

US History Semester 1

Project #2

Poem Analysis

"Child Labor" by Benztown Bard

(Published in The Public on January 2, 1914)

***You going to put that boy to work,
That little bit of a kid,
Whose heart is out where the daisies are
In the dew and the grasses hid?
Going to put that boy to work,
Whose soul is way out there,
Dreaming of meadows and streams and bridge,
And the joy of the summer air?
You going to put that boy to work
Who is old enough, you say,
To be out helping you get along
With his little pittance of pay?
You going to put that boy to work
Who belongs to God awhile,
Out in the green of the boyhood sheen
Where the hills and meadows smile?***

***May be your business, and that I'm blind,
Or a fool to be butting in,
But putting a kid like that to work
Is an economic sin;
Stunting and putting him back so long
From the glory he should know
In the good green spell of the wood and dell
Where a kid like him should grow.
You going to put that boy to work
Because he can help you bear
The burden of grocer and clothes and rent,
And he ought to be doing his share?
You going to put that boy to work,
That little kid whose eyes
And heart and soul are hankering for
The blue of the summer skies?
You going to chain him in a mill,
Who all day longs and longs
For the playtime life on the good green hill
And the cheer of the robins' song?
You're going to put him in prison, eh,
That he'll never get out again - -
For the dreams, the dreams, of the open day
Can never come back to men!***