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JENKINS, BOLSHEVIST

There was a man named Jenkins who had a home, a job, seven sons and a grouch. He was a good provider. In his home he was boss. His wife cocked the dishes he preferred, chose her clothing to win his approval and asked his advice concerning everything. She did not question his authority. His sons accepted his word as the law and stirred their feet to a lively pace when he called.

Jenkins had a grouch because the foreman in the plant where he worked wore a white collar and spent most of his time at a desk, and yet received a wage larger than his own; and because the man who owned the plant rode in a limousine and carried a walking stick.

When the whistle blew for quitting time Jenkins would join a group of his fellows on the street corner and talk about the rights of the workers. The more he talked and the more he listened the stronger became his conviction that he was oppressed, and he learned to pronounce the word "capitalist" so that it hissed like a serpent.

When he went home at night and sat down to supper he entertained his wife and his sons by lecturing to them concerning the new day that would bring the under dog to the top. His wife and his sons listened open-mouthed, for they considered him a great man.

"The day of liberty is at hand," he declared. "The greedy capitalists have kept us in line with the whip of poverty, but we shall not long be poor. We shall rise and in our might take for ourselves the tools and machines and buildings, and we shall seize the raw

material and the means of transportation, and thereafter we shall have the whole profit of our labor. Unfair rules have given our bosses power to take; now we shall have power to take what we desire—and if we have the power who shall deny us the right?

"We shall abolish law. What is law but the will of the people? Well we are the people. Each will be a law to himself, choosing his own course, permitting his own soul to develop without hindrance or restraint. There will be no scheming to get wealth, for the world will belong to all. There will be no anxious thoughts for the morrow, for there will be assurance of plenty tomorrow.

"No man will be a slave and none will labor except when he so desires. We all shall be brothers and one man's authority shall be equal to that of another."

The youngest Jenkins boy, age ten, dared a question. "Daddy," he asked, "are you sure that is the right way? If it is wouldn't it be a good idea for us to learn it now while we are young?"

"Yes, I'm sure," replied Jenkins. We have groped in darkness, but we are near the light. I would be proud to have my sons learn this great doctrine while it is yet new."

When Jenkins came home the following evening he saw a red flag tacked to his front porch. For some reason he did not attempt to analyze he felt a touch of shame and glanced furtively up and down the street to see if the flag had attracted attention. Then his face set into hard lines and he said to himself: "What matter? Someone must be the pioneer. The boys have caught the spirit. I am glad."

The living room did not appear as neat as usual, and as he passed through the dining room he noticed that the dinner dishes were yet unwashed. He found his wife in the kitchen, smiling to herself and humming as she went about the preparation of supper.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Been down town all day?"

"Nothing wrong," she replied. We have turned Bolshevik, and I didn't feel in a humor for work this afternoon. I finished that book Mrs. Stallings loaned me."

Jenkins started to speak but thought better of it and went into the bathroom to wash up.

As he came out he noticed that the wood box was empty and called his

son Will. "Billy," he said, "get your mother some wood, and while you are about it bring in enough to get breakfast."

The boy grinned and shook his head. "Like fun I will," he replied. "We are all Bolshevik here. None of us are slaves and one has just as much authority as another. I have no desire to bring in wood."

Jenkins turned to his wife. "I want to know—" he demanded hotly, and then his eyes fell on the teapot and he stopped short. "What's the big idea?" he asked. "You know I detest tea. If we are out of coffee send one of the boys for some."

"We are not out," she replied. "But I really prefer tea. Making it instead of coffee is my little way of letting my soul develop without hindrance. If you prefer coffee you may make it."

Jenkins glared and strode out of the kitchen.

Supper was a very unsatisfactory meal. The boys were in high spirits and talked incessantly of the new day and its freedom.

"After supper," declared Bob, aged fourteen, "I am going downtown and wander round until bedtime. I've always wanted to."

"You'll stay inside this house," growled Jenkins, "and study your lessons. I'm going to make something of you boys, and I can't do it if you loaf on the streets. The idea!"

"That's nonsense, dad," the boy protested. "There's lots of jobs a fellow can handle if he hasn't got a bit of education, and if the workers are to own everything what's the use of wasting time trying to learn something? If I study like as not I'll grow up to be a lawyer or a manufacturer or some kind of capitalist and then you would be ashamed of me."

Jenkins got to his feet. He started to speak, but his glance was caught by a sparkle of light that came from the necktie worn by his oldest son.

"Ralph," he asked coldly, "where did you get that diamond?"

"Jewelry store," answered Ralph.

"I've warned you boys against the folly of buying on the installment plan," Jenkins growled. "In the morning you will take that silly thing back and get the money you paid."

"I didn't buy it, dad," the boy explained. "I took it."

"You what?"

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