



“Relics from the Late Carnage”:

The New Slavocracy and the Unemployed

Lucy E. Parsons

January 25, 1879

The Government [building] rookery is *daily* overrun with a number of mendicants, claiming assistance under the representations that they are relics from the carnage of the late rebellion. These unfortunates, irrespective of the truth or falsity of their representations, are almost invariably referred to some private institution or to the County [poorhouse] authorities, where provision is made for their wants. (From the *Chicago Times*)

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The above item is from one of those slandering, venal sheets of this city, whose proprietor had managed to keep far in the rear of cannonballs and bombshells during the late struggle between slavery and freedom, Republican institutions and Slavocracy; who was too great a coward to respond to his country’s call in the days of her perilous need to save her from the cruel assaults of a heartless foe. Ah, no! but rather stayed at home, fared sumptuously, and waxed fat on the spoils and “carnage” of a cruel, cruel war; and, in order to

prolong the days of the in-flow of his ill-gotten gains at the soldiers' expense, did all in his power

1) to induce the workingman to believe that this was his country; 2) that it was worth saving; 3) that in order to show his patriotism he was in duty bound to forsake family, home and friends, shoulder a musket and make for the front; and 4) should "his country" be wrested from the grasp of a heartless enemy, that he (the soldier) would share in its joys and prosperity as he had in its gloom and woe.

And so it was that thousands, yea, tens of thousands of workingmen left their all and bravely hastened forward to the defense of what they believed to be *their* country, leaving the slimy cowards at home to furnish paste-bottom boots the while. The soldier fought, bled, and died; reclaimed the country, and those who were fortunate enough to return, reasonably expected that she, for whom their life's blood had been shed, would at least, in turn, serve them to the end of obtaining an honest, decent living.

But alas! what must be their heartfelt humiliation and burning indignation when they are denied by a bloated aristocracy, a cruel monied-ocracy, the commonest right that should be accorded the yellow cur that runs the streets—*the right to live!*—and [instead] find themselves alluded to in the columns of a hireling, venal press as "mendicants," "relics from the late carnage," "unfortunates," etc. But then, what else can they expect from

*A speculating, thievish clan,
Who rob alike on sea and strand.*