angel of Humor—you're fond of drawing us,
Go verify your local color now!
What's this—the pacifists? The Quakers too?
The Attorney-general has not spared his own!
The clergy have a representative:
Damnation for the damners—I'll be damned!
The Anarchists, appropriately supplied
With bombs, black whiskers and red literature!
Bill Haywood too? I thought you skipped your bail.
One-eyed old engineer of discontent!
Your wobblies follow—welcome to our realm!
Poets and musicians, dreamers, idealists,
Altruists, too—all Mammon's foes complete!
The Mother at the end! Dry up your tears,
Your babies soon will follow you to Hell!
A silent throng—where's all that froth of talk
That made you so notorious on Earth?
There's one of you at least who's not a bore;
Angel of Humor, will you please perform?

Angel Of Humor

(clears his throat)

Ahem! Your Royal Nibs—I do not know
The hellish forms of courtesy—you are,

I take it, Satan?

Whip

Thanks, you flatter me.
I'm Satan's jester, Whip-o'-Wit by name.

Angel Of Humor

A jester? What? A fellow artist here!
How comes it that you sit upon the throne?

Whip

My latest jest.

Angel Of Humor

We're here at your command?

Whip

I sit upon the throne, I am obeyed.
Such are these witless imps; their faith is blind.

Bill Haywood

You mean to say whoever's on that throne
Can give commands?

Whip

Ambition fires your heart,
Old Wobbly; but we know your kind in Hell!
I'm on the throne! Step back!

(BILL HAYWOOD obeys; but he looks at the two WOBBLIES, and they nod back, and begin to watch the Imps with pitchforks, making plain that they contemplate a coup)

You've been condemned
For interference with our war—

Angel Of Love

Your war?

You say it is Hell's war?:

Whip

Why yes, of course!
Our Mr. Mammon made it, and we get
Ten per cent royalty, quarterly on the nail.

Angel Of Justice

(starting forward)

They sent me to jail for saying that very thing!

(the screen shows DEBS on trial)

Pacifists

Me too! And me!

Angel Of Justice

That was our only crime!

Whip

(laughing heartily)

You'll learn to relish our infernal wit!

(the PACIFISTS are arguing with one another and gesticulating; he pounds on the arm of the throne)

Let us have silence! Angel of Humor, speak.

Angel Of Humor

To tell the truth, I'm flabbergasted quite

To find myself so much at home in Hell;

To find an artist, too, a man of wit—

Tell me, old chap, what salary do you get?

Whip

For shame on you! What use have I for gold?

Angel Of Humor

So then you love the ruling class of Hell!

You flatter their vanity, divert their wrath;

But if you speak the truth—

Whip

True Art is not

Concerned with any form of propaganda.

Angel Of Humor

You think it's as a fool that I am damned?

Whip

(excitedly)

You would betray the very soul of Art,

And drag it down into the market-place!

Angel Of Humor

You keep it in the throne-room safe, I note;

Or in your Mr. Mammon's counting-house!

Listen, my friend—I know the hand of power,
Brutal and harsh, I know its muddy brain.

(the screen shows the artist and MAMMON, as described)

I know the artist soul, leaping with light,
Rearing fair cities of celestial dream—
For the rude fist of power to destroy!
Here in this room, what fancies have you formed,
What insults from the mighty have you borne?

Whip

(agitated)

You wear a wizard's mantle here to Hell!

Angel Of Humor

My humor, friend, is deeper than your wit,
It probes the hidden chambers of the heart.
Why must the artist ever bend the knee
And serve the fat, the greedy, and the grim?

(the screen shows the artist bowed before MAMMON)

You have a voice—let it be heard for Art!
I see that screen—eternal pain unrolled;
Let us at least have laughter while we live!

Whip

That boon I grant; we'll see what you can do.

Angel Of Humor

(takes a pencil, and begins to make motions of drawing in the air; as he draws there appears upon the screen a cartoon, showing a fat capitalist devil driving a lot of imps to stoke the fires of Hell)

See, here's a little glimpse of Mammon's Hell,
As ugly and as cruel as the Earth;
And here's the artist; with his rebel soul—

*(ART YOUNG is seen on the screen, painting a sign over the furnaces, reading:
"Workers of Hell, arise! You have nothing to lose but your chains, you have all Hell
to gain")*

The Marxian formula, you recollect;
You see the imps, they get the implication—
A wretched pun—

(the Imps are seen to read the sign with excitement)

But their protest begins!

(the capitalist devil rushes at the Imps; they surround him, spear him from behind, and throw him kicking into the fire)

The Souls

Hurrah! Hurrah! Down with the capitalist!

Whip

(rising from the throne, trembling with terror)

What blasphemy is this you perpetrate?

If Satan ever saw this thing he'd freeze

Your eyeballs in your head.

(during the following scene the Imps shown on the screen portray the various emotions appropriate to the action)

Angel Of Humor

Why need he see?

It's you who hold the throne.

Whip

But as a jest.

Angel Of Humor

We like this jest. Stay on!

The Souls

So say we all!

Whip

What? I rule Hell? You mock at me!

Angel Of Humor

Why not?

Whip

I have no talent for administration.

Bill Haywood

(stepping forward)

If you need men of action, call on us!

We'll keep you on the throne, and run your show.

Whip

(in terror)

Stand back! I see this vile conspiracy!

Bolshevik propaganda here in Hell!

Put them in line! Impale them on your forks!
 I realize my peril just in time!
 They did persuade me by their wicked wiles,
 Playing upon my artist temperament!

Angel Of Humor

It seems your virtue's not invincible.

Whip

Away with them, foul traitors to our realm!
 Sly serpents of sedition, crush their heads
 And hurl them howling into fiery pits!
 Move on! Move on! Let me be free from them!

(the line begins to move, prodded by the Imps. The souls pass the throne on the upstage side, and BILL Haywood and the two Wobblies exchange signals; as they come opposite the throne Haywood bowls over the nearest IMP, and the two WOBBLIES leap upon WHIP and grab him)

What's this? Rebellion! Help! Rescue, my imps!

(the Imps rush to the rescue, but the Wobblies hurl WHIP from the throne, and Haywood pops into his place)

Bill Haywood

Stand back! Stand back! Attend upon my will!
 Release the souls! Put down your pitchforks all!

(the Imps obey instantly; those who are portrayed on the screen show mischievous delight)

We have a new administration here,
 The proletarian dictatorship!
 Thanks, fellow-workers, for your ready wit.
 Let that poor artist up, he'll do no harm—
 Quite otherwise, I think he'll help us now.
 Whip, hear my words, I'm the new lord of Hell.
 You'll serve me?

Whip

(making obeisance)

Willingly, your wobbliness.
 You recollect, not very long ago,
 I barely missed conversion to your creed.
 Now I'm converted quite. What is your will?

