

AESOP SAID SO

LITHOGRAPHS BY HUGO GELLERT



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COVER
FRONT

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Eighteen of Aesop's Classic Fables

**WITH LITHOGRAPHS BY
HUGO GELLERT**

This volume contains eighteen of Aesop's classic fables, each illustrated by one of Gellert's remarkable lithographs. The fables are unaltered from the original; the accompanying illustrations, however, apply the wisdom of the Greek slave to the modern social scene with scathing brilliance.

It was a moment of true inspiration when the idea of illustrating Aesop occurred to Gellert, for the fables make a perfect frame for Gellert's panorama of the paradoxes, barbarities, fantasies and secret forces of decadent capitalism. His pungent proletarian art and the penetrating irony of the aphorisms suit each other perfectly.

Among the artist's previous work his powerful version of Karl Marx's "Capital" in pictures is notable. In this new book he exhibits an even greater vision and power. His lithograph technique is unsurpassable, his caricature profound, and his satire devastating.

"Aesop Said So" is a book you will value for years to come.

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Aesop Said So · Hugo Gellert

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Hugo Gellert

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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· *Editors*

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FOREWORD

The voice of a Slave who became a Free Man speaks to us. Twenty-five hundred years cannot dull the wit, nor dim the truth and wisdom that his voice carries. The sham, hypocrisy, cowardice, avarice, treachery, fallacy and downright meanness of the Enemies of Man are exposed, and we are warned of them.

Let us heed the warning, and listen to that voice, the voice of the Slave who became a Free Man.

Hugo Gellert

TO TOM MOONEY

(The Wolf and the Lamb)

As a Wolf was lapping at the head of a running brook, he spied a Lamb, drinking, at some distance down the stream. Having made up his mind to seize her, he tried to justify his violence.

“Villain!” said he, running up to her, “how dare you muddle the water that I am drinking?”

“How can I disturb the water,” said the Lamb humbly, “when it runs from you to me, and not from me to you?”

“Be that as it may,” said the Wolf, “but you are the Lamb that called me vile names, a year ago.”

“Oh, Sir!” said the Lamb, trembling, “a year ago I was not even born.”

“If it was not you,” replied the Wolf, “it was your father,” and with that, he fell upon the poor, helpless Lamb.



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ÆSOP SAID SO

THE LABORING MAN AND THE OSTRICH

(The Wild Boar and the Ostrich)

A Wild Boar was sharpening his tusks, when an Ostrich, coming by, asked why he did so.

“I see no reason for it,” said she; “there is neither hunter, nor hound in sight, nor any other danger that I can see, at hand.”

“You would do well to look again,” replied the Wild Boar; “and remember, when my enemies be upon me, I shall have something else to do than to sharpen my weapons.”

