

WILL MAUPIN'S WEEKLY

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF CHEERFUL COMMENT

Volume 8

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, SEPTEMBER 1, 1911

Number 24

A SONG FOR LABOR DAY

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I have builded your towns and cities,
And over your widest streams
I have flung with a giant's ardor
The web of strong steel beams.
I have carved out the busy highways
That mark where your commerce
reigns;

With hammer and forge and anvil
I have wrought your golden gains.

I have girded the rock-ribbed moun-
tains
With rails for the iron steed;
I have delved in the old earth's
bosom
To answer the great world's greed.
I have clothed you, housed you, fed
you,
For thousands of years gone by;
I have stepped to the front when
duty
Has called, and I've answered "I!"

I have wrung from the soil denied me
Your toll of the golden grains;
I have garbed you in silks and
satins—
And fettered my limbs with
chains.

I have given my sweat and muscle
To build for you, stone on stone,
The palace of ease and pleasure—
The hut I may call my own.

For a thousand years you've driven—
A thousand years and a day.

But I, like another Samson,
Am giving my muscles play.
My brain is no longer idle;
I see with a clearer sight,
And piercing the gloom about me
I'm seeing, thank God, the light!

I see in the days before me
My share of the things I've
wrought;
See Justice no longer blinded,
The weights of her scales un-
bought.

I see in the not far future
The day when the worker's share
Is more than his belly's succor;
Is more than a rag to wear.

I see on the morrow's mountains
The glints of a golden dawn;
The dawn of a day fast coming
When strivings and hates are gone.
Lo, out of the vastly darkness
That fetters my limbs like steel
I can hear the swelling chorus
That sings of the commonweal.

For a thousand years you've driven—
For a thousand years and one.
But I'm coming to take possession
Of all that my hands have done.
And cities and towns and highways
I've builded shall be mine own;
And Labor, at last unfettered,
Shall sit on the kingly throne.