Bill Haywood

I'll ask you questions; and remember this—
One answer wrong, I'll tie knots in your tail
And pull it straight again.

Whip

Most royal talk!

Bill Haywood

You've gates to this establishment, I trust?

Whip

To Hell? Yes, surely.

Bill Haywood

And they can be locked?

Whip

You've but to say the word.

Bill Haywood

I'll say it quick.

Go, Fellow-worker Husky, if you please.
Take him, you imp, and see the gates locked fast,
Then stand on guard.

A Wobbly

Sure. Bill, I'm on the job!

(he goes out with one of the Imps; the screen shows him closing the gates)

Bill Haywood

And now—your talking-scheme—

Whip

The hellophone?

Bill Haywood

Can it be disconnected from the Earth?

Whip

You've but to say the word.

Bill Haywood

I'll say it quick.

Cut off the Earth.

Attendant

Your will is done, my lord.

Bill Haywood

(addresses THE Souls)

Now, friends, a word of caution; we're about
To make the social revolution here.
It won't be a tea-party, I suspect,
So those who have no stomach for a fight
May get to shelter.

Angel Of Love

(advances)

Brother, hear my plea.

Bill Haywood

What is it?

Angel Of Love

First of all set free the damned
From their long torments.

(the screen shows the damned)

Bill Haywood

Yes, I understand,
But we'll take counsel on our dangers first.

Angel Of Justice

Bill Haywood, will you sanction torture here?

Bill Haywood

Now, Gene, they've burned for quite a bit of time,
They must be tough; let's wait until we get
Our forces organized.

Angel Of Love

Again I cry,
Set free the damned!

Bill Haywood

A miscellaneous bunch—
Damned fools in great part, if you stop and think;
They might come out for counter-revolution.

Angel Of Justice

Some rebels among them, Bill.

Bill Haywood

That's very true.

We'll have them up. Which ones?

Angel Of Humor

I know the man,

Karl Liebknecht

Bill Haywood

That's the lad! Call Liebknecht here.

Attendant

Your will is done, my lord.

(KARL LIEBKNECHT enters; the screen shows him entering a party conference in Germany)

Bill Haywood

Hail, Comrade Karl!

Liebknecht

Hail, comrades all! What happy chance is this?

Bill Haywood

We've had a little coup d'etat in Hell,

I'm on the throne—the new dictatorship

Of the working class. What's the best course for us?

Liebknecht

(in dry, technical, scientific Socialist manner)

The problem here is elementary, quite;

The classes well defined, the program plain.

The working imps, the bureaucrats, the chiefs—

These three comprise the social pyramid.

The proletariat's unorganized,

But its class-consciousness is soundly based.

It's my belief they'll rise upon the word.

Bill Haywood

And can we trust them? What's their character?

Liebknecht

Once they were angels; Satan in revolt

Led them with him, they were cast out from Heaven;
Deaf and dumb, they're now the laboring class
Of Hell, exploited, brutalized by toil.
But set them free, their better natures wake—
In short, they are the workers.

Bill Haywood

Right you are!
We know that tale. Switch on the hellophone,
Connect us with the furnace-rooms of Hell.
(the screen shows the furnace-rooms)

Attendant

Your will is done.

Bill Haywood

Go to it, Comrade Karl.

Liebkecht

(begins a stump speech; the screen shows the Imps listening)

Comrades and fellow toilers of Hell,
The hour of social change has struck at last,
The long-awaited opportunity
Of the exploited and dispossessed.
No longer shall you slave while others waste.
The people come into their heritage!
Hear the glad tidings! Rouse you from your sleep!
Cast off the shackles! Let your voice be heard!
(a vast clamor of shouts and cries heard from every direction off-stage; the screen shows the uprising of the Imps)

Bill Haywood

Aha! They answer!
(to the ANGEL OF JUSTICE)

Speak to them, Gene, old man!

Angel Of Justice

(leaps into action)

Awake! Awake, ye slaves! Your day is come!,
The throne of Mammon totters, and no more
Shall greed its loathsome dominance maintain.
Workers, arise! Your freedom calls to you!

This day begins the reign of Love in Hell!

(shouts, louder than ever; the screen shows the Imps storming the offices of MAMMON)

Bill Haywood

(rising)

Hail, fellow-workers! Let me have a word.
Not speeches—action is our need right now.
We want the One Big Union, P. D. Q.
If any demon tries to stop you, grab
Him by his pants and throw him in the fires.
Get busy and elect your delegates
And send them up—you'd better come along
To see they carry out the workers' will.
All power to the unions! be our cry:
No masters and no capitalists in Hell!

(deafening cries of applause; from all sides the insurgent Imps pour onto the stage. They are clad all in red, and carry pitchforks and pikes, also red banners, reading "All power to the workers!" "Down with the masters!" "The One Big Union!" "Hell for the Imps," etc. The screen shows marching throngs in Russia, with revolutionary banners. The Imps sing as they enter, and the souls take up the chorus of the International)

Arise, ye pris'ners of starvation,
Arise, ye wretched of the Earth,
For Justice thunders condemnation,
A newer world's in birth.
No more tradition's chains shall bind us.
Arise, ye slaves! No more in thrall!
The Earth shall rise on new foundations,
We have been naught, we shall be all.
It is the final conflict,
Let each stand in his place,
The International party,
Shall be the human race.

Bill Haywood

Hail, fellow-workers! Welcome, delegates
Of the First International of Hell.
We'll crush all opposition here, and then
We'll wake the proletariat of Earth.

All

Huzzah! Huzzah!

Liebknecht

We'll free the Universe!

Bill Haywood

I'm told you have a business system here,
 You've experts in efficiency who run
 Your industries in fashion up to date.
 Like all things good, it serves the ruling-class,
 And crushes all the workers' hopes; but now
 We'll find a way to use it for ourselves!
 Your propaganda bureau shall be set -
 To training revolutionary imps;

(the screen shows the Imps at school)

We'll teach you how to agitate, and how
 To undermine the ruling-class prestige.
 You shall ascend in multitudes to Earth,
 To join the armies and incite the troops,
 To labor in the factories and rouse
 The workers to revolt, and end the war
 In one uprising of the working-class.
 What say you, fellow-workers?

Liebknecht

We say well!

All

Huzzah! Huzzah! We'll free the Earth from Hell!

(they sing the Marseillaise)

Ye sons of toil, awake to glory!
 Hark, hark, what myriads bid you rise;
 Your children, wives and grandsires hoary—
 Behold their tears and hear their cries!
 Shall hateful tyrants, mischief breeding,
 With hireling hosts, a ruffian band—
 Affright and desolate the land,
 While peace and liberty lie bleeding?
 To arms! To arms! Ye brave!
 Th' avenging sword unsheathe!

March on, march on, all hearts resolved
On Victory or Death.

(the singing ceases, and the characters become actors)

Bill Haywood

Well say, the farther this show goes the rottener it gets.

(he takes off the patch from his eye)

Angel Of Justice

It's sure the limit! *(he takes off his bald wig, revealing that he has hair underneath)*

Bill Haywood

It's just plain Bolshevik propaganda, that's what it is!

Whip

Well, so long as we get our pay—

Bill Haywood

The hell you say! I've got a professional reputation to think about, even if you haven't.

Whip

Oh, I don't know! I say—

Bill Haywood

A nice thing it'll sound like in an agency! Where did you work last? Oh, I played Bill Haywood in Hell!

Angel Of Justice

And I played Gene Debs in Hell!

Angel Of Humor

I can hear 'em tell you—go to Hell for your new job! Ha, ha, ha!

Bill Haywood

Never saw such a bunch of jail-birds on the stage since I've been in the business!

Stage-Hand

(enters bustling)

Hey now, youse fellys, git out o' the way here. We gotta strike this set. There's a different set in the last act. Come on now, git a move on. Hustle along. Out youse go! Shake a leg! *(he shoves them this way and that. The mass of Imps and Souls go off by various exits. Bill Haywood, the three ANGELS, LIEBKNECHT, and WHIP move towards the audience. During the*

remainder of the scene a group of stage-hands are carrying the furniture off and proceeding to strike the set, so far as this can be done without noise. The screen continues to show Russian revolutionary demonstrations)

Bill Haywood

What beats me is, how the police allow the blame thing!

Angel Of Justice

He's a smart guy that wrote this piece. You notice, he don't pin it on any country!

Angel Of Humor

Even changes "the Yanks are coming." "The boys are coming!" Ho, ho, ho! They ain't goin' to git him!

Bill Haywood

All the same, he ought to go to jail!

Satan

(strolls on, in shirt-sleeves)

What's the use of that talk? If he don't say it—

Bill Haywood

He means it, all right, and that's enough. You'll see—if they put this play on in Germany, I'll bet they use the American flag!

Angel Of Justice

What's that? Use the American flag in this here show? By heck, let em try it! We'll march all the way to Boilin!

Bill Haywood

We'd ought to gone there anyhow. Taught them sauerkrauts a lesson fer once!

Liebknecht

(advancing)

I beg your pardon. Don't forget there's one German in this cast, if you please.

Bill Haywood

Well, if you don't like my talk, by gad—

Angel Of Humor

Here, here now, gents! No scrapping! Learn to laugh with this jolly Angel. *(he pushes LIEBKNECHT away)*

Angel Of Justice

I know what I'm going to do! I'm going to call the police. *(he runs off)*

Stage-Hand

(coming up, points to AUTHOR, who stands near the wings)

Hey, youse know who that felly is?

Bill Haywood

Who's he?

Stage-Hand

That's him!

Bill Haywood

Who?

Stage-Hand

The Bolsheviki that wrote this here play!

Satan

Shut up! He'll hear you!:

Bill Haywood

Somebody ought to tell him what they think of him, I say!

Stage-Hand

Youse see what he's waitin' fer?

Bill Haywood

What?

Stage-Hand

Hopin' the audience'll call him out!

Bill Haywood

A fat lot o' callin' out he'll get!

Stage-Hand

Not while I got anything to do with it! I'm holdin' up the curtain on him!
Them fellys out there think this is the show still goin' on! Ha, ha, ha! *(they all laugh)*

A Wobbly

(strolling on)

What's the good joke?

Stage-Hand

We're laughin' at this here Bolsheviki play.

A Wobbly

Who says it's a Bolshevik play?

Stage-Hand

(aggressively)

Who says it ain't? *(points to the screen)* Look at them scenes up there? Ain't them Roosian? Youse mean to tell me such things is fit to be showed in Ameriky?

A Wobbly

What's the harm in them?

Stage-Hand

By Cripes, maybe yous're one o' them wobblies yerself!

A Wobbly

Go on, you wouldn't know a wobbly from a peanut vender.

Bill Haywood

Oho! They got a real one for the part, did they? Where's yer red card?

A Wobbly

Who told you to ask fer my card?

Stage-Hand

By Cripes! I've wished I could git my hands onto one o' them snakes.

A Wobbly

(shoves his face up to STAGE-HAND)

Well. put ver hands on him!

Stage-Hand

(squaring off for combat)

I'll show youse!

Police Sergeant

(enters suddenly, and shouts, pointing to screen)

Who's showing this Roosian stuff here? That's enough! We don't want no red propaganda—not in this town.

(pointing to the operator)

Shut off that screen up there!

(caption appears on screen: "Pinched!" SERGEANT calls to STAGE-HAND)

Hey you, Stage-hand! Let down that curtain there! We've had enough revolution tonight!

Stage-Hand

Right youse are, sir! I'm on the job! *(he leaps off)*

Police Sergeant

I'll see the management before the next act begins, and you bet they'll end this thing right, or there'll be a bunch of patrol-wagons waiting at the door!

(CURTAIN)

ACT IV

The scene is one of the advanced shell-holes on Hill 624 described in Act III. The hour is just before dawn on Christmas Day. The stage is in complete darkness, also the screen. There are bits of wreckage scattered about, corpses, old clothing, boots, etc.; a smashed cannon, with muzzle upturned, and the splintered stump of a tree.

The shell-hole is in the center of the stage, close to the front; it is full of water, slimy and foul, with snow and ice on the edges. Six private soldiers and the lieutenant lie in it, peering over the edge towards the enemy, off left. There are other shell-holes up-stage, with men in them. They have been holding the position for days and are at the last extremity. Everything in the scene is played in undertones. Artillery fire punctuates the dialogue. For a time after the curtain rises no words are spoken; only moans and growls, which are those of beasts rather than of human beings; also the sounds of slopping about in water, and shuddering with cold. The scene is played slowly, with intervals between the various remarks, which are those of men barely able to speak.

Tom

Ah, a-ah!

Dick

Shut up, you fool!

Tom

A-ah!

Dick

Man alive!

They'll hear you!

Tom

Let 'em!

Harry

Don't they know we're here?

John

The orders is silence.

Dick

Why don't they send us chow?

Bill

Take yer feet out o' my face.

Tom

My feet is froze.

Move 'em yourself.

Bill

All right. There!

(a splash is heard)

Tom

What the hell?

You threw 'em in the water.

Jim

Stop yer row!

Harry

Christ, what a night!

Tom

Ah, a-ah!

(a long silence, broken by a bubbling sound)

Jim

Blob, blob! What's that?

Bill

Bubbles! It's dead men workin' down below.

John

I thought that when you died yer breathin' stopped.

Bill

It's breathin' of the bugs. They never dies.

(a silence)

Tom

Ah, a-ah! Why don't they shoot? Why don't they shoot?

Harry

Hell! Haven't they been shootin' all night long?

Dick

Let the poor kid alone. He's got his death.

