



**CAROLINE H. PEMBERTON**  
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## CAROLINE HOLLINGSWORTH PEMBERTON: PHILADELPHIA SOCIALIST CHAMPION OF BLACK EQUALITY

By PHILIP S. FONER<sup>\*</sup>

OF ALL the discussions on the Negro question in the Socialist press between the 1901 and 1904 national conventions, the least compromising and most advanced came from the pen of the assistant secretary of the Pennsylvania state committee of the Socialist party, Miss Caroline Hollingsworth Pemberton.<sup>1</sup> Miss Pemberton was descended from an old Quaker family. She was the daughter of Henry Pemberton, scholar, scientist, and author of *The Path of Evolution* among other works. Her uncle was General John C. Pemberton of the Confederate army. As a young girl Miss Pemberton spent months with her uncle's household in the South and came to know firsthand conditions of the Southern blacks.<sup>2</sup>

The fact that the niece of a Confederate general, the defender of Vicksburg, should write so sympathetically on the Negro question did not escape attention in the contemporary press<sup>3</sup> even though so little is paid to it today that Miss Pemberton's name does not appear in any work on American Socialism and is not even listed among the hundreds of entries in *Index to Women of the World*, published in 1970.<sup>4</sup>

Miss Pemberton first aroused some attention with the publication of two novels: *Your Little Brother James* (1896) and *Stephen the Black* (1899). The first novel demonstrated Miss Pemberton's interest in the problems of the poor (which she also evinced in letters to the press). She contended that environment was more important than heredity in the development of a child's character. She

<sup>\*</sup>The author is Professor of History, Lincoln University, Pennsylvania. This article will be a chapter in his multivolume *The Black Experience in American Socialism*.

<sup>1</sup> *Chicago Socialist*, July 9, 1902.

<sup>2</sup> Henry R. Pemberton to author, Wayne, Pennsylvania, April 10, 1970.

<sup>3</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, June 24, 1903; *The Worker*, July 26, 1903.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Pemberton died on February 5, 1927, but not a single Philadelphia paper carried an obituary notice. There is no biographical sketch of Miss Pemberton in any work on American biography, and it is all but impossible to find material about her in any library.

described how James, born in the slums and neglected by his mother, was transformed from a juvenile offender, judged incorrigible by the courts and suited only for the reformatory, was transformed into an entirely different being when placed with a family in the country where he received attention, love, and education. The whole point of the novel was to demolish the widespread conception that children of the poor, inhabiting the slums, were products of natural depravity, and that society could only be protected from their criminal tendencies by keeping them locked up in reformatories.<sup>5</sup>

In 1897 Miss Pemberton was in the deep South, probably Alabama, and she drew on her experiences in writing her novel *Stephen the Black*. The novel revealed both the author's knowledge of the conditions under which Southern blacks lived as well as her indignation over what she had seen during her visit. But it also reflected her disdain at the indifference to these conditions in white Philadelphia and the hypocrisy of many of those in her social set who were prepared to donate to black educational institutions in the South but were unwilling to offer blacks opportunities to use the talents they acquired in these institutions. She felt that they were primarily concerned that the Negro remain in his place doing menial work.

The indignation that flows through the novel was expressed, claims Professor Rayford W. Logan, when the nadir of Negro rights was in full operation, characterized in the South by disfranchisement, segregation, peonage, and lynching, and by acceptance in nearly all of the North of the Southern solution to the Negro problem.<sup>6</sup> It was rare, indeed, for a white Northern woman, and especially one with close links to Southern families, to concern herself so fully and sympathetically with the deteriorating status of the Negro.

*Stephen the Black* opens with a lucid picture of the failure of legal emancipation to change fundamentally the poverty-stricken status of Southern blacks. "Ignorance enveloped them still, as in the days of slavery. They worked steadily and uncomplainingly, but only a very few of them had land, houses, money, or education. They lived in the same miserable cabins; they toiled for the benefit of others;

<sup>5</sup> Caroline H. Pemberton, *Your Little Brother James*, with an introduction by H. Clay Trumbull (Philadelphia, 1896).

<sup>6</sup> Rayford W. Logan, *The Negro in American Life and Thought: The Nadir 1877-1901* (New York, 1954).

they reaped not what they sowed." She describes the vicious sharecropping system which replaced plantation slavery and how the master received the bulk of what the blacks produced. "They had all they could do to keep alive that year: and the master remarked grimly, 'Fill up your stomach with freedom boys,' when he saw their disappointed looks and heard the apprehensive murmur that the supply of food received in exchange for cotton would not last them until the next crop was grown and picked."<sup>7</sup> Later she describes the division after the cotton had been sold, and how little was received by the sharecropper. Wesley Anderson, a former slave, "sat in his cabin discussing with Stephen the mystery of his empty pockets. The cotton he had raised had been sold by his landlord, who after deducting the expenses of living, the price of the ox, and the interest of his mortgage returned to him a statement in which it appeared that Wesley was still in arrears for the interest that had been accumulating on the ox." Miss Pemberton describes how the illiterate Anderson was cheated by the landlord-storekeeper who kept the accounts, charged the sharecropper whatever he wished for supplies, and falsified the amounts he purchased so that the black was literally being swindled out of his just earnings.<sup>8</sup>

Stephen Wells (*Stephen the Black*), with whom the sharecropper discusses his sad plight, is a graduate of Tuskegee Institute, who starts a school in this typical Southern community. Anxious to help his people escape from peonage through education, he quickly discovers that the white community is determined to prevent any improvement in the condition of blacks, and that they are ready to resort to every tactic, including lynchings, to frustrate his plans. At first he gives way to despair. "'God of my fathers' his spirit cried out, 'why am I—why is my race thus pilloried in the midst of the white man's civilization? What have my people done to deserve a fate like this?'" But his despair is lifted by the urgent need of his people for some aid:

There came into his mind a picture of the black field-hands among whom he had chosen to cast his lot. He saw them bowed down with heavy toil and blinded by ignorance, appealing to him for aid with outstretched, groping

<sup>7</sup> Caroline H. Pemberton, *Stephen the Black* (Philadelphia, 1899), 13-4, 174-75. *Stephen the Black* was reprinted by Books for Library Press in 1972 as part of the Black Heritage library collection. But the reprint contains no discussion of either the author or the book.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 176-77.

