



## Gila Monster

The capitalist system, after a period of uncompleted inefficiency, finds its victims on the verge of revolt. Hunger, mal-nutrition, cold, insanity and degeneracy are a common malady, now evident to the most skeptical, and they are demanding a recount of the good things of life. Violence is being used against the sponsors for a better social system. The working class especially has come into disfavor (oh how they hate 'em!) with the representatives of this violent system. The capitalist system does not say to us, "Now children, be good and stand still while we remove the few 'nik-kels' from your clothes; be quiet while we wear away the seat of your pants; hold still while we put you on a liberty-steak diet"—oh no! They do not plead with us "be good now children, or we will slap you on the wrist," oh no. They let you know that if you are not satisfied with being "broke" all the time, working three hundred and sixty-five days a year, they will ask the governor to send out the militia to shoot you full of holes—they don't temporize, they believe in violence and use it because they are weak. . . .

Their moving pictures show us the most modern machines and ways of taking life—they are frank about violence. They show us the best way to crack a safe (with an acetylene torch) but slightly veiled. They preach and practice violence and accuse those opposed to it of practicing it.

. . . did you ever notice the sublime confidence of a mouse in jail? After it has visited you a few times and has found out that it was not killed; that no injury resulted to it and that none was intended. How confident and confidential it becomes. Just think of it, that "mountain of prisoner" is not a monster of extermination rolling down to crush a thimblefull of life—the mouse has come to know this and looks up to the prisoner with small calm eyes, wells of peace, that actually are beautiful. How unlike is the individual that has incurred the displeasure of a gigantic system—the mad, rolling, mangling, crushing system that begrudges the toiler a place in the sunlight—that demoralizes, degenerates and exterminates millions and crucifies those that dare to demand butter on their bread, a little comfort and the right to die in peace. *How does it come that jails in the United States (including California) are filling up with Labors' own?*

It was down in the St. George country, back of the Mormon temple, and we had the man to look out for the Gila Monster; we had explained to him the various deadly insects that might bite him—the diamond-head rattlesnake; the scorpion; the tarantula, anyone of whose bites would mean "pay day." He was bare handed and handling rock: "I'm not afraid of these bugs," says he, "I'm not afraid of devil nor god; I'm not afraid of these deadly wrigglers that bite and hang on until you cut them out with a knife." . . . "Scorpions," he laughed a bitter laugh. "Tarantulas, I'll take them to my bosom. Rattlesnakes, I could kiss them—they are my friends. . . I'm not afraid of them. . . . There is only one thing I am afraid of and that is a parasite. It poisons you without biting. It kills without striking. It transforms men into snakes, and heroes into curs. It contaminates all that is good, pure and wholesome—It befouls even the foul a thousand fold, and leaves humanity a quivering, struggling mess of biting, snapping maniacs. . . ."

A few more gentle words he spoke—a few more rocks he pried loose, and then—a Gila Monster kissed his hand. . . .

We buried him in the evening's gloom,  
Before the blinking stars—  
A likely lad, so kind and sad,  
But not afraid of cars. . . .

The question before the house is: What are you going to do about these parasites? Are you going to let them founder themselves?