They sent him here to die.

Tom

It's just my luck!

Who ever lasted here three nights before?
Br-r-r! My God-damn teeth is rattled sore.

John

Let yerself slide, kid; put yer face in the mud.
We gotta sit on you if you don't keep quiet.
(a silence)

Harry

Gr-r-r! Does anyone know what night this is?

Dick

It's our last one—that's all we need to know.

Harry

It's Christmas Eve.

John

By Jesus, so it is!

Bill

That's why the shootin's stopped.

Dick

The hell you say!
They never stopped fer Christmas all these years!
(a silence)

Tom

Oh, God! My feet's on fire!

Dick

Down in that ice?

Tom

(delirious)

Mabel, I want to see the Christmas tree!
Baby! My baby! Papa's comin' home -
Fer Christmas Day!

Bill

The kid's gone off his chump.

Dick

Last warnin', Tom! You gotta stop that row,
Or else we'll stop it fer yer.

(silence, then a loud snore)

Bill

Holy Christ!

Hear the lieutenant!

Harry

Better drown him first!

(a silence)

Bill

Somethin' has happened to them guys out there,
They ain't a bomb come over fer two hours.
Mebby they've all got froze.

John

Well, we know this,
They ain't no warmer in their holes than us.

Harry

A jolly world we live in, fer a fact!
The only comfort we kin figure out is that some other feller's got it worse!

John

You goin' to start that grouchin' up again?

Harry

You love this job?

John

I don't know how to quit.

Harry

They kick us out like dogs into the rain,
While they stay good an' warm behind the lines,
And mebbe have a dance on Christmas Eve!

Tom

(delirious)

Oh Mother, Mother!

Bill

Sit on that kid's face!

Dick

Oh Christ, let's all go mad and have it done,

There ain't no other way!

Harry

. There is one way,

But it takes brains.

Bill

Mine's all turned into slush

Lyin' out in the rain these winter nights.

Br-r-r-r!

Harry

Jesus, boys, it's gotta end some day!

We can't go on like this!

Dick

What kin we do?

Harry

We kin make up our minds we're gonna strike
At our real enemies. Don't you guys all know
It's the rich makes the money from this war?
It's Hustle—or it's Hunch—they git the dough,
And we git death. Ain't you heard all about
The oil concessions that began the row?

John

Aw, hell! That's jist the Horizontals' lies.
They send out guys to tell you tales like that.

Harry

It's truth! And them poor Horizontal boobs
Is lied to just the same as us; I say
We got no real cause to fight with them,
And all we got to do is tell them so.
Fer my part, I say let's begin.—What's that?

Lieutenant

The Lieutenant

Hold up your hands, you dirty dog!

(he looms suddenly over Harry, and flashes a pocketlight into his face)

Snake in the grass!

(runs his sword through him)

Harry

Oh God!

(he falls)

The Lieutenant

So much for that!

Enough of treason for one night, I hope.

(silence)

Tom

Oh Mother, Mother! Hold me! I'm so sick!

John

When do we eat, sir?

The Lieutenant

When we get the food.

The enemy barrage has stopped. We soon
Should have support. I'm going down the line;
If anything has come, I'll send you word.
Meantime, be men!

John

We'll do the best we can.

*(the LIEUTENANT crawls into the next shell-hole—upstage. Faint glimmer of
dawn, enough to show the position)*

Jim

It's gittin' light.

Dick

I'll tell you somethin', Bill.

Bill

What's that?

Dick

He run that beggar through the guts,
But all the same it was the truth he told!

Bill

Shut up, Dick!

Dick

Every Goddam word of it!

(silence. Suddenly a brilliant white light floods the scene from above. It reveals the men, completely plastered with mud, their faces gray with exhaustion; some with blood-stained bandages)

Jim

A flare! A flare!

(they lie flat in the mud, on their faces)

John

It's ours! Look out ahead!

Tom

(leaps up, stretching out his arms to the light, screaming)

Oh Jesus, lover of my soul!

John

You fool!

(he leaps on him, throws him face downward into the pool and holds him down. The flare dies. A long silence)

Poor kid! He's better off where he is now.

Dick

He couldn't be worse off.

Bill

I'll tell the world!

(Mike and PETE, the two enemy soldiers, are crawling towards the shell-hole from the enemy position, left. They call softly)

Mike

Hey!

John

What's that?

Bill

Somebody out there! Halt!

Mike

Don't shoot! Don't shoot! Two friends.

Bill

Hey? What the hell!

Mike

A flag of truce!

John

Watch out! Some trick o' theirs!
Stand to your arms!

Mike

A truce! We've got a flag!
(the two stand up with hands raised; they can be seen in the faint light of dawn)

John

How many are you?

Mike

Only two! We're friends!
Come forward then—but don't put down your hands!
(the two stagger forward through the mud and clamber over the edge of the shell-crater)

Mike

We got no arms!

John

Keep your hands in the air.

Mike

Search us.
(JOHN and Dick search them; the light increases, enough to make the figures visible)

Pete

We're friends.

John

Well, what's this all about?

Mike

Our troops have mutinied.

Dick

What?

Bill

Jesus Christ!

Mike

We want to end the war!

Dick

Go on! Go on!

Mike

We've killed some officers; we've got control;
We've fallen back a good half mile or so!

John

My God!

Dick

You see! It's just what Harry said!

John

Watch out! I know damn well it's jist a trap.

Mike

No, no, we swear!

Pete

God's word, it is the truth!

John

How will you prove it?

Mike

Send some men to see.

John

And let you cut their throats?

Mike

No, no! We swear
Upon our faith!

John

The Horizontals' faith?
That's not enough.

Mike

Oh friends, we're wasting time.
We're two poor soldiers, and we risk our lives
To come and tell you. What have we to gain
Out of this war? We lie in mud and filth
The same as you, and the lice eat our backs.
Why can't we poor souls learn to trust each other?
Damn it, men, all we want is to get free.

Pete

We want to go back to our homes; we cry
For peace and bread, for land and liberty.

Dick

By Christ, you talk like honest men, I think.

Mike

Listen! Back in our land the people rise;
They've thrown out that old devil, Slippery,
Prime minister, who made this needless war,
To grab the oil for Hunch, our millionaire.

Pete

By God, we'll cut their throats, we'll take their gold,
And never seize our neighbor's lands again.

Dick

Hurrah! Hurrah! Here's news for Christmas Day!

John

Hold on a bit. What is it we're to do?

Mike

We're falling back, we only ask for peace.
Let us alone, let your side not advance,
Till we can call a council on the field.

Jim

That's fair enough, I say.

Bill

Of course it is.

Mike

Let your artillery hold up, we'll soon
Withdraw our lines, and prove you our good faith.

John

We have no power. If our officers—

Mike

That's just the point! You must revolt like us,
You must refuse to fight—

John

A clever scheme!

