

# LETTERS TO JUDD

AN AMERICAN WORKINGMAN

*by*

UPTON SINCLAIR

Author of "The Jungle," "The Brass Check," etc.

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This book was written in 1925, and was reprinted in 1932 and 1933. I might have rewritten it, but I thought you would learn more by reading it as prophecy.

All our present tragedies existed seven years ago in the seed; and this book put the seed under the microscope, and showed what was coming out of it. What better test of knowledge, than the ability to prophecy? And what better test of a prophecy, than not having to revise it!

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## INTRODUCTION

Judd is an old carpenter who has done odd jