

Uncle Walt

HE LABORED on the railway track; his task would break a horse's back; he tugged at things that weighed a ton, and all the time the summer sun blazed down and cooked him where he toiled, and still he worked, though fried and broiled. I grieved for this poor section man, who drank warm water from a can, and ate rye bread and greenish cheese, and had big blisters on his knees. "Ods fish!" quoth I, "when day is dead, methinks you straightway go to bed, too labor-worn to heave a sigh, as wounded soldiers go to die." "That's where you're off," the toiler said; "I'm in no rush to go to bed; you must be talking in a trance—tonight I'm going to a dance!" "Gadzooks!" thought I, "and eke ods blood! My tears have streamed, a briny flood, because of all the cares and woes the horny-handed toiler knows! And it would seem, from what I learn, that he has fun, and some to burn. Gadzooks again! It seemeth plain, that weeping in this world is vain!"

*The Stricken
Toiler*