hands and weary eyes. He turned to the thought of them with a cry of love and tenderness in his heart. They were his brothers because they needed him, and not because their skins were black like his. Among them he could work for humanity, for country, for race, for God! No man could take from him *that* privilege!<sup>9</sup>

Stephen leaves for Philadelphia to raise money for his school, having been told while at Tuskegee that there were wealthy philanthropists in the City of Brotherly Love interested in helping the Southern Negro. He quickly discovers that these white philanthropists were ready to help certain Southern black colleges miles away from where they might possibly come into contact with those who were being helped. They had no interest in meeting blacks personally; they were embarrassed, made uncomfortable, and not a little frightened when approached by Stephen. Stephen dimly discerned "what may be described as the national attitude of the average white American toward the black. For thirty years it has been his habit of mind to look over, by, or beyond the black man, but never at him. Though northern cities may teem with representatives of the liberated race, the white American of the North knows the black only by the dreadful things he reads about him in southern dispatches."<sup>10</sup>

Unable to make any headway among rich whites, Stephen is compelled to look for work. But he was wise in the ways of Northern society and knew that his training at Tuskegee would not help him in his pursuit of work for which he had been trained.

Although Stephen was a good penman, an accurate accountant and a clever carpenter, he was too well acquainted with the peculiar form of race prejudice in the North to waste time seeking employment in any of these lines. Through the efforts of a friend, he secured a position as a waiter in a large summer hotel situated at a fashionable seaside resort, and as it was now open and guests were pouring in plentifully, his services began without delay.

Among his fellow-waiters were graduates of training schools established for the industrial development of the race. They had become skilled craftsmen and were striking examples of the satirical benevolence of the North which

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 160-61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 204-05.

bestows the handsome accomplishment of a trade on a black, and then commands him to starve or steal rather than live by it.

The head-waiter was a graduate of Harvard and had been selected with great care, not because of his Greek and Hebrew accomplishments (of which the proprietor indeed knew nothing) but because his honesty was unquestioned, his habits beyond reproach, and his command of men, napkins and china equal to that of a great general over an army. His name was Henry Howards; he was a coal-black negro of good height and heavy build; his expression was thoughtful and his smile pleasing.<sup>11</sup>

As the waiters were excellent singers, the headwaiter suggested, after he learned of Stephen's mission, that they give a concert for the benefit of his school. The waiters responded enthusiastically and sold tickets to the wealthy white guests. Before the concert was to begin, Stephen delivered a short speech in which he told of his school and what he hoped to accomplish for his people. When he concluded, a wealthy guest observed that she had once been a great friend of the negro but now had come to the conclusion that "a great deal of money had been thrown away on educating him above his position. The race had become shiftless and good-for-nothing. The colored people needed to be made to work. Freedom had done them no good." Furious, Stephen, forgetting that he was supposed to act the role of a menial, cried out angrily: "My people have never eaten

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-13. It is rather strange that in a letter to *The Christian Recorder*, the official organ of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, published in Philadelphia, the same year in which this criticism of opportunities for blacks in Philadelphia appeared, Miss Pemberton, after conceding that in many Northern communities, the Negro's problem was "how to make a living in a community where many labor unions and a peculiar form of prejudice combine to shut the doors of industry in his face," in Philadelphia, "at least if in no other, he is solving his 'problem' creditably and with amazing success." (*The Christian Recorder*, May 11, 1899.) Actually, as W.E.B. Du Bois made clear in his monumental study in 1899, Miss Pemberton's description in *Stephen the Black* was more in keeping with reality than was her conclusion in *The Christian Recorder*. "No matter how well trained a Negro may be, or how fitted for work of any kind," wrote Du Bois, "he cannot in the course of competition hope to be much more than a menial servant . . . . He cannot become a mechanic except for small transient jobs, and he cannot join a trades union." (*The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* [Philadelphia, 1899], 23.)

Probably in her desire to refute the argument of John Hames Ingalls, former Senator from Kansas, that there was no room for blacks in the United States and that Northern opinion would not tolerate a place for blacks in the cities of the North in other than the most menial capacities, Miss Pemberton drew an exaggerated picture of opportunities for blacks in Philadelphia.

bread that they've not earned,—they've paid double the price of every mouthful that the white man has paid.”<sup>12</sup>

The “great lady” rose from her chair in indignation, swept majestically out of the room, and promptly told the other guests about the insulting conduct of the Negro waiter. The result was that except for the nurses and children, no one came to the concert. The receipts amounted to next to nothing. Stephen's hopes were crushed. “To add to his depression, the evening papers told a terrible tale of massacre in one of the southern states—the victims being as usual, accused, untried, defenceless blacks.”<sup>13</sup>

Out of despair, Stephen all but gives up hope for his school and his people. White America was too powerful and black Americans too degraded by centuries of exploitation ever to hope for change. But Howard, the headwaiter, reminds him that he knows nothing of the history of his people, that black Americans are descended from the Ethiopians and other great civilized people of ancient times. In time black Americans would regain their heritage. It would require patience and the kind of work Stephen had been doing in his Southern community. But their rise was inevitable.

Encouraged, Stephen continues at his work. When a Quaker family, learning of his plans for his school, add to his earnings with a check for two hundred dollars, he has enough to pay his school's expenses for several months.

When Stephen returns to the Southern community, he and several blacks organize a society to study improved methods of agriculture. The plan was to purchase land, sell it in small lots to members on credit, and gradually enable blacks to escape from sharecropping and become independent farmers and homeowners. But when the officers of the association try to purchase land, they discover whites will not sell at any price. The blacks are forced to remain tenants. “This kept them poor and at the mercy of their landlords.”<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile, the school progresses, but progress alarms the whites who threaten to burn the building. To prevent this, blacks arm themselves and guard the school every night, drilling during part of the day with their arms. Alarmed that this will bring on a race riot with an orgy of lynchings, Stephen threatens to leave the community unless the armed patrol is disbanded. After an exciting de-

<sup>12</sup> *Stephen the Black*, 214-15.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 216-17.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 240-43.

bate, the blacks agree to cease the patrol on condition that a dozen be permitted to sleep in the building. "They came late, slept on the floor with a blanket apiece to cover them, and departed early in the morning." Learning of these safety precautions, the whites abandon plans to destroy the school.<sup>15</sup>

*Stephen the Black* ends with the murder by white vigilantes of Theresa, a black woman who has secretly married Ralph Aikens, a wealthy white man who had fallen in love with her. Stephen buries her and dedicates his life to continue his work for his people in the small Southern community.

*Stephen the Black* is not great American fiction. Nor is it free of ideological weaknesses; there is a good deal of discussion of the conflict between the white and black blood in both Stephen and Theresa. Despite its stilted language and this particular weakness, *Stephen the Black*, for its time, was a remarkable novel, fully as important as *Doctor Huguet*, Ignatius Donnelly's novel, published in 1891, about a white man turned black, who learns the daily humiliation of being a Negro in American society.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, it provides a better picture than does Donnelly's novel of the terrible system of peonage under which millions of Southern blacks lived, the hypocrisy of Northern white philanthropy, the failure of industrial education to solve the economic problems of young blacks, and the inability of Southern blacks to purchase land, even when they had mastered scientific agriculture in order to escape peonage. Furthermore, the novel portrays sympathetically the efforts of blacks to resist their exploitation and achieve a better way of life. It bluntly points out that it was not through lack of initiative and self-effort, but Southern violence and Northern indifference, that they had not been successful. The novel was, indeed, a good antidote to the feeling so common in the United States at the time it was published that white America had done enough for the Negro, that blacks had not known how to use their freedom, and that the solution of the race problem should be left to white Southerners who best understood the Negro.

In the sections of the novel dealing with the secret marriage between Theresa and Ralph Aikens, Miss Pemberton makes it quite clear that she condemns the laws and the public sentiment in the

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 246-47.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of *Doctor Huguet*, see John Patterson, "Alliance and Antipathy: Ignatius Donnelly's Ambivalent Vision in *Doctor Huguet*," *American Quarterly*, XXII, (Winter, 1970), 824-845.



South against intermarriage and the danger of miscegenation. She made this clear, too, in a letter published in the *Springfield (Mass.) Republican* of February 24, 1899, in which she criticized Charles Francis Adams for calling for complete prohibition of intermarriage between Anglo-Saxons and an "inferior race." Miss Pemberton denounced this stand as "the grossest encouragement to vice," noting that white men in the South continued to have sex relations with black women but then compelled the black community to assume the burden of the care and support of their offspring. She warned white Southerners that their practice of forcing black women to submit to their sexual advances could have serious consequences. If it were true, as they (and Charles Francis Adams) insisted that the Anglo-Saxon race was so very superior, they were infusing black women with that superior blood. "The blood of those 'virile Anglo-Saxons' having passed into veins of an oppressed and suffering people, is bound to endow their leaders with the courage and tenacity to resist and to overcome."

This letter was only one of several Miss Pemberton published in the *Springfield Republican*, *City and State*, and *The Christian Recorder* dealing with the Negro question at the turn of the century. (She also published several in the *Springfield Republican*, the leading anti-imperialist daily newspaper, condemning the imperialist robbery by the McKinley administration of the independence of the people of Hawaii, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and especially the Philippines.<sup>17</sup>) Indeed, one paper cited Miss Pemberton's letters as the outstanding example of "defense of the southern negro, and protest against the slanders that have been so persistently circulated against the race." It noted that they were written by "the niece of the famous confederate general, John Clifford Pemberton."<sup>18</sup>

Despite several factual errors, the letters were outstanding for the period. They described in detail and condemned the sharecropping system in the South, pointing out that it had created "labor conditions similar to those found in Puerto Rico and other tropical islands" and had reduced blacks to a status not too far different from slavery. She criticized the apparent indifference of Northern whites to the reign of terror against blacks in the South; denounced Northern newspapers for assuming the guilt of Negroes lynched by

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, *City and State*, June 15, 1899; *Springfield Republican*, July 12, 1900.

<sup>18</sup> *Scranton (Pa.) Republican* reprinted in *Springfield Republican*, September 18, 1900.

Southern mobs, pointing out that the victims of lynch mobs were "put to death without evidence, identification or trial," and accused Northern capitalists of hypocrisy because they believed that they had done their duty to the Negro by mailing a check "to the principal of a colored industrial training school" while denying the graduates jobs in their shops and factories.

What the negro needs more than anything else is a diversified opportunity for industry. This the average white man seems determined he shall not have, and even the philanthropist shuts his door on the negro who appeals to him for work, after having benefitted by his liberality to the extent of a "free scholarship." What a satire this is on the white man's logic.<sup>19</sup>

On two occasions Miss Pemberton used the columns of the *Springfield Republican* to publicize letters she had received from Miss Georgia Washington, a young black Superintendent of the People's Village School, Mt. Meigs, Alabama, in which the black educator graphically described the serf-like conditions of her people and appealed for aid in her efforts to introduce education among illiterate black masses. Introducing one of Miss Washington's letters, Miss Pemberton, reflecting her strong anti-imperialist views, noted that her young friend "does not ask for Maxim guns, troops or battleships—not even the tiniest gunboat is asked for," and that she "does not seem to be aware . . . that the most popular kind of missionary zeal, nowadays, is that which comes out of guns—and I have left her in this happy ignorance, trusting that she may find through your columns some old-fashioned believers in the type of Christianity which her work represents."<sup>20</sup> The satire was almost worthy of Mark Twain's great anti-imperialist article "To the People Sitting in Darkness."

Several of Miss Pemberton's letters were reprinted in other newspapers, but one reached a nationwide audience through the *Literary Digest*. This was Miss Pemberton's vigorous response to an address on "The Negro Problem in the South" by Charles Dudley Warner, president of the American Social Science Association, before the association's meeting in Washington, D.C., May 8, 1900. In his ad-

<sup>19</sup> *Springfield Republican*, April 17, June 6, 1899, September 11, 1900; *The Christian Recorder*, May 11, 1899; *The Public*, May 16, 1899; *City and State*, May 11, 1899.

<sup>20</sup> *Springfield Republican*, May 10, 1900.

dress, published in the *Springfield Republican* of May 10, 1900, Warner contrasted the beneficial effects of slavery upon the Negro with the injurious effects wrought by the attempts since his freedom to give him a higher education. Warner contended that under slavery, "the negro was taught to work, to be an agriculturalist, a mechanic, a material producer of something useful," while "our higher education applied to him in his present development operates in exactly the opposite direction." He judged Negro colleges in the South a total failure. Instead of stimulating industry, thrift, and "the inclination to settle down to the necessary hard work," they had bred idleness, indisposition to work, "a vaporous ambition in politics and a sort of conceit of gentility of which the world has already enough." Warner concluded that the condition of blacks in the South was "lower than it was several years ago, and that the influence of the higher education has been in the wrong direction."

Warner's address was widely applauded. It fit neatly into the general view that the Southern Negro was destined to be only "the hewer of wood and drawer of water" and should be contented with this status. But wide attention was also given to Miss Pemberton's response in the *Springfield Republican*. In reprinting sections of her letter, the *Literary Digest* called attention to the fact that she was the niece of a Confederate general, "an able defender of the colored race, and is the author of the recent novel, 'Stephen the Black.'"<sup>21</sup>

In her response, Miss Pemberton graphically described the sad condition of blacks under slavery and noted the small likelihood of their obtaining the industrial education Warner believed was one of the benefits of slavery. She continued:

I take exception to Mr. Warner's attitude toward the colleges that have been started for the advancement of negro education. It is fashionable to deride them. It is considered in good taste to sneer at the negro who can read Latin or Greek, or who aspires to be anything more than a hewer of wood or a drawer of water. Does Mr. Warner not know (along with the other good people who sincerely want to help the negro) for what purpose these colleges were started? Has he forgotten that there were no public schools in the South for either race at the close of the war, and that up to the present day every school-teacher of colored children south of Maryland must be drawn from the negro race, in deference to a universal Southern

<sup>21</sup> *The Literary Digest*, XI, (May 26, 1900), 630.

sentiment, which proclaims it a degradation for white people to teach them? Not only is it the vocation of these struggling colleges to provide teachers for the whole of the black South, but on their efficiency depends also the training of negro clergymen to minister to the moral and spiritual needs of the people. Where else are these people to look for guidance, if not to their teachers and pastors? And are the blind to lead the blind and both to stumble along in dense ignorance together?

There was not the slightest danger, she noted, of the Southern negro becoming overeducated. The real danger that the mass of the blacks faced was being undereducated. The Negro masses, except in the towns and cities, had little opportunity "to obtain even the rudiments of an education."

A public-school system of three-months' schooling, without text-books or school-houses, and which opens its schools in deserted log cabins or colored meeting-houses five, ten, or fifteen miles apart, is not likely to prepare many pupils for the "negro colleges" that Mr. Warner so much dreads. The public schools in the Philippine Islands would probably compare favorably with those provided for negro children in many of our Southern States—that is, for negro children on the plantations, where illiteracy often claims 70 per cent of the population.<sup>22</sup>

The *Boston Transcript* reprinted Miss Pemberton's letter in full and commented: "In this woman's quick intelligence, sound intuition, deep sympathy, and undoubted knowledge of the facts of the situation there seem to be gathered up more truth and justice than in any of the labored and pretentious attempts to state the problem and furnish a solution."<sup>23</sup>

Caroline M. Pemberton brought these qualities, especially "deep sympathy and undoubted knowledge of the situation," with her when she became a member and official of the Socialist party. Her conversion to socialism, as she explained in her article, "How I Became A Socialist," was almost by accident. One of her letters in the *Springfield Republican* brought a response from a Socialist who "pointed out the overwhelming power of wealth—the plutocratic nature of our government—and suggested that a study of Socialism

<sup>22</sup> *Springfield Republican*, May 14, 1900.

<sup>23</sup> Reprinted in *The Literary Digest*, XI (May 26, 1900), 630.

would throw light on the political situation." At his advice, she read *The Fabian Essays in Socialism* with George Bernard Shaw's opening chapter, "The Economic Basis of Socialism," a work which had already revolutionized the opinion of the British public toward Socialism. Although she went on to read William Morris and Edward Bellamy, she had already been converted to Socialism by her reading of the work of the British evolutionary Socialists.

Just precisely when Miss Pemberton's conversion to Socialism occurred is difficult to tell, but it must have been late in 1900, for in her letter published in *City and State* of February 26, 1901, she writes as a Socialist. Miss Pemberton criticized an article in the reform and anti-imperialist weekly published in Philadelphia by Herbert Welsh, in which the writer argued that "to give food to poor people simply because they are hungry is to demoralize their self-respect, while to encourage them to profess religion in the hope of getting more is to ruin their body and soul for ever." Such people, Miss Pemberton noted caustically, claimed to be friends of the poor. But real friends of the poor do not, like the author, "belong to any societies to 'Teach the Poor How to Live on Fifteen Cents a Day and Save Money for Their Old Age.' " The real friends of the poor are those who understand that as long as our present social conditions continue, poverty would also continue and therefore seek to change these conditions. Suppose, she asked, the poor should inquire of these so-called friends:

Friends are generally willing to share with each other. We work in your husband's factory, and his large income is the result of the work of our hands. *He sells all that we make*, yet he gives us barely enough to keep body and soul together. Dear, beautiful lady friend, persuade this husband of yours to make a fair division of the profits with us, for we make all that he has! Do this in the name of the friendship you profess, and, if you succeed, you will not need to come here so often to see if we are starving. You can take a rest; and we will move into a good neighborhood and send our children to school regularly.

At one time Miss Pemberton believed that black extremists like Socialist Reverend Reverdy C. Ransom should be denounced for urging armed self-defense, and that patience, as counselled by T. Thomas Fortune, was the correct answer. In a letter to the *Springfield Republican* in praise of a brilliant anti-imperialist essay written by Kelly Miller, black professor of mathematics at Howard

University, and published in the anti-imperialist daily on September 7, 1900, Miss Pemberton emphasized that if only the whites in the North and South would be true to their own best interests, the Negro problem would be solved. But that was before she was converted to Socialism. Now she was convinced that good will was not enough, that the entire social system had to be changed and a new society created free of the racism inherent in capitalism before the problem could be solved. After a good deal of seaching—she did not yet know a single Socialist—she hunted out the Socialist party of Philadelphia, paid her membership dues, and began attending party meetings.<sup>24</sup> Shortly thereafter she contributed her first analysis of the Negro problem from a Socialist point of view.

On November 7, 1901, *The Worker*, the Socialist weekly published in New York City, carried the first of a series of four articles by Caroline H. Pemberton entitled, "The American Negro's Problem: Another View of the Race Question Considered in the Light of Economic Conditions." The editor introduced the series with the notice that since Miss Pemberton was a member of a family that "distinguished itself on the Confederate side in the Civil War," and had "closely observed conditions in the South in recent years,"<sup>25</sup> she was "especially qualified to discuss the negro question without being open to the charge of Northern prejudice." No further explanation was offered on just what constituted "Northern prejudice" on the Negro question, but perhaps the editor had in mind criticism by Southern delegates at the Indianapolis convention that comrades in the North simply did not understand the Negro question in the South.

