

# The Statesmen

By Ambrose Bierce

How blest the land that counts among  
Her sons so many good and wise,  
To execute great feats of tongue  
When troubles rise.

Behold them mounting every stump,  
By speech our liberty to guard.  
Observe their courage—see them jump,  
And come down hard!

“Walk up, walk up!” each cries aloud,  
“And learn from me what you must do  
To turn aside the thunder cloud,  
The earthquake too.

“Beware the wiles of yonder quack  
Who stuffs the ears of all that pass.  
I—I alone can show that black  
Is white as grass.”

They shout through all the day and break  
The silence of the night as well.  
They’d make—I wish they’d *go* and make—  
Of Heaven a Hell.

A advocates free silver, B  
Free trade and C free banking laws.  
Free board, clothes, lodging would from me  
Win warm applause.

Lo, D lifts up his voice: “You see  
The single tax on land would fall  
On all alike.” More evenly  
No tax at all.

“With paper money,” bellows E,  
“We’ll all be rich as lords.” No doubt—  
And richest of the lot will be  
The chap without.

As many “cures” as addle-wits  
Who know not what the ailment is!  
Meanwhile the patient foams and spits  
Like a gin fizz.

Alas, poor Body Politic,  
Your fate is all too clearly read:  
To be not altogether quick,  
Nor very dead.

You take your exercise in squirms,

Your rest in fainting fits between.

'Tis plain that your disorder's worms—

Worms fat and lean.

Worm Capital, Worm Labor dwell

Within your maw and muscle's scope.

Their quarrels make your life a Hell,

Your death a hope.

God send you find not such an end

To ills however sharp and huge!

God send you convalesce! God send

You vermifuge.

n/a