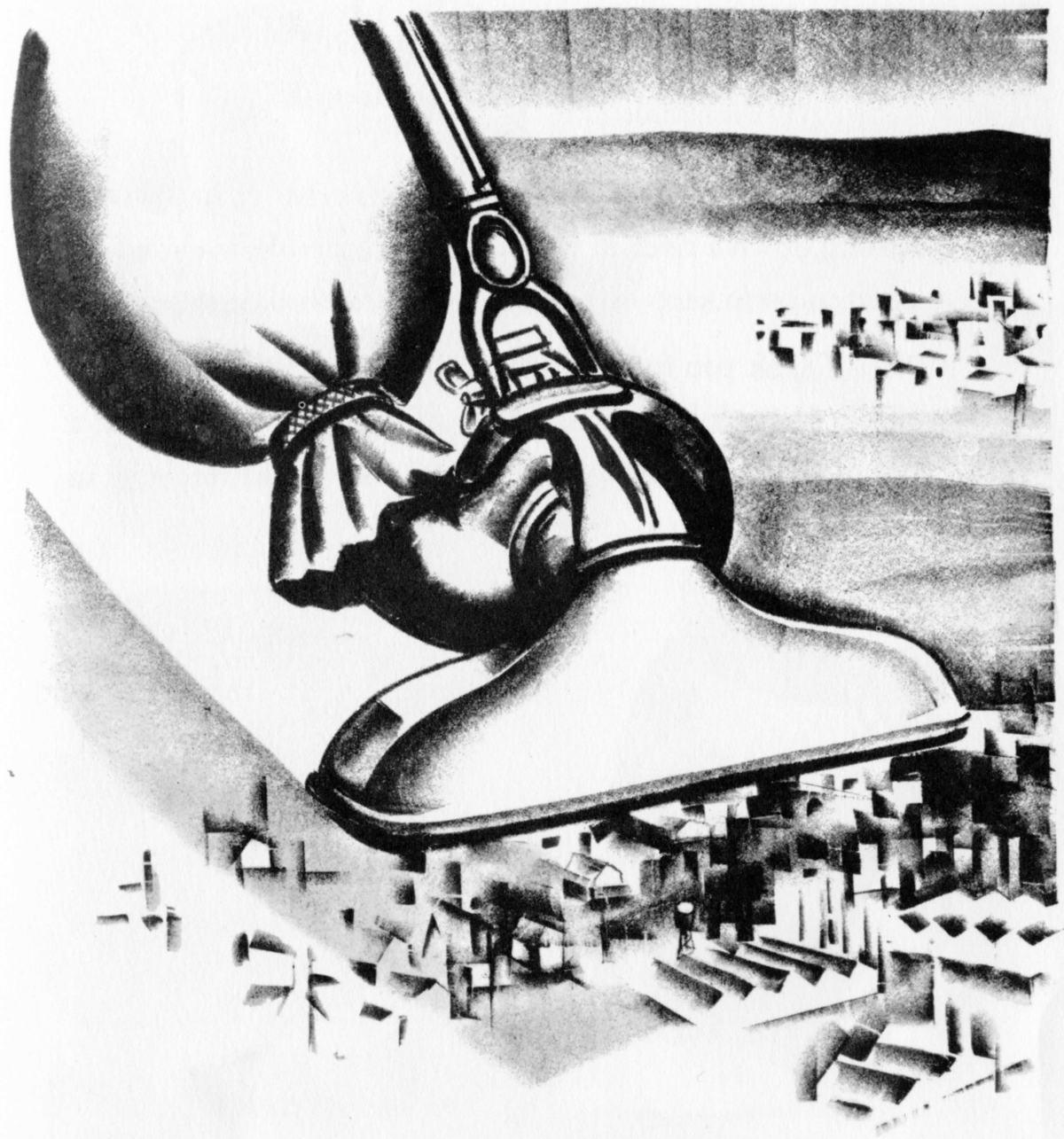


THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

(The Lion and Other Beasts A-Hunting)

The Lion and Other Beasts formed an alliance to go a-hunting. When they had taken a fat stag, the Lion divided it into three parts.

“The first,” said he, “belongs to me, as I am your King; the second I shall take for my personal share in the chase; and as for the third part—let him take it who dares.”