Miss Pemberton's articles furnished no comfort to Southern Socialists who hoped the party would understand the white point of view in that section. The first article attacked the concept that the Southern Negro was fundamentally "an idle, lazy brute, who knows not how to earn a living either with his hands or his brain," that he actually was a "heavy burden on the white population," and was likely to remain so "until Northern philanthropists start enough industrial schools to teach him 'how to work.'" She emphasized instead that the Negro had always been and still was "the basis of every form of industrial enterprise south of Mason and Dixon's

<sup>24</sup> *Springfield Republican*, June 16, 1899, September 11, 1900; Caroline H. Pemberton, "How I Became A Socialist," *The Comrade*, I (May, 1902), 202.

<sup>25</sup> The reference is probably to Miss Pemberton's visit to the "heart of the Black Belt" in 1897.

line," and that whatever he had received since being brought to this country, he had "paid for many times over with his toil."

Next Miss Pemberton challenged the mythology, prevalent even in some Socialist literature,<sup>26</sup> that slavery had been the best of all possible institutions for helpless negroes, that bondage had offered the Negro the guiding intellect and moral support of the superior race, and enabled the Negro to be trained "to habits of industry, and disciplined to good order," thereby lifting blacks up from savagery. According to the mythology, blacks were worse off as a result of the demise of slavery. No longer provided for by a benevolent and paternalistic master, they were suddenly "turned loose on their hands—and not knowing how to 'earn a living.'"<sup>27</sup>

Miss Pemberton noted that slavery had existed for the sole purpose of furnishing "cheap and efficient labor for Southern cotton fields, and other branches of industry." Negro slaves were not kept for pets, but for what they could produce by their labor for a capitalistic system of exploitation to achieve the greatest profits. The treatment of slaves was geared to the extraction of the greatest profits so it was not surprising that they had inadequate food, clothing, and housing. Even if the house slaves were better housed and fed than the field hands, they rarely constituted more than 5 percent of the slave population. Then, to complete the picture of the so-called benevolent institution, there were the horrors of the domestic slave trade, the breeding of slaves in the Upper South to be sold to the Cotton Kingdom where they would be put to work "in gangs under the lash of overseers whose only interest in them was the amount of work they could be made to perform at the smallest possible cost to their owners."

Finally, Miss Pemberton tackled the myth that American slavery was characterized by a considerable degree of contentedness and docility among the slaves, and that during the Civil War, the conduct of the slaves testified to a remarkable loyalty to the master class. She noted the thorough systems of control developed by the Southern ruling class, especially the elaborate and complex system of military control, to maintain its domination over the slaves. But

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Appeal to Reason*, July 13, 1901, February 20, 1909; *The Worker*, May 18, 1902; *Cleveland Citizen*, February 6, 1909; *New York Call*, September 22, 1912.

<sup>27</sup> This view of slavery was given circulation not only in contemporary historical works such as John Fiske's *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors* (Boston, 1897) and Ulrich B. Phillips's *Georgia and State Rights* (Washington, D.C., 1902), but also in the novels of Thomas Nelson Page. (See Harriet R. Holman, "The Literary Career of Thomas Nelson Page, 1884-1910" (unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Duke University, 1947), 59-70.)

she also noted the existence, in the face of these methods of suppression and oppression, of resistance to slavery and observed that "every fugitive slave was a whole insurrection in itself." As for the loyalty of the slaves during the Civil War, the records in the War Department gave the answer:

One hundred and eighty thousand ex-slaves fought for freedom in the ranks of the union army against their former masters. No one denies that they fought bravely. In many cases whole regiments of blacks perished under fire rather than fall alive into the hands of their late masters.

Miss Pemberton concluded her first article with the observation that while martial courage ranked low "as a civic virtue in the estimation of Socialists," for whatever it was worth, "the American black soldier is entitled to the credit of having at least a fair share of it."<sup>28</sup>

One has only to compare Miss Pemberton's article with the writings of Algie M. Simons, the foremost Socialist authority on American history, to see how advanced she was in the literature of the Socialist party on the Negro question. When Simons's *Class Struggle in America* was first published in 1901, it did not even include a discussion of Negro slavery. Later, Simons conceded his oversight and published three articles in the *International Socialist Review* of 1903 on "Economic Aspects of Chattel Slavery in America."<sup>29</sup> But in these articles, Simons did not include a single sentence on the Negro slaves themselves or even deal with the myth of the docile slave. When he touched on the Civil War, Simons did not challenge the myth of the faithful slave. Instead, he argued it was immaterial whether Negro slaves helped free themselves or were freed without their own participation since the war "'freed' nobody, and least of all the negro." In what was probably an attack on Miss Pemberton's first article, Simons declared that the attempts of some Socialists to prove that Negro slaves had participated in their emancipation are essentially meaningless.<sup>30</sup>

While Miss Pemberton did not have the advantage of access to studies in the history of American Negro slavery subsequently

<sup>28</sup> *The Worker*, November 7, 1901.

<sup>29</sup> A.M. Simons, "Economic Aspects of Chattel Slavery," *International Socialist Review*, IV (July 1, 1903), 25-33, IV (August, 1903), 95-105, IV (September, 1903), 164-73.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, IV (September, 1903), 173.



published which authoritatively demolished the mythology of the benevolent, paternalistic institution, the rarity of manifestations of slave unrest, and the loyalty of Southern slaves during the Civil War,<sup>31</sup> her conclusions were basically correct, truly advanced for the time. Her first article was a unique contribution to the Socialist approach to the Negro question.

Miss Pemberton's second article dealt with the post-Civil War South. She mentioned how blacks were robbed of their hard-won civil and political rights after Reconstruction. Unfortunately, she did not deal with another myth which influenced a good deal of Socialist thinking on the Negro question, particularly in the South—the myth that during Radical Reconstruction black voters had been ignorant and easily exploited, the passive pawns of scheming Northern white Carpetbaggers and radical politicians, their leaders corrupt and incompetent, and the Republican administrations in Southern states a tragedy for black and white alike and without the slightest redeeming features.<sup>32</sup> Since it was not until W.E.B. Du Bois read a paper on "Reconstruction and its Benefits" before the American Historical Association in 1910 that the standard accounts of Reconstruction were challenged, it is understandable that Miss Pemberton decided it best to avoid discussion of the question. Her article concentrated on the process by which most blacks after slavery became sharecroppers or tenant farmers, rather than independent, landowning farmers, living and working on land owned by white men, and constantly in debt to their landlords. She had already dealt with this subject in *Stephen the Black* and her letters to the Non-Socialist press, but here she developed it for a Socialist audience and more effectively explained the emergence of semi-feudal conditions in the South. Furthermore, for the first time, she showed how the superexploitation of Southern blacks adversely affected the conditions of white labor nationwide, and how "all other

<sup>31</sup> Such studies include Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956); Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York, 1943); Bell I. Wiley, *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865* (New Haven, 1938); W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1880* (New York, 1935), and a host of articles in scholarly journals.