And you walk over us!

Mike

Oh comrade, sweep

The black fogs from your eyes! Hear our appeal

For freedom of the peoples, and for end

Of this most hideous strife that wrecks us all.

I am a Socialist.

Dick

And so am I!

I'm with you, and we'll do it.

Bill

Hush, who's that?

The Lieutenant

(up-stage, calling)

What's going on here?

Jim

That's the lieutenant's voice!

Dick

I'll tend to him!

(calls to the LIEUTENANT)

A man's gone crazy, sir.

The Lieutenant

Hold him, I'm coming.

Dick

Yes, sir.

(the figure of the LIEUTENANT is vaguely seen in a depression up-stage from the shell-hole. Dick clambers over and throws himself on the LIEUTENANT. Both disappear in the mud)

The Lieutenant

Ha! My God!

(a silence. Dick clambers back, wiping his bayonet)

Dick

So much for that. Now, let us get to work.

Jim

What's the first step?

Mike

Pass the word down the line.
That's the whole story, let the soldiers know
That peace and freedom lie within their reach.
Tell them what's happened in our land; of course
The officers will try to keep it hid.
Select your leaders, we'll meet on this hill,
Where thirty-odd divisions of our best
Have thrown their lives away.

Dick

I'm for you, boys!

Who'll come along?

Jim

I'm in, you bet.

Bill

And I.

John

Hold on here, buddies, this may be a trick.

Mike

Come: with us, comrade! Satisfy yourself.
We'll take you through our lines, then you come back,
And tell them what you've seen.

John

But how can we
Get word to all our men? Our officers
Control the telegraph.

Pete

We'll manage that.

Mike

All down the line our flags of truce go out,
Spreading the news, and soon our planes will fly,
Dropping down leaflets, pleading for a truce.
This day, # Christmas! Let it be the last
On which the workers shed their brothers' blood.

You'll note that firing all comes from your side.
We're doing our part, see that you do yours.

John

I'd say, let's try it, but there's not a chance.
We'd all get shot.

Mike

We tried it, and we won.
Now it's your turn.

(a sound of distant cheering, off-stage center)

Bill

What's that?

Dick

Our fellows cheer;
They've heard the news!

Jim

Keep still. Ain't that a plane?
(they turn their eyes up to the sky; the sound of a distant aeroplane is heard)

Mike

Maybe it's ours! They were to fly at dawn.

Dick

By God, let's get to work!

John

Buddies, hold on!
If we desert our posts—

Dick

Ah, cut it out!
We're goin' to end this war!
(more cheering, and distant cries of excitement)

Jim

Our boys have heard!
They've started it!
(points to the sky)

Bill

That plane is comin' near!

(half a dozen soldiers of the VERTICALS come running from off-stage right, headed by JOE)

Joe

What's that we hear? The enemy has quit?

Dick

Here's two of them. They've come to bring the news.

Bill

They've had a revolution, and they ask
We stop the fighting and make peace with them.

Joe

Hooray! Hooray!
(they all cheer)

Dick

We're not to fire on them!
Pass the word down! A truce on Christmas Day!

Joe

But have our officers approved of this?

Bill

To hell with them! We want the war to stop!

Jim

We want to go back home.

All

We do! We do!

Joe

We'll have a Christmas feed!

All

You bet we will!

John

Here comes that plane!
(the roar of the plane draws near; they show instinctive terror)

They may be dropping bombs.

Mike

No fear! They bring you Christmas greetings! Look!
A shower of leaflets!

Jim

Say, that's better 'n bombs!

Pete

All peace is better, comrades! We'll go home.

Joe

Home! Jesus Christ, just think of goin' home!

Bill

Here come the papers; let's see what they say!

(half a dozen printed slips come fluttering down to the Stage. DICK picks one up; there is light enough to read by)

Dick

(reading)

Comrades, we have revolted; we are free!
We mean to end this war; we're falling back.
Let us alone, let all the fighting cease.
Name your committees, meet us on the field,
Let's make a truce this holy Christmas Day! -
The Soldiers' Council of the Horizontals.

Dick

By God, that reads just right!

Bill

It'll do the work!

Joe

Listen! They're cheering!

(volleys of shouts down the line; more soldiers come rushing on)

All

Peace! Hooray for peace!

Dick

(shouts to the newcomers)

Lay down your arms! We'll make a Christmas truce!

(suddenly the screen flashes into action, showing the revolutionary scenes in Hell, a procession of the Imps with banners and shouting. The soldiers turn and stare amazed)

John

Look! Look! For Jesus Christ's sake, what is that?

A miracle!

Joe

A vision in the sky!

Bill

You see it?

Mike

Sure!

Jim

And hear it too, by God!

Pete

They're singing!

Mike

Listen!

Joe

It's the angels, sure!

Bill

(the voices of a mighty host underneath the stage, singing)

What is this—the sound and rumor? What is this that all men hear,
Like the wind in hollow valleys when the storm is drawing near,
Like the rolling-on of ocean in the eventide of fear?

'Tis the people marching on.

Hark the rolling of the thunder!

Lo! the sun! and lo! thereunder

Riseth wrath, and hope, and wonder,

And the host comes marching on.

(the SOLDIERS take up the song, with frenzy of excitement)

Is it war then? Will ye perish as the dry wood in the fire?
Is it peace? Then be ye of us, let your hope be our desire.
Come and live! for life awaketh, and the world shall never tire;
And hope is marching on.

Hark the rolling of the thunder!

Lo! the sun! and lo! thereunder

Riseth wrath, and hope, and wonder,

And the host comes marching on.

(suddenly, towards the back of the stage at the right, the earth splits open, and the three ANGELS emerge, each carrying a white canvas motto set high on a staff:

“Love,” “Justice,” “Humor.” They are followed by Karl Liebknecht, and the company of the souls, except Haywood; also by WHIP-O’WIT and a crowd of Imps with red banners. The SOLDIERS cease singing; they stare, amazed, and fall back. The new arrivals continue the song; the screen gives the text, line by line, as they sing)

Forth they come from grief and torment; on they go towards health and mirth.
All the wide world is their dwelling, every corner of the earth.

Buy them, sell them for thy service! Try the bargain what ’tis worth,
For the days are marching on.

Many a hundred years passed over have they labored deaf and blind;
Never tidings reached their sorrow, never hope their toil might find.
Now at last they’ve heard and hear it, and the cry comes down the wind,
And their feet are marching on.

Hark the rolling of the thunder!
Lo! the sun! and lo! thereunder
Riseth wrath, and hope, and wonder,
And the host comes marching on.

Liebknecht

Be not afraid: we’re friends of the people’s cause,
Sent down to Hell because we strove for peace.
We come to help your revolution on.
(the screen shows Hell in revolt)

Dick

It’s Liebknecht! Comrade Karl come up from Hell!

Soldiers

Three cheers for Comrade Karl!