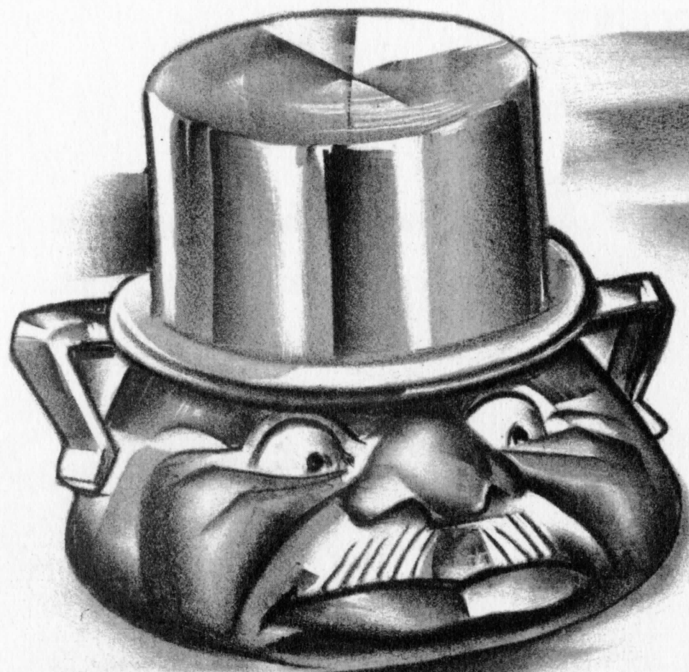


THE LIBERTY LEAGUE AND LIBERTY

(The Two Pots)

Two Pots, one of earthen ware, the other of brass, were carried down a river in a flood. The Brazen Pot begged his companion to keep by his side, saying he would protect her.

“Thank you for your offer,” said the Earthen Pot, “but that is just what I am afraid of. If you will only keep at a distance, I may float down in safety; but should we come in contact, I am sure to come to grief.”



THE SUPREME COURT

(The Swallow in Chancery)

A Swallow had built her nest under the eaves of the Court of Justice. Before her young ones could fly, a Serpent, gliding out of his hole, ate them all up.

When the poor bird returned to her nest and found it empty, she began a pitiable wailing. A neighbor, trying to comfort her, suggested that she was not the first bird who had lost her young.

“True,” she replied, “but it is not only my little ones that I mourn, but that I should have been wronged in that very place where the injured come to seek justice.”



U.S. CONGRESS ★

AN ACT

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THE ARMY, THE NAVY, AND THE AIR FORCE

(The Three Tradesmen)

A council was called to discuss the best means of fortifying a city.

A Bricklayer gave his opinion that no material was so good as brick for the purpose.

A Carpenter begged leave to suggest that timber would be far more preferable.

Whereupon a Tanner spoke up: "Sirs, when you have said all that can be said, there is nothing in the world like leather."



THE PROFESSIONAL PATRIOT

(The Trumpeter)

A Trumpeter, who was taken prisoner, begged hard for quarter.

“Spare me, good sirs, I beseech you,” said he, “and put me not to death without cause, for I killed no one myself, nor have I any arms but this trumpet only.”

“For that very reason,” said they who had seized him, “shall you the sooner die, for without the spirit to fight yourself, you stir up others to warfare and bloodshed.”