<sup>32</sup> With an insight rare among Socialist papers, *The Worker* pointed out that a vital flaw of Reconstruction following the Civil War was that when the government—"actuated partly by humane sentiments, but more by economic necessity—set the slaves free forty years ago, it carefully refrained from providing them with land or other means of production." (May 18, 1902.) For a more typical view, see *Appeal to Reason*, July 13, 1903.

forms of labor" were exploited in exact proportion to the exploitation of blacks.

As long as the tiny black child is robbed of school and home to gather cotton from the growing plant, so long must the tiny white child be robbed of school and home to stand by a loom and weave that same cotton into cloth to undersell the cotton mills of the North. As long as the mills of the South can employ labor at 40 cents a day (and children all night), the mills of the North will have to adjust their wage scale to suit, or shut down half the year. . . . Unquestionably the white man pays somewhere for everything the negro is robbed of.<sup>33</sup>

Yet Miss Pemberton made it clear in the beginning of her third article that black and white labor were not equally exploited under American capitalism. It was not correct to argue, one had to conclude from her analysis, that the Negro question was simply a labor question no different for black than for white workers, and that there was therefore no need for any special attention by Socialists to this question. Miss Pemberton put it succinctly:

The dark skin of the negro is the livery of the laboring class in the South. He needs no leather apron or cotton blouse to mark his calling. The Northern white laborer can doff his apron and hide his blouse when it suits his capitalist masters to lift him out of his class and make him one of themselves. With all the old ear-marks carefully obliterated even his old comrades can now hardly recognize him, and his place in their ranks closes up as if had never been.

But the negro can not shed his skin. The white South not only adheres firmly to its traditional scorn of the laborer, but enjoys the immense advantage of dealing with its laborer as a race rather than as a class. If he dare rise above his fellows, he can be pushed back in the ranks and denied the benefits that capitalism is generally willing to bestow on those who can beat it at its own game.

In short, the Negro question was both a class and a race question, and the blacks faced special forms of exploitation under American capitalism not experienced by white workers which required special attention and understanding on the part of American Socialists.

<sup>33</sup> *The Worker*, November 24, 1901.

Miss Pemberton then proceeded to illustrate how the white South applied different principles to different Negroes. As long as the Negro occupied the servile status white Southerners had established for him, he could be accepted even in the white community. But "uppity" blacks who, by dint of enormous hard work and self-sacrifice, overcame the insuperable obstacles confronting the Southern Negro to achieve a higher economic status had to be put in their place and were the main targets of the rigid exclusionist policy. The Negro, in other words, was acceptable so long as he was docile and knew his subordinate place in the Southern scheme of things. Those blacks who did not were guilty of insolence and had to be segregated, deported, or even, as a last resort, exterminated.<sup>34</sup>

While this analysis was an oversimplification, one has but to read the writings and speeches of William Gannaway Brownlow, Henry Watterson, Thomas Nelson Page, Thomas E. Watson, James K. Vardam and other ideologists of white supremacy<sup>35</sup> to realize that Miss Pemberton's discussion was based on solid evidence.

In her final article, Miss Pemberton boldly tackled an issue Socialists were reluctant to deal with—lynching. The 1901 convention had bowed to the Southern Socialists and eliminated the anti-lynching clause in the Negro resolution. Yet the increasing number of black victims of lynch mobs and the increasing evidence of torture, dismemberment, and burning at the stake during the lynchings kept forcing the issue to the forefront. Many Socialists, however, contented themselves with accepting the usual justification for lynching, namely, that it was necessary in order to protect white women from the primitive sexual lust of the black male. Victor Berger did more than accept this thesis; he embroidered it with descriptions of Negroes as depraved degenerates who went around "raping women (and) children" and referred to the "many cases of rape which occurred wherever negroes are settled in large numbers."<sup>36</sup> Debs never stooped to such shocking racism, but he also spoke of the animalism of blacks,<sup>37</sup> a term that was part of the lexicon of justification for lynchings.

Black spokesmen like Frederick Douglass and especially Ida B.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1, 1901.

<sup>35</sup> For a summary of these views, see Lawrence J. Friedman, *The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1970).

<sup>36</sup> *Social Democratic Herald*, September 14, 1901, May 31, 1902.

<sup>37</sup> *International Socialist Review*, IV (November, 1903), 258-59; V (January, 1904), 396.

Wells had already exploded the myth that lynchings resulted from the attempt of Negro men to rape white women,<sup>38</sup> but none of this appears to have had any influence in Socialist circles. Realistically Miss Pemberton's final article was the first effort to deal with this sensitive subject in the Socialist press. She demolished the rape argument with evidence from American history, from her own personal experience in the black belt of the South, and by reference to statistics on lynching. Statistics showed that not more than 25 percent of all the Negroes lynched since 1885 were even accused of such an offense as rape, and that many of those accused and brutally murdered were, indeed, clearly innocent. There was, she concluded, no other way to account for the persistence of this justification of lynching, in the face of all the evidence proving it to be baseless, than that it was part of the apparatus of Southern white supremacy to keep the Negro in total subjugation. It was also part of "the Southern capitalists' inherited antipathy to the existence of a growing class of comparatively independent negroes."

Summing up her view of "The American Negro Problem," Miss Pemberton described it as a Southern and national problem. In the South the Negro's problem was "how to steer his way . . . through a community that wants his work and denies all the rights of his manhood; how to escape his class conditions without letting his exploiter know that he has escaped." Nationwide the Negro's problem was "the labor problem plus the inherited prejudices of employer and fellow workmen in the north, plus the bitter jealousy in the South of a proud people who were conquered by the sword while defending their beloved dogma that 'the negro is not a man.'"<sup>39</sup>

Unlike nearly all Socialist writings of the period on the Negro question, Miss Pemberton did not close with the assurance that Socialism would solve the Negro problem and that, therefore, victory for the Socialist party was the only real answer. She merely said that the solution was the most difficult task ever placed before any race or nation and left it to her comrades in the Socialist party to do something to help in the solution besides passing resolutions.