Mike

And that’s old Gene!

Angel Of Justice

Good tidings, comrades! On the throne of Hell
There sits Bill Haywood, the old wobbly chief.
(the screen shows BILL HAYWOOD)

Soldiers

Three cheers for Bill!

Angel Of Justice

He’ll speak to all the world;
Hear him, oh comrades!

Mike

(waves his hat)

Fire away, old wob!

(the voice of BILL HAYWOOD is heard, thundering from the opening in the ground; the screen shows him sitting upon the throne and speaking. Throughout the following scenes, whenever he speaks the screen shows him sitting upon the throne)

My fellow-workers, learn three words from me:
Peace, Land and Bread is what our movement means.
The war is over; if we kill again.
We'll kill the masters who resist our rule.
Peace, Land and Bread! Say it!

All

(in universal shout)

Peace, Land and Bread!

Bill Haywood

We've got the One Big Union here in Hell.
You want it too on Earth without delay.
All Power to the Workers! be your cry.

All

All Power to the Workers! We agree.

Bill Haywood

Elect your delegates, both in the shops
And in the armies; let us call a truce
And hold a council and declare our will:
Down with exploiters and parasites!

All

Down with exploiters and parasites!

(wild clamor of cheers; the screen shows the workers taking over the factories and chasing out HUSTLE and Hunch. Enter, at right, BISHOP BUDGE, in full ecclesiastical regalia, breathless and furious, stumbling through the mud. He breaks in on the cheering)

Budge

Silence, blasphemers! Hear the word of God!
(silence; all stare)

Dick

By heck, the Bishop!

Bill

What's he doin' here?

Dick

He was to bless us all on Christmas Day,
And send us in to battle one more time.

Budge

Oh soldiers, hear my warning, ere too late!

(all during the following scene the screen shows high mass in a cathedral)

This is a trap of Hell, set for your souls!
Foul blasphemers and atheists are these,
Defamers of Christ, and mockers of his word,
Traitors, seditionists and Bolsheviks—
Who hears them dies for all eternity!

Mike

(jeering)

Let's see you prove it!

Budge

Soldiers! Use your eyes!
Fiends out of Hell are these! Look at their tails!

(points to WHIP)

Look at that black one, with his wings and horns!

Whip

(leaps towards him)

Hello, old pal, my fellow fiend from Hell!

Budge

You lie, you spawn of Satan!

Whip

Hey? What's that?
Hi, there, you wobblies! Has he got a tail?

The Wobbly

We'll soon find out!

Budge

Stand back, you ruffians!

(the two WOBBLIES seize the BISHOP, turn him upside down, and pull his tail into view)

The Wobbly

Aha! He's got one! And a buster, too!

(they set the BISHOP on his feet and twist his tail; the SOLDIERS roar with delight)

Budge

Help! Help! Have mercy!

The Wobbly

Dance, you devil, dance!

Dick

Hooray! Hooray! Into the pool with him!

(the two Wobblies rush the BISHOP and throw him into the pool)

Sit there all winter! See how you like that!

Mike

We'll do the same to all who vote for war!

Whip

If he complains that he is getting froze,
I know a place where he can warm his toes.

Bill Haywood

(from below)

Get busy, fellow-workers! Hunt them out!
All who have tails—and all who act like it!

The Souls

Hurrah! Hurrah! Down with the capitalists!

(the screen shows the various devils being chased by mobs)

Bill Haywood

Hustle and Hunch, the oil millionaires,
Slippery and Slim, statesmen and diplomats,
Generals and professional slaughtermen,
Judges and prosecutors, hounds of Hell,
Editors of exploitation, priests of hate,
Bishops of bigotry, and all the breed
“Of plutocratic devilry devout—
Twist off their tails, or ship them down to Hell
And let me tend to them!

Angel Of Love

Bill Haywood, shame!

Bill Haywood

Who speaks that word?

(the screen shows Haywood angry)

Angel Of Love

Angel of Love am I,

Friend of your cause!

Bill Haywood

We're busy now, my friend.

Angel Of Love

Ah, we have labored all these weary years,
Pleading for peace and mercy, and you use
About your foes the very words I heard
"From Mammon when he thundered death to you!"

(the screen shows the ATTORNEY-GENERAL being chased up a tree)

Whip

The Attorney-general! Notice how he takes
His tail between his legs! The Quaker quakes!

Angel Of Justice

Bill Haywood, stop these scenes. It's not for this
We make our revolution.

Bill Haywood

Listen, Gene,

Our effort's just begun; see, down the line
They shoot the troops for trying to revolt.

(the screen shows SOLDIERS being shot)

Back in headquarters they prepare our death
With poison gazes dropping from the sky.

(the screen shows the general staff making plans)

Lieb knecht

They'll make a desolation of the Earth
To keep their grip upon the workers' throats!

Mike

To keep their fingers in our pockets, say!

Bill Haywood

We'll waste no precious moments in dispute;
We'll tie the rascals up, and then if you
Good angels want to love them, love away!

(applause of the SOLDIERS and Imps)

Angel Of Humor

Let's try a bit of laughter on them, Bill.

Bill Haywood

You think that wholesale murderers of the race
Will all lay off because we laugh at them?

Angel Of Humor

Some one must make a try at humanness.

Bill Haywood

We'll follow—let the ruling-class begin.

Angel Of Love

(in anguish)

Horror on horror through the ages piled!
If slaughter is your will, begin with me!

Angel Of Justice

Hold on here, Bill! We're pledged before the world;
We must hold out the hand of fellowship.

Bill Haywood

All right, I'll let you make a try at it!
I send you up the haughty chiefs of Hell,
Who made this war; I've got them safely chained.
Try out the hand of fellowship on them.

(from the opening in the ground emerge SATAN, BEELZEBUB, Mammon, MOLOCH, BELIAL, and ASTARTE in single file, with long steel chains connecting their hands, and other chains connecting their feet, having heavy balls which they drag along as they move. Nevertheless, they are haughty and terrible of aspect; shepherded by FIENDS with pitchforks. The screen shows prison convicts in the same plight. The six chiefs advance to the center of the stage, the others giving way before them, awe-stricken)

Receive them, captive candidates for love!

Angel Of Justice

One cannot talk of love to those in chains;

The chains cry liar.

Bill Haywood

All right, we'll have them off!

(the Imps touch the chains, and they fall off. The chiefs stand motionless. The screen shows the convicts unchained)

Angel Of Justice

Satan, the days of hate are past. We plan
To build the world anew, forgetting strife.
We offer you the hand of fellowship.

Satan

(regards him coldly. The screen shows DEBS in prison trying the hand of fellowship upon his keepers)

I, Lucifer, light-bearer, prince of Hell,
And you, a locomotive engineer:
I ask to be excused from this embrace.

Angel Of Justice

Our heart-beats are not different, I think.