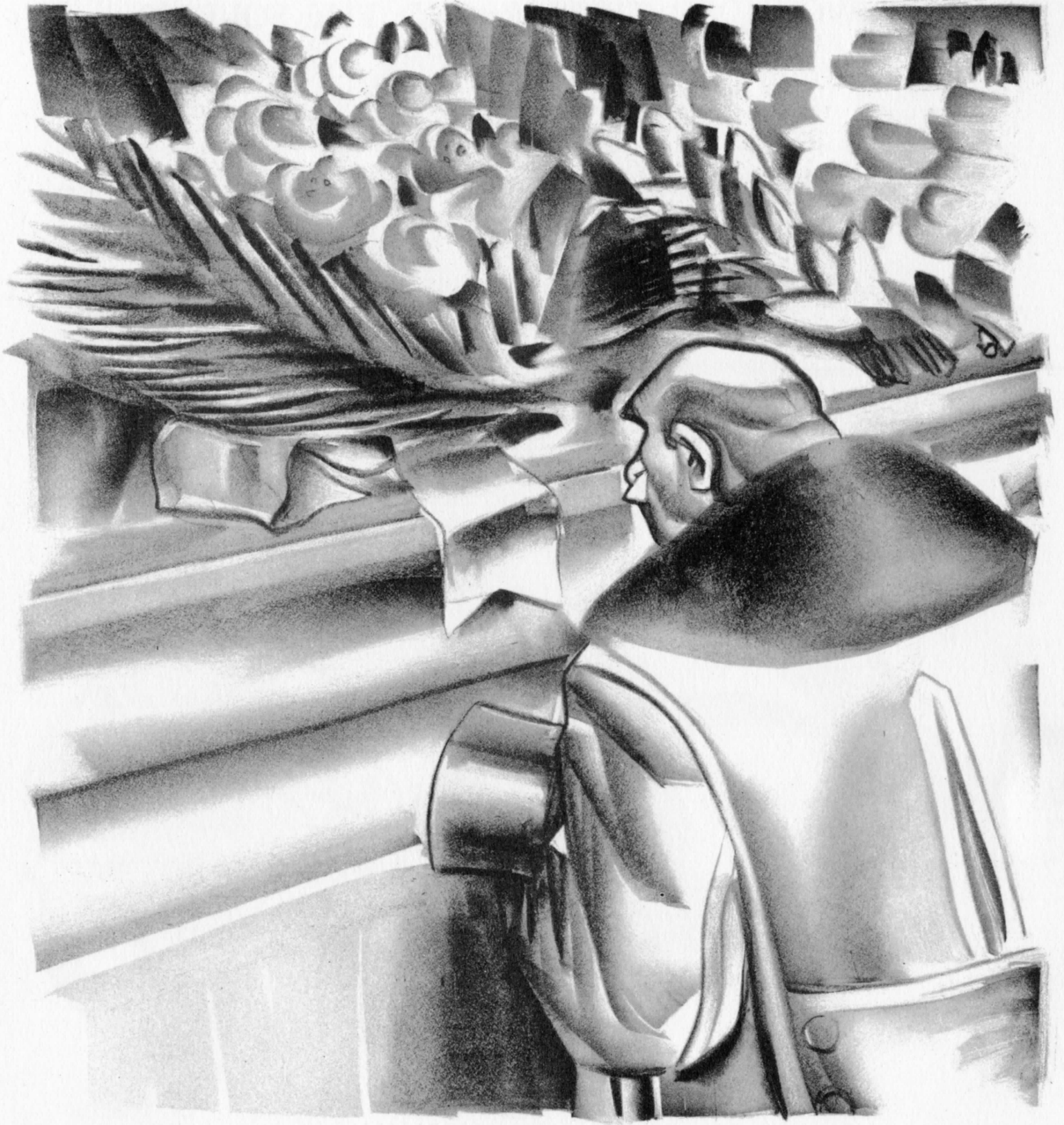


THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER
AND THE WAR-MAKER

(The Bear and the Fox)

A Bear used to boast of his excessive love for Man, saying that he never disturbed him when dead.

The Fox observed, with a smile: “I should have thought more of you if you had as much consideration for the living.”



A WOUNDED STRIKER AND THE SOLDIER

(The Eagle and the Arrow)

An Eagle was mortally wounded by an Arrow. As he turned his head in the agonies of death, he saw that the Arrow was winged with his own feathers.

“How much sharper,” said he, “are the wounds made by weapons which we ourselves have supplied.”



WILLIAM GREEN AND THE COMMITTEE
FOR INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION

(The Hunter and the Woodman)

A Man went out Lion-hunting into a forest, where, meeting with a Woodman, he asked him if he had seen any tracks of a Lion, and if he knew where his lair was.

“Yes,” said the Woodman, “and if you will come with me I will show you the Lion himself.”

At this the Hunter, turning ghastly pale, and with his teeth chattering, said: “Oh! Thank you—it was the Lion’s track, not himself, that I was hunting.”



THE NEGRO, THE FOREIGN-BORN,
AND DISCRIMINATION

(The Trees and the Axe)

A Woodman came into a forest to ask the Trees to give him a handle for his Axe. It seemed so modest a request that the principal Trees at once agreed to it, and it was settled among them that the plain, homely Ash should furnish what was wanted.

No sooner had the Woodman fitted the poor Ash to his Axe, than he began laying about him on all sides, felling the noblest Trees in the wood.

The Oak, now seeing the mistake too late, whispered to the Cedar: "The first concession has lost all; if we had not sacrificed our humble neighbor, we might have yet stood for ages ourselves."



