

## A NEGRO POET.

We take from the *New York Liberator* these poems by Claude McKay, a negro of Jamaica, who, when he wrote them, was a waiter in an American dining car:—

## THE BARRIER.

I must not gaze at them although  
Your eyes are dawning day;  
I must not watch you as you go  
Your sun-illuminated way;

I hear but I must never heed  
The fascinating note,  
Which, fluting like a river-reed,  
Comes from your trembling throat;

I must not see upon your face  
Luce's softly glowing spark;  
For there's the barrier of race,  
You're fair and I am dark.

## AFTER THE WINTERS.

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves,  
And against the morning's white  
The shivering birds beneath the eaves  
Have sheltered for the night,  
We'll turn our faces southward, lone,  
Toward the summer isle  
Where bamboos spire the shafted grove  
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill  
Where towers the cotton tree,  
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,  
And works the droming bee.  
And we will build a lonely nest  
Beside an open glade,  
And there forever will we rest.  
O love—O nut-brown maid!

## THE LITTLE PEOPLES.

The little peoples of the troubled earth,  
The little nations that are weak and white:—  
For them the glory of another birth,  
For them the lifting of the veil of night.  
The big men of the world in concert met,  
Have sent forth in their power a new decree:  
Upon the old harsh wrongs the sun must set,  
Henceforth the little people must be free!

But we, the blacks, less than the trampled dust  
Who walk the new ways with the old Jim  
eyes.

We to the ancient gods of greed and lust  
Must still be offered up as sacrifice:  
Oh, we who deem to live but will not dare,  
The white world's burden must forever bear!

## A ROMAN HOLIDAY.

'Tis but a modern Roman holiday;  
Each state invokes its soul of basest passion,  
Each vies with each to find the ugliest way  
To torture Negroes in the fiercest fashion.  
Black Southern men, like hogs await your doom!  
White squashes hunt and haul you from your  
huts,  
They squeeze the babies out your women's  
womb,  
They cut your members off, rip out your guts!  
It is a Roman holiday, and worse;  
It is the mad beast risen from his lair,  
The dead accusing years' eternal curse,  
Reeking of vengeance, in fulfilment here.  
Bravo, Democracy! Hail greatest Power  
That saved sick Europe in her darkest hour!

## IF WE MUST DIE.

If we must die—let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,  
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,  
Making their mock at our unscarred lot.  
If we must die—oh, let us nobly die,  
So that our precious blood may not be shed  
In vain; then even the monsters we defy  
Shall be constrained to honour us though dead!

Oh, kinsmen! We must meet the common foe;  
Though far outnumbered, let us still be brave,  
And for their thousand blows deal one  
death-blow!  
What though before us lies the open grave?  
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly  
pack,  
PRESSED TO THE WALL, DYING, BUT—FIGHTING BACK!

## DUBB DIALOGUES.

By L. A. MOTLER.

## Part IV.

Scene: A workshop.

Characters: Henry Dubb and the Author's Ghost

Henry Dubb—I have heard many a chap spouting about Socialism, but I have never heard 'em explain properly just how they mean to get it. What do you say to that?

Author's Ghost—Your question shows you take a wrong view of the case.

Henry—How do you mean by that?

Ghost—Well, you are asking how they mean to get Socialism. It isn't a question of the Socialists getting Socialism.

Henry—But it ought to be. If there's anyone more interested in it than these here Socialists, I don't see who is.

Ghost—You are, for instance. Supposing a man fell in the water, you would not just stand on the bank and ask how he means to get out. It is the same with Socialism. It concerns you as much as the Socialist. Socialism is a theory of society where the people will be better off than they are now. It is therefore plain that it is to the interest of the workers to get Socialism.

Henry—Perhaps so. But as you Socialists want us to have Socialism, we naturally asks you how it will come about.

Ghost—The question is better put this time. In order to get Socialism, we have to know exactly what we want. I said last week that what we want is good jobs, good houses, good clothes, good food and the rest for the people of these islands. At present the workers do not get these because most of the things which make money are in the hands of a few. These things are called the means of production. If, for instance, you have a bit of land, you have the means of producing vegetables, fruit, grain, and other foods.

Henry—But clothes don't grow on trees, nor houses neither.