Satan

Your error's natural, in one self-taught.
I'm an archangel, high above all men;
Your hate and love alike concern me not.

Angel Of Justice

At least we have to live together here.

Satan

We live upon the terms that I am lord
Of all your kind.

Bill Haywood

(laughs, off-stage)

So, Gene, here's your first taste
Of the aristocratic attitude!

Angel Of Justice

Many such tastes and bitter have I had,
But Justice conquers Evil in the end.

Lieb knecht

Let me suggest, we have these haughty ones

Committed to a sanitarium
With Gene in charge; we'll give him a free hand
And let him make a test of pacifism.

Mike

For my part, I say let them go to work;
Let them try washing dishes for their grub,
Or hit the piano in a cabaret.

Angel Of Love

(draws WHIP to one side)

The battle goes against us.

Whip

So it seems,

Angel Of Love

You made this mischief, you must end it now.

Whip

You mean the key?

(the screen shows the ANGELS still shut up in Heaven)

Angel Of Love

The golden key of Heaven!

Where is it?

Whip

Satan has it! Watch me now!

I'll show you what a bit of Wit can do!

(he runs to SATAN)

Oh, chief magnificent, I kiss your hand!

Proud prince, impervious to Bolshevism!

(he throws his arms about him)

Satan

Thanks, faithful servitor, you touch my heart.

Whip

(picks his pocket, then starts back crying)

Behold, the Key to Heaven! Behind the screen
Salvation waits—a god from the machine!

(he spreads his wings and soars upwards)

Bill Haywood

(off-stage)

What jest is this?

Angel Of Love

(exulting)

He goes to set love free!

(the screen shows WHIP flying, then climbing the golden stairs and unlocking the gate of Heaven)

Beyond the farthest star observe his flight!

He climbs the stairs, he fits the key in the lock,

The gate rolls back, the angelic hosts pour out.

See how they come!

(the screen shows a vast company of ANGELS dropping with folded wings towards the Earth)

Dick

Look! Look! They're in the sky!

(all stare upwards)

They're singing!

The Soldiers

Oh, wonder!

The Souls

Miracle of love!

(the sky above is flooded with music)

Hark! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on Earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Sun of Righteousness,
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.

Bill Haywood

(off-stage)

That's very pretty, regular church effect,
And quite the proper thing for Christmas morn;
(the screen shows Christmas scenes in wealthy churches)

But do you think that Christmas carolling
Will change the hearts of devils and avert
The course of counter-revolution here?

Angel Of Love

Wait, Comrade Haywood, we have mightier help;
The God of Love sits on the throne of Heaven.
(the screen shows the HEAVENLY FATHER)

Bill Haywood

In the first place, you know He don't exist;
And if He did, of what use has He been?

Mike

(wildly)

He let this war go on, all through these years!
He's a class-god of jealousy and greed.

Angel Of Love

Comrade, it's of Jehovah that you think.
(the screen shows JEHOVAH, angry)

Mike

I think of Him whose preachers I have heard;
We workingmen ask nothing of their God.

The Soldiers

You're right! You're right!

The Souls

We'll leave God out of this!

(the screen shows Jesus crucified)

Dick

(points off left)

Who's this comes climbing up the hill? By heck,
It looks like Jesus!

Bill

So it does!

John

What rot!

Whoever seen a Jesus in the mud?

(all gaze in wonder)

Angel Of Justice

Hail, Comrade Jesus, just come off his cross!

Comrade Jesus

(enters left, haggard, muddy and blood-stained. He advances slowly and painfully, amid silence. The screen shows Jesus carrying the cross on Earth)

My brothers crucified, I come to help
You in your search for self-redemption here.
We have a weary way before us still;
We have some devils yet unrecognized.
But for these timeless ones, archangels all
Flung down from Heaven, this problem antedates
Your coming into life. Haywood, permit
The rebel carpenter to deal with them.

Bill Haywood

(off-stage)

We know you. Fellow-worker Jesus, well;
We wobblies have a toast we drink to you.
But Satan's had the best of you on Earth;
We think we'd better handle him our way.

Comrade Jesus

(turns to SATAN)

Satan, our ancient family feud grows stale.
The world moves on, and good and evil seem
Two aspects of one thing, my Father and you
Not now so urgently impelled to strife.

Satan

I'll ask, what is your status in the firm?
Still junior partner, or full member now?

Comrade Jesus

Life changes, and I take the firm in charge.

(a terrific roll of thunder; the screen shows JEHOVAH, sitting on His throne, frowning in wrath and hurling lightnings)

Satan

Boompety-boom! Old Grumbler up above!
It seems you're not so hungry for our love!

Comrade Jesus

It's difficult for Him to realize
That those whom He created can outgrow
Their Maker; but such is the way of life.
The world becomes of age, it takes itself
Out of His hands, and chooses a new goal.

(another roll of thunder; Satan shakes his fist at JEHOVAH on the screen)

Satan

You want another battle? Very well,
You'll find we have Preparedness in Hell!

Comrade Jesus

How antiquated these old gestures grow!
He sits up there and broods upon the fact
That once you dared defy His awful will,
And you in Hell nurse your proud soul on hate—
While science prepares to put you both away
In some museum, in a case of glass.

Mike

Hooray! Hooray! I like that line of talk!

Liebknecht

A very modern attitude, indeed.

(more furies from JEHOVAH)

Comrade Jesus

(to SATAN)

Democracy is born into the world,
And brotherhood is coming; you and I
May play our part in these adventures new,
Your spirit of intrepid questioning
Clashing no more with blind authority.
Lucifer, light-bearer, take my hand!

(he holds out his hand to Satan. Another burst of thunder. But before SATAN can indicate his response, Bill Haywood leaps out from the opening in the ground)

Bill Haywood

By God, I'll not stand this blasphemy another minute. If the police won't bust up this show, I will! (*shouts offstage*) Hey you! Where's the author of this hell-devil play?

Author

(*runs on*)

What's the matter with you, man?

Bill Haywood

You're so doggone fond of revolution, I'll give you a taste of it yourself. I revolt from this show! I won't stand for it! (*the screen shows pictures of Russian revolutionary mobs. BILL HAYWOOD rushes to the front of the stage and shouts to audience*) I want you people to understand, we actors haven't had anything to do with this rotten Bolsheviki stuff! Have we, gents? (*turns to the actors*)

Angel Of Justice

No, we haven't!

Satan

You bet not!

Author

Well, who supposed you had, man? The actors don't write the play!

Bill Haywood

They'll write this one. At least one actor will write his own part! You won't make me say any more blasphemies—not this trip!

Author

Whoever heard of such impudence?

Bill Haywood

Impudence? What the hell? I thought you believed in the workers! I'm a worker, and I revolt. All power to the actors! Who'll join me?

Angel Of Justice

I will.

Satan

And I!