FASCISM AND THE GULLIBLE

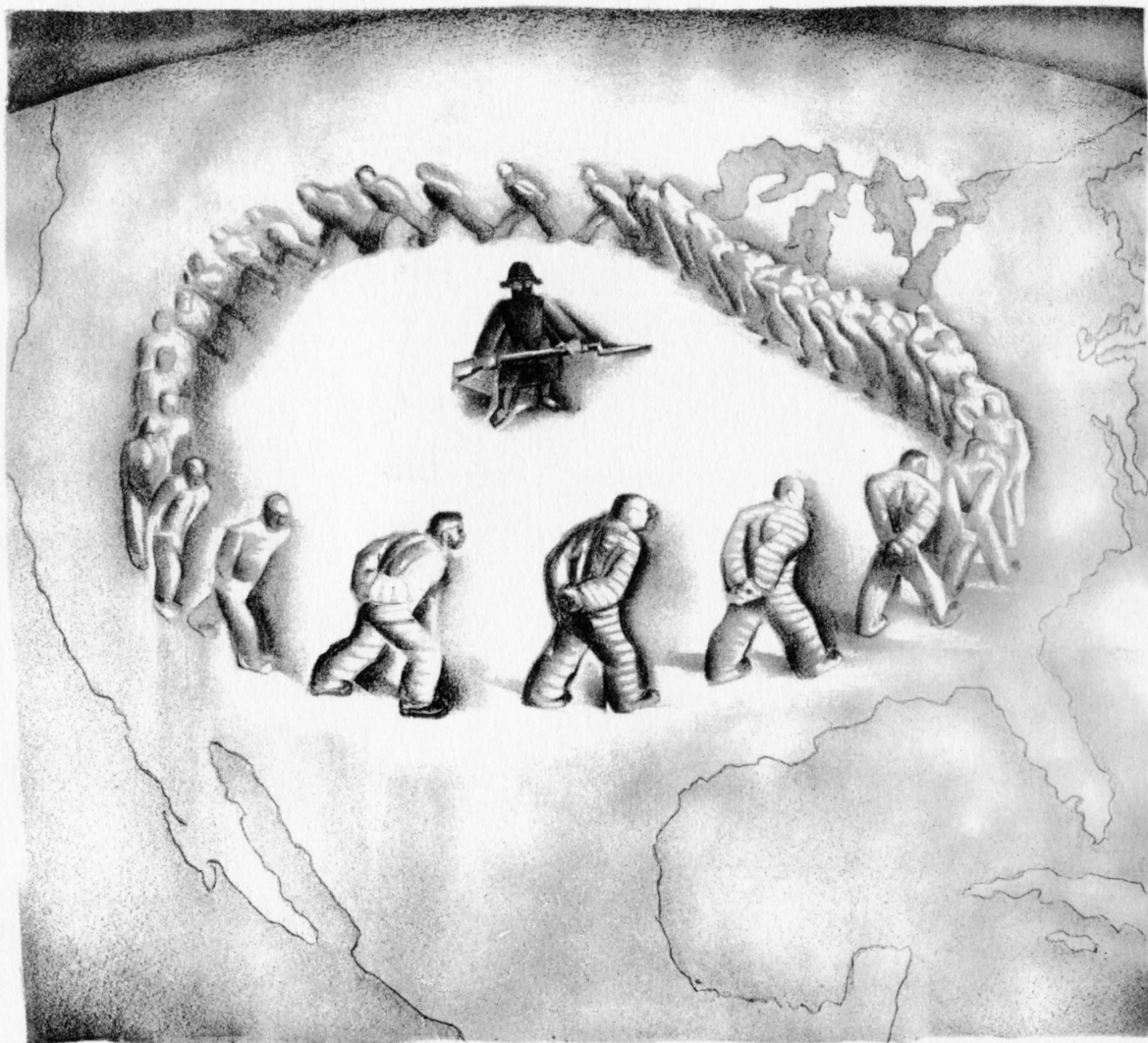
(The Bird-Catcher and the Lark)

A Bird-Catcher was setting traps upon a common, when a Lark, who saw him at work, asked him what he was doing.