Although Miss Pemberton's four articles in *The Worker* contained

<sup>38</sup> See Frederick Douglass, "Why Is the Negro Lynched? The Lesson of the Hour," in Philip S. Foner, editor, *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass* (New York, 1955), IV, 491-523; Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors* (New York, 1892); and *A Red Record* (New York, 1900). All three are reprinted in *On Lynchings* by Ida Wells-Barnett (New York, 1969).

<sup>39</sup> *The Worker*, December 8, 1901.

several oversimplifications, they made everything else by Socialists of this period on the Negro question look superficial by comparison. Nevertheless, they were not reprinted in any other Socialist publication, nor even commented on in editorials or in letters to editors. However, one letter to *The Worker* from a correspondent in North Carolina was published as closely corroborating "the account of farming conditions given by Caroline H. Pemberton in a former issue of the paper, which our correspondent had not seen at the time of the writing." The letter invited those in the North who doubted that sharecroppers lived in a state of peonage to try to live for a year under the same circumstances. He would discover what it meant to live under semifeudalism:

For the use of the land he pays to the landowner one-half of all he makes before the expenses of the making and the housing of the crop are deducted—that expenses come from the tenant's half. Then, too, the landed proprietor usually owns a store where the tenants run an account, paying 'time prices,' which means an extra per cent for the privilege. It is either to one merchant or another, thus giving the growing crop as security for credit. Of course, it takes all the poor devil makes, and he actually feels happy if expenses are paid and he can start the next year fresh—"cut down expenses and try to save a little." His ambitions are seldom realized beyond a few dollars which go to "fixing up" personal wardrobe, household or some other necessity which seem to them almost a luxury. Markham need not go to Millet's peasants. Men with the hoe are infinitely sadder pictures if not so strong dramatically.<sup>40</sup>

If nothing else Miss Pemberton made American Socialists conscious of the fact that the Negro's failure to advance substantially in the South after emancipation was due not to the inherent backwardness of blacks or an unwillingness to strive to improve their conditions, but to the existence of a system under which, as Frederick Douglass put it, "the same class that once extorted his labor under the lash, now extorts his labor by a mean, sneaking, and fraudulent device, which is more effective than the lash."<sup>41</sup>

Miss Pemberton's next and final discussion of the Negro question

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, December 1, 1901.

<sup>41</sup> Frederick Douglass in Address on the Occasion of the Twenty-Sixth Anniversary of Emancipation in the District of Columbia, April 16, 1888, and reprinted in Philip S. Foner, editor, *The Voice of Black America: Major Speeches of Negroes in the United States, 1797-1971* (New York, 1972), 526.

in the Socialist press occurred in connection with the controversy aroused by the Louisiana Socialists. In September, 1903, the Socialist locals in Louisiana met to form a state organization. They adopted a platform demanding the enfranchisement of all races, but at the same time advocated the "separation of the black and white races into separate communities, each race to have charge of its own affairs."<sup>42</sup> The Socialist Party National Committee demanded an explanation from the Louisiana Socialists. They replied that racial instincts would never permit intermingling and that the Democratic party was already accusing the Socialists of favoring social equality. To take a different stand than one adopted in the platform was to doom the party in Louisiana. Finally, since Negroes had been effectively disenfranchised in Louisiana by the Grandfather Clause, they could not vote for party candidates and so could make no real contribution to its growth. To court them would antagonize whites who were able to build the party.<sup>43</sup>

While *The Worker* published the correspondence between the national committee and the Louisiana Socialists, it refrained from editorial comment. This was so brazen that Miss Pemberton pointedly asked *The Worker* why it could find ample space to discuss the appointment by Mayor "Golden Rule" Jones of Toledo yet remain silent on the "vastly more important question involved in the Constitution of the Louisiana 'Socialists,' so-called, who have embodied in their manifesto a declaration denouncing any semblance of equality in the union between the white and colored races." She then proceeded to read the Louisiana Socialists a stern lecture. It having been demonstrated again and again that the capitalist class established the myth that the Negro was inferior as a means of profiting by his "illegal and enforced 'inferiority,'" it was clearly one of the most vital principles of Socialism that "such schemes be exposed and traced to their selfish, commercialized sources." It was as important that this be done in Louisiana as in Pennsylvania. "If the Louisiana people cannot bear the truth of the Socialist point of view, is it not a proof that they are not yet ready to uphold the cause of Socialism?" No compromise with capitalism must be the Socialist motto, and this applied in the South as well as elsewhere. If Socialists refused to unite with capitalist parites in the North "to secure a temporary advantage," how could they unite

<sup>42</sup> *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 18, 1903.

<sup>43</sup> *The Worker*, December 6, 1903.

with the "political, social, and economic powers of the South to crush the dark-skinned proletariat for the sake of the profit that lies in his degradation?"

Miss Pemberton applauded the national committee for withholding a charter from the Louisiana Socialists because of their stand "in favor of 'racial distinctions'—a smug phrase for negro degradation." As she explained:

Such a sentiment has no place in any Socialist constitution in any country that the sun shines upon. To admit it for the sake of expediency is to lower our standard and convict ourselves of shameful hypocrisy.<sup>44</sup>

Several weeks later *The Worker* carried its first editorial on the Louisiana controversy. It explained that the Socialist party could not permit the statement in a party platform of the principle of the permanent separation of whites and blacks. To be sure, the blacks through no fault of their own, were inferior to whites, but it was the duty of Socialists to lift them up to a higher level of civilization. If the two races were permanently separated, their ability to perform this noble work would be frustrated.

