



## BY THE POWERS!

We, the people, have a way of using old, obsolete terms or sayings that convey a meaning that is foreign to the facts in the case.

For instance, in a case of death we say he was "gathered unto his ancestors"—to kind of fill up the collection, I s'pose—when we should say "he climbed the family tree." We simply cannot bring ourselves to say "he played his last tune," or, more direct still, "he lost his life or coughed up the ghost." No; we've got to beat around the bush and insinuate (just because we've been *hi-balling* all our life) that he's gone to his eternal rest.

Nothing of the kind! He died and had to be carted away—he didn't go—never moved. Only recently I read a statement that "Truth, alone, will set you free," and, being of inventive turns of mind, I got to wondering if "truth" could be harnessed so's to lift one of those heavy hand-cars on the track.

My partner suggested that I better stick to perpetual motion (he's a sarcastic cuss). That's what comes of having too many chestnuts in the fire. But I couldn't very well give up the idea because if truth can set me free, there must be power; and power certainly ought to put that car on the track; once on the track we could take it off the track by using a little falsehood.

It occurred to me that it isn't enough that truth sets me free. We got to hitch it up some way so it will do some of this work.

This HE-IDEA of truth going around and freeing people is all right as far as it goes and I believe every word of it. And I believe, further, that it will be a great help to George—George, you know, had a contract to free people while the people were pounding their ear catching a few of those famous forty winks. . . .

Now George can lay down his tools—drills, hacksaws, coldcuts and hammers, and take a much needed flop for himself, for the truth is going to cut the shackles that prevent people doing the "Clarenceburg stagger"—and, in the meantime, the people can rest assured that when they wake up they'll find the *base* and *chain* missing from their economic-ankle—yessirree—just like that—they even don't have to give a hand *filing* them off. Just turn over on their side and stick out their other leg.

I don't know how long I would have kept on hugging this idea (of easy virtue) if my partner hadn't asked me, kind of abruptly: "Slim, are you working in this gang?"

He's a sarcastic bugger and if he don't improve fast I'm thinking of trading him off for a box of snuff or one of those new Fords that make 35 miles on a gallon.

"Certainly, I'm working in this gang! and I'm about the only one in the gang that is earning the substantial wage issued by the considerate railroad (\$7.05 for 5 days' work, on the former empire-builder, Jim Hill's Northern Pacific R. R., at Lincoln, Minn., Gang No. 2—what the other gangs got, I know not; but I do know, I had to wait five days (after I quit) before I got my seven dollars and a nickel. The company is honest—they even gave me the nickel. . . .

"Certainly, I'm working in this gang!"

"Well," says he, "get a hold of the corner of this car."

"Damn those cars, anyway," says I, forgetting for the time being about applying truth to the job of heavy lifting, "certainly I'll get on the corner, but, before I do, I wish you fellows would kind of arrange yourselves around the load—there's four of you on one side and two of us on the other. Indeed it seems to me that we've got to organize ourselves so's not to be too thickly populated on one side. We don't owe you fellows anything, do we?"

They were struck dumb by the force of my logic; and my sarcastic partner even didn't have a comeback.

"Certainly, I'll get on the corner; but bear in mind, not only on this *teeny* job, but on all jobs we've got to organize (to do equitable lifting) until such time as our great author and inventor has perfected an instrument whereby truth can be squirted on the handles and handcars float in the atmosphere—mind you, not that I'm running down truth.

I am fully conscious of the irresistible horsepower of truth and its potential, its positive pep; as well as I'm aware of the reciprocating effect of falsehood, its destructibility and negative noxiousness—you see, I've watched for years the struggle between positive truth and negative falsehood and I've come to the conclusion that if negative-falsehood didn't have the *veto* power, freedom would be a cinch. As it is, alas, truth is too busy to give us a hand lifting this handcar. We got to organize ourselves and set it on the track by main-beef—if you please. And we got to organize ourselves into an industrial union to help us lift the wages—stands to reason: If one alone is weak, then many together are strong, and, *all together*, can raise the *heaviest of wages*; if they all lift.

"O dry up on that," says my partner, "this gang of men know all about that. The trouble is you can't get the men to stick together." Can't, hey? Well, then, that being the case, we'll just keep on slaving and thank God for the blessings he pours down our neck—and try to get the ball and chain loose by wearing it off. Let's put the car on the track boys—the company is waiting! As I was saying: Industrial Unionism

alone, with or without either truth or falsehood, will set you free—nothing else but!

P. S.—A noted electrician said: "Juice will set you free!"

An oracle, of Minneapolis, claims: "Snus will set you free—if you chew 'nough of it."

So, how can we decide? At first I thought it a dilemma but now I see its only a predicament.