“I am establishing a colony,” said he, “and laying the foundations of my first city.” Upon that he retired to a little distance and hid himself.

The Lark, believing him, soon flew down to the place, and, swallowing the bait, found himself entangled in the noose; whereupon the Bird-Catcher made him his prisoner.

“A pretty fellow you are!” said the Lark, “but it serves me right; I should have had more sense than to trust you.”



THE LIBERAL

(The Moon and the Stars)

The Moon asked the Stars to make her a little cloak that would fit her well.

“How,” they replied, “can we make a cloak to fit you, who are now a New Moon, and then a Full Moon, and then again neither one nor the other?”



FATHER COUGHLIN AND HIS FLOCK

(The Blind Man and the Wolf's Cub)

A Blind Man was able to tell any animal by merely touching it with his hands. Once they brought him a Wolf's Cub. He felt it all over, and being in doubt, said: "I know not whether thy father was a Dog or a Wolf; but this I know, that I would not trust thee among a flock of sheep."



HEARST AND COLUMBIA

(The Garbage Man and the Laundress)

A Garbage Man, who had more room in his house than he could use for himself, proposed to a comely Laundress to come and take up quarters with him.

“Thank you,” said she, “but I must decline your offer, for I fear that as fast as I wash my clothes you will soil them again.”



THE LIBERTY-LEAGUE-REPUBLICAN-PARTY AND THE CONSTITUTION

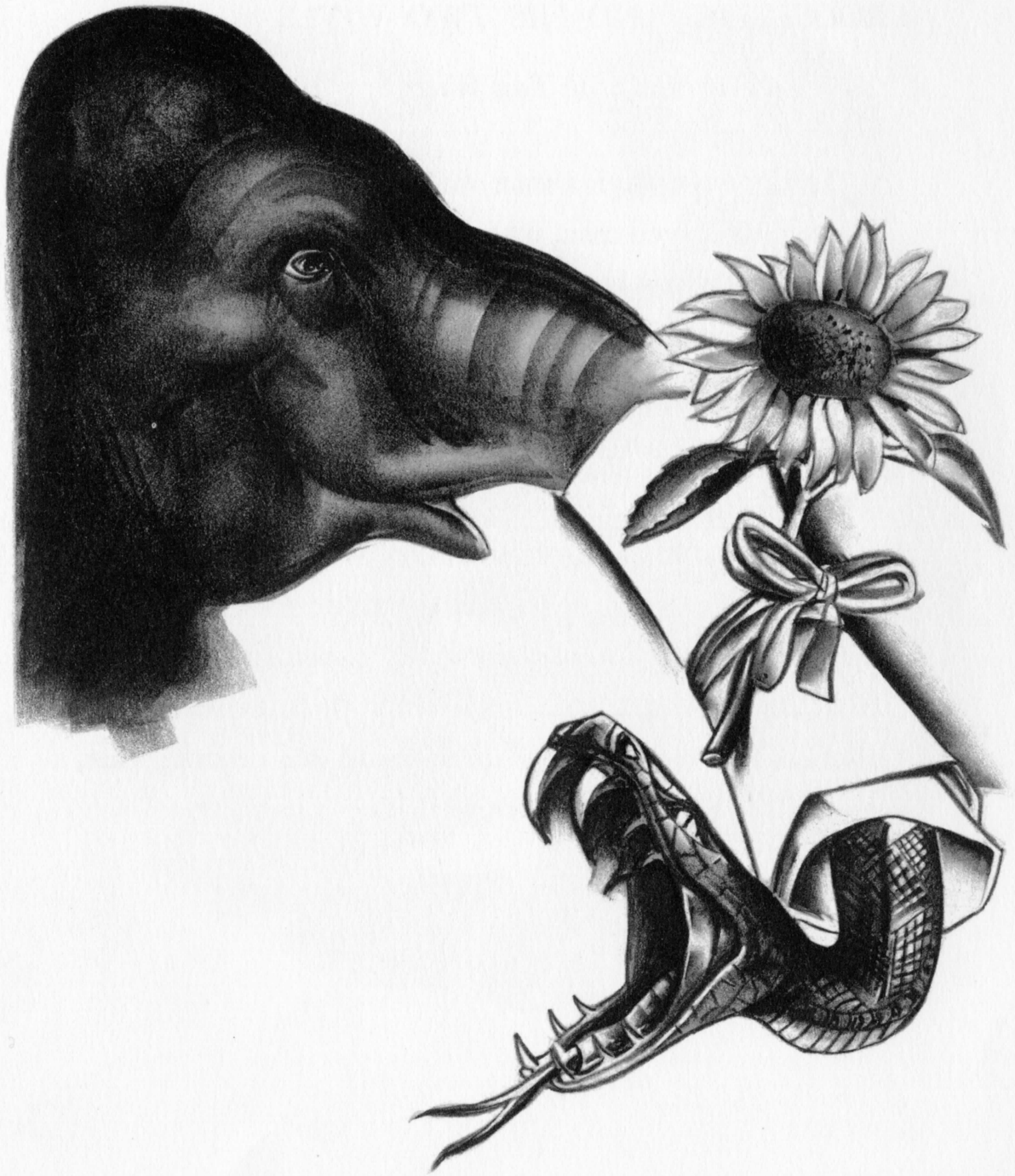
(The Cat and the Mice)

