

Childhood (December 21, 1907)

What emotions the recollection of childhood inspires and how priceless its treasured memories in our advancing and declining years!

Laughing eyes and curly hair, little brown hands and bare feet, innocent and carefree, trusting and loving, tender and pure — what an elevating and satisfying influence these little gods have upon our maturer years!

Childhood! What a holy theme! Flowers they are, with souls in them, and if on this earth man has a sacred charge, a solemn obligation, it is to these buds and blossoms of humanity.

Yet how many of them are prematurely plucked, fade and die, and are trampled in the mire. Many millions of them have been snatched from the cradle and stolen from their play to be fed to the forces that turn a workingman's blood into a capitalist's gold, and many millions of others have been crushed and perverted into filth for the slums and food for the potter's field.

Childhood is at the parting of the ways which lead to success or failure, honor or disgrace, life or death. Society is, or ought to be, profoundly concerned in the nature of the environment that is to mold the character and determine the career of its children, and any remissness in such duty is rebuked by the most painful of penalties and these are inflicted with increasing severity upon the people of the United States.

Childhood is the most precious charge of the family and the community, but our capitalist civilization sacrifices it ruthlessly to gratify its brutal lust for pelf and power, and the march of its conquest is stained with the blood of infants and paved with the puny bones of children.

What shall the harvest be?

The millions of children crushed and slain in the conquest of capitalism have not died in vain. From their little graves all over this fair land they are springing up, as it were, against the system that murdered them and pronounce upon it, in the name of God and humanity, the condemnation of death.