Ghost—I appreciate your sarcasm. I was merely instancing one point of my argument. The fact remains, however, that most things come from the land. Iron and other metals, for machinery. Wood and clay for houses. And coal. Likewise animals live on the land, and from these we get wool, leather, and meat. Consequently the first and foremost thing the people should do would be to take over the land.

Henry—What about the rights of private property?

Ghost—The land was there before you were born, before the owners were born. Even scientists, who are not Socialists, say that the land existed thousands of years before man began. The land therefore could not belong to anyone, since no one made it.

Henry—Perhaps that's true. But you can't take over workshops and the machinery on the same principles.

Ghost—The present owners have no more right to them than have the owners of the land, as they call themselves. The houses, workshops, palaces, docks, ships, machinery were all made by the workers. It is true that the workers were paid for doing it, but nobody is mad enough to suppose that they got the value of it all.

Henry—But the capitalist invested his money in them.

Ghost—Yes, but how did he come by his money? By making profit out of labour on the land. We see, then, that we always go back to the land.

Henry—But making a profit isn't agen the law.

Ghost—No. Especially as the profiteers made the laws themselves. When the land was split up among the present "owners," laws had to be passed to legalise the ownership, as it is called. Or the King gave what's known as charters. The people don't come in anywhere. And as

to profits not being against the law—they are against commonsense to begin with. There is a story of a man who saw some fine logs drifting down stream. Some other men were looking on, so he says: "Get those logs on the bank for me and I'll pay you sixpence a log." Then he sold the logs at ten bob each. That's some profit.

Henry—But all that doesn't explain how we are to get Socialism.

Ghost—Most people imagine that we are going to get it by a revolution. That is true. But it depends on what kind of a revolution they mean. The common idea is that it will be done by shooting all the capitalists and hanging all the politicians.

Henry—Well, you don't deny that, do you?

Ghost—I do. After all, what do we have? simply dead capitalists and defunct politicians. We are where we were. We want to take over the land and all industry and run it for the good of the people.

Henry—You can get all that more easy by Parliament than what you can by revolution.

Ghost—That is not so. Most of the men in Parliament are owners of some form of property, even if it is only shares in a business. Of course, if industry stops, no profits are made and the shareholders get no dividends, so shareholders are as one with the capitalists and the landlords.

Henry—You have forgotten the Labour Party.

Ghost—What have they done? Practically nothing, and what they have got has merely been because the workers outside went on strike. That was how the miners got the Eight Hours' Day.

Henry—But there ain't enough of the Labour Party in now. All the workers have to do is to vote more of them in, and we shall see things move a bit.

Ghost—If things do move a bit then, they'll move backwards. Even if a proper Socialist Government gets in, they will soon be shut down by those who have the army and navy behind them. They will then find that they have to fight just the same.

Henry—It seems to be bloodshed anyway.

Ghost—Yes. And the joke is that the army and navy are drawn principally from the working classes. When they all set about cutting each others' throats, it will amuse the capitalists.

## THE CARNEGIE LEGACIES.

Mr. Burt has explained to the *Times* that Carnegie first went to see him because he had spoken in his defence. This is how Burt tells the story:—

At one of our Northumberland miners' picnics Mr. Keir Hardie had made a strong speech against capitalists and mentioned Mr. Carnegie as an example of one who had made millions out of the workers. I followed Mr. Keir Hardie on that occasion, and I said that while I did not desire to enter into any controversial discussion at a picnic gathering, I would just like to mention that I had been to Pittsburgh and had met the leading trade unionists there, and that they and the workmen said Mr. Carnegie was a good employer, and that his works always paid the best wages. The only regret the workmen had, they told me, was that they could not get access to Mr. Carnegie as often as they would like.

This is the typical attitude of the old-fashioned trade union leader, who has no thought of abolishing the system under which some work hard all their lives, and yet remain poor, whilst others are growing rich out of poor people's labour. It is noticeable that to various politicians, already amply provided for, Carnegie gave annuities of £1,000 to £2,000 a year. To three old servants, one of whom had served him for 27 years, and of whom he says, "These are as members of the family!" he gives pensions amounting to half their wages. In the average case the servant gets no pension at all, even if the employer happens to be a millionaire, but even in this case, note the different treatment meted out to the political associate and to the old servant. Carnegie, though risen from the working class, shared, whatever he may have said, the contempt for the manual workers which is created by capitalist society.