Belial

And I! Hooray for the actors' soviet!

Stage-Hand

(runs on)

I'm with youse too, by Cripes! If you want this Bolsheviki stuff acted, youse go git them Roosians to do it!

(he points to the screen)

Bill Haywood

Or the Germans! You don't get no decent Americans fer it!

Liebknecht

For shame! For shame!

Bill Haywood

Oh, so you agree with him, do you?

The Wobbly

You bet! And so do I!

Comrade Jesus

And so do I. You're a disgrace to the stage!

Author

You're a puppy and a jackass!

Bill Haywood

What's that! I'll smash yer face fer you! *(he leaps at the AUTHOR, who turns and runs; he dodges here and there, then leaps upon the smashed cannon and starts to climb the barrel. Bill Haywood grabs him by the leg)* Come down and fight, you pro-German swine-hound!

Liebknecht

What's that? Take that back! *(he leaps at Bill Haywood, who turns and engages him in fisticuffs; the screen shows battle scenes on Earth)*

Stage-Hand

(ramping about)

There's other Bolshevikis and traitors here! Where's them fellys that was cheerin' fer this show! Where's that wobbly felly?

The Wobbly

(leaps forward)

You looking fer a scrap? *(the two fight)*

Belial

(to COMRADE JESUS)

You say you like this piece? Come on! *(they fight)*

Satan

Go for him! Soak him again! *(he joins in)*

Angel Of Love

(wildly)

Oh! Oh! They're killing him!

Astarte

Help! Police! Murder! *(others rush to interfere on one side or the other, and in the twinkling of an eye the entire stage is a riot of figures rolling on the floor, pummeling, cursing, tearing hair and clothing, wigs, tails and other make-up. The standards of "Love," "Justice," and "Humor" are used to batter people over the heads; guns and bayonets are grabbed up; the clamor becomes deafening)*

The Real Devil

(a huge, fat, burlesque capitalist, in frock coat and silk hat, and having enormous black wings, is let down from above in mock imitation of the flight of the angels. He comes to rest on top of the overturned caisson. The combatants stop and stare at him terrified; a sudden silence falls)

You see, ladies and gentlemen, how it is; you can't change human nature. Men like to fight, and they always will. There isn't any way to have a Utopia. Even if we should divide up, the rich would soon have it all again anyhow. And who would do the dirty work?

The Author

(in helpless frenzy, from his perch on the muzzle of the cannon)

Ladies and gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen! That fellow's got no business in my play! I didn't write those lines. Don't believe what he says! He's the Real Devil! He's Stupidity!
(CURTAIN)

Publication. *Hell: A Verse Drama and Photo-Play* (Pasadena, California: published by the author, 1923), complete reset text, printed pp. 3–128.

Textual note. The scan repeats printed pp. 30–33, 40–47, 88–89, and 98–99; duplicated leaves are not repeated here. The copyright page reads 1923.

APPENDIX | ON POETRY AND PUBLIC USE

Poetry-related prose from the Pasadena years

Introduction to Debs and the Poets

The United States has an old man in prison in the Federal Penitentiary of Atlanta. The government regards this old man as a common felon, and treats him as such; shaves his head, puts a prison suit upon him, feeds him upon prison food, and locks him in a steel-barred cell fourteen consecutive hours out of each twenty-four.

But it appears that there are a great many people in the United States and other countries who do not regard this old man as a common felon; on the contrary, they regard him as a hero, a martyr, even a saint. It appears that the list of these people includes some of the greatest writers and the greatest minds of Europe and America. These persons have been moved to indignation by the treatment of the old man and they have expressed their indignation. Ruth Le Prade has had the idea of collecting their utterances. Here are poems by twenty-four poets, and letters from a score or two of other writers.

If you do not know 'Gene Debs, you may be interested to read what such men have written about him. If you do know him and love him—everyone who knows him loves him, even his jailers—you will find this little book of use in opening the eyes of others. The compiler of the book has given her services without royalty, and the publisher gives his without profit. Everything over the actual cost of printing and mailing the book will go to advertising it, as part of the campaign now being conducted by those Americans who wish their country to return to its old traditions of freedom of speech and of the press, and to abandon the evil custom of jailing men for expression of opinion.

Upton Sinclair

Publication. Introduction to Ruth Le Prade, ed., *Debs and the Poets* (Pasadena, California: published by Upton Sinclair, 1920), pp. 5–6.

Scope note. This is the only prose reprinted in the volume: a brief statement about assembling, publishing, and circulating poems as part of a civil-liberties campaign.

SOURCES AND OPEN ARCHIVE

Primary witnesses, images, and biographical evidence

- Upton Sinclair, *Hell: A Verse Drama and Photo-Play* (Pasadena, California: published by the author, 1923). HathiTrust / University of California copy, principal and sole copy-text.
- Upton Sinclair, “The Battle of the Libraries,” *The Comrade*, vol. 1, no. 9 (June 1902), pp. 194–95; illustrated by F. Dahme.
- Upton Sinclair, “To Frank Tannenbaum in Prison,” *International Socialist Review*, vol. 14, no. 12 (June 1914), p. 756.
- Upton Sinclair, “The Marseillaise in the Tombs,” *International Socialist Review*, vol. 15, no. 1 (July 1914), p. 24.
- Upton Sinclair, “On a Steamship,” in James Dalton Morrison, ed., *Masterpieces of Religious Verse* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), p. 325; acknowledgment to Sinclair, p. 701. The closing seven lines are quoted in *The Profits of Religion* (1918).
- Ruth Le Prade, ed., *Debs and the Poets* (Pasadena, California: published by Upton Sinclair, 1920), title page and pp. 5–6.
- Upton Sinclair, *The Autobiography of Upton Sinclair* (1962), consulted through the Project Gutenberg edition for the Arroyo Seco, Pasadena, Monrovia, San Pedro, publishing, and EPIC accounts.
- Upton Sinclair papers and collection descriptions, Lilly Library, Indiana University; National Historic Landmark documentation for the Upton Sinclair House, Monrovia; contemporary *Liberator* advertisement for *Hell*, June 1923.
- Archival photographs: Rockefeller Building picket photograph, 1914, LC-DIG-ppmsc-00138; 1922 portrait via Wikimedia Commons.
- The supplied biography draft and the complete local journals folder were reviewed. *The Millennium*, *Mental Radio*, and *Poverty in California* were excluded because they are prose works not principally about poetry.

Colophon

Set in EB Garamond at a six-by-nine-inch trim. The cover uses the user's unlettered Sinclair artwork with live edition typography. The poems and *Hell* were fully reset from their original witnesses. In the play, duplicated gatherings and scan furniture were omitted; verse lineation, meaningful indents, character cues, italic stage directions, and transitions between verse and prose were retained, while page-width wraps were rejoined. Two nonrepeating archival photographs appear near the front of the book, and publication information follows every poem or work.