While capitalism lasts, it is the duty of the Socialist Party so far as it deals with the Negro question as such, to use its influence in favor of the educational and especially the economic uplifting of the black . . . . Under Socialism, however, a segregated place for the Negro would become a viable solution of the race question. But 'social equality' at any time was not part of the objective of Socialism, and the Southern Socialists could rest content that no effort would be made by the national office to force this upon them.<sup>45</sup>

*The Worker's* editorial won applause from many party members.<sup>46</sup> But Miss Pemberton was not among them. She complimented the Socialist weekly for supporting rejection of the Louisiana charter. But she took issue with the assertion that the Negro was clearly an inferior race, and that it was the duty of the superior white Socialists to adopt a benevolent policy toward the inferior race, and charitably uplift it. "Since when, may I ask, have you, a Socialist, become converted to the doctrine of 'benevolence' as a working force to

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, November 15, 1903.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, December 6, 1903.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, December 13, 1903.

bring about the reign of truth and practice?" Speaking not only as a Socialist but simply as "a fellow human being to the negro," Miss Pemberton insisted that no race could be classified as inferior that "rises to the measure of its opportunities," and the so-called Negro race of America, of whom the majorities were "mixtures of various nationalities," could justly be said to have risen to the measure of its opportunities:

Where the environment has been favorable, it has produced (from its working population, too) in a few decades, an astonishingly large number of educated, refined, self-controlled and gifted men and women, who, in obscurity, and often poverty, are leading blameless lives as teachers, professors, clergymen, writers and artists—not to speak of the still larger class who are producing wealth for the masters as peasants and laborers, and whose so-called "degradation" is certainly not greater than that of the despised peasants and laborers of Russia, Italy and other European countries.

She warned that once the Socialists held out to the Southerner the attractive bait of future Negro segregation as an inducement of his acceptance of Socialism, the way would be open to offer inducements to the Christian who objected to the Jews, the American who objected to the Chinese—and so on endlessly she concluded:

If we believe in international Socialism, we cannot judge any race by its progress in what is called "Civilization." Our civilization must first be cured and purified before we can reproach any race because it has not yet learned to wallow in the foul depths of our own hypocrisy and corruption.<sup>47</sup>

Miss Pemberton did not remain in the Socialist party long enough to see how the white supremacists within the party made use of the same arguments about inferior races against "backward races such as Asiatic and African coolies."<sup>48</sup> Her second letter to *The Worker* on the Louisiana controversy was her swan song as a Socialist. We do not know enough about Caroline Hollingsworth Pemberton to be

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, December 20, 1903. In the end Louisiana capitulated. It removed the offending clause from its platform, received its charter, and then proceeded to establish separate locals for blacks without any objection from the national leadership of the Socialist party.

<sup>48</sup> *Monthly Bulletin of the Socialist Party*, November, 1904.



able to explain why she ceased to contribute to the Socialist press or participate in party activities after 1903, just as we are unable to explain why she was so atypical of her culture.

We find a clue in the note published by the Philadelphia *North American* in June, 1903, as an introduction to an article by Miss Pemberton in support of the 100,000 textile strikers, men, women, and children, then engaged in a battle to lower their working hours from eleven hours per day. The article, the paper noted, was of peculiar interest not only as an expression of Socialistic view but "because of the writer's social position and connections." Miss Pemberton, it noted, was a member of a distinguished Philadelphia Quaker family, the niece of General John C. Pemberton of the Confederate army, and daughter of Henry Pemberton, a distinguished scholar and scientist. It then emphasized: "Mr. Pemberton, and, indeed, all the members of her family are strongly opposed to her active interest in Socialism. 'It has caused us a great deal of annoyance and sorrow,' said her father recently."<sup>49</sup> *The Worker* also reported on July 26, 1903, that "Miss Caroline Pemberton of Philadelphia, an able member of the Socialist Party who is lending much assistance to the textile strikers, has deeply displeased her aristocratic relatives by her devotion to the cause of labor." One might conclude that family pressure to force her to abandon her activity in behalf of the Socialist party was too strong for Miss Pemberton to resist. Even today aristocratic relatives of Miss Pemberton refuse to discuss a member of the family who was a So-

<sup>49</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, June 11, 1903. In her article entitled, "Duty of the Poor to Insist on Rights," Miss Pemberton chided the textile strikers for being willing to reduce their wages and definitely to forego any wage increase so as to obtain less hours of work. She insisted that they should not be "begging as a favor what should be their unquestioned right—the right to rest when they are weary from excessive toil." She also criticized the Philadelphia press for praising the strikers for not seeking higher wages. "As if the asking for a tiny raise in wages were in itself a sign of degeneracy or a lack of virtue." She concluded: "Textile workers, be brave in your fight and open-eyed! There is no virtue and no heroism in passive submission to grinding poverty; to conditions that keep your young children in the mills and your wives at the loom, instead of in their homes."

Miss Pemberton's article produced a sharp reply from F.A. Burnett in which he insisted that strikes were useless since only the law of supply and demand determined wages. (*Philadelphia North American*, June 16, 1903.) In her answer Miss Pemberton declared that Burnett's argument showed the need for Socialism, but that meanwhile the strikers should be fully supported because it was "their first manly protest against the system that deals with them as merchandise and reduces them to slavery." "Later on," she predicted, "they will strike at the ballot box. They will vote for Socialism to take the place of capitalism and release themselves from their present enslaved condition." (*Ibid.*, June 22, 1903.)

cialist,<sup>50</sup> who had dared to champion the cause of black Americans, organized labor and the poor in general, and proclaimed: "I am deeply interested in social questions, in the labor problem and in the success of the Socialist party."<sup>51</sup>

Miss Pemberton's only published writings after 1903 is a small collection of poetry, *Phileomon's Verses* issued by the Evergreen Press, Montrose, Pennsylvania, in 1909. It includes two poems which reveal that while she was no longer active in the cause, Miss Pemberton was still a champion of the oppressed. One is "The Breaker Boy," a moving picture of exploitation of child labor in the coal mines and the hypocrisy of the Christian lady who objects to the breaker boy's militancy. The other is "The Patriot" which contrasts the "Song of the Trust" and the "Song of Labor" and demonstrates that it is the spirit of labor which represents the face of liberty.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Apart from a brief letter from Henry R. Pemberton of Wayne, Pennsylvania, April 10, 1970, tersely acknowledging that his niece, Caroline H. Pemberton, had indeed been interested in the Negro question, all correspondence with members of the Pemberton family requesting information about Miss Pemberton have gone unanswered.

<sup>51</sup> *Philadelphia North American*, June 11, 1903. In the same letter to the *North American*, Miss Pemberton wrote: "You are at liberty to describe me as a Socialist, but not as a leader of society; for that I am not and never was, and never would be or could be. How on earth could a Socialist be a leader of society, as some of the papers have described me."

<sup>52</sup> Caroline M. Pemberton, *Phileomon's Verses* (Montrose, Pa., 1909), 9-14, 18-25.