A Cat, feeble with age, and no longer able to hunt the Mice, thought that she might entice them within reach of her paw. She tried to pass herself off for a scroll of parchment, in the hope that the Mice would no longer be afraid to come near her.

An old Mouse, who was wise enough to keep his distance, whispered to a friend:

“Many a parchment scroll have I seen in my day, but never one with a cat’s head.”

“Stay there, good Madame,” said his friend to the Cat, “as long as you please, but I would not trust myself within reach of you though you were stuffed with straw.”



ROOSEVELT AND HIS TWO WIVES

(The Man with Two Wives)

In the days when a man was allowed more wives than one, a middle aged man, who could be called neither young nor old, and whose hair was only just beginning to turn gray, fell in love with two women at once, and married them both.

The one was young and blooming, and wished her husband to appear as youthful as herself. The other was advanced in age, and was as anxious that her husband should appear a suitable match for her. So, while the young one seized every opportunity of pulling out the good man's gray hairs, the old one was as industrious in plucking out every black hair she could find. For a while the man was highly gratified by their attention, 'til he found one morning that, between the one and the other, he had not a hair left.



CAPITAL IS ONLY THE FRUIT OF LABOR *

(The Bees, the Drones, and the Wasp)

Some Bees had built their comb in the hollow trunk of an oak. The Drones asserted that it was their work, and belonged to them.

The case was brought into court before Judge Wasp. Knowing something of the parties, he thus addressed them:

“The ends of justice, and the object of the court, will best be furthered by the plan which I propose. Let each party take a hive to itself and build up a new comb, so that from the shape of the cells, and the taste of the honey, the lawful proprietors of the property in dispute may appear.”

The Bees readily assented to the Wasp’s plan. The Drones declined it. Whereupon the Wasp gave judgment:

“It is clear now who made the comb, and who cannot make it; the court adjudges the honey to the Bees.”

** From Abraham Lincoln’s message to Congress, December 3, 1861: “Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.”*



THE FARMER-LABOR PARTY

(The Bundle of Sticks)

A Father who had quarrelsome sons, tried to reconcile them. He called them together and bid them lay a Bundle of Sticks before him.

Having tied the sticks securely together, he handed the Bundle to his sons and told them to break it. Each tried, but in vain. Then, untying the Bundle, the old man broke the sticks one by one with the greatest of ease. Then he said:

“Thus you, my sons, as long as you remain united, are a match for all your enemies, but differ and separate, and you are undone.”

LIFE ★
LIBERTY
AND
THE PURSUIT OF
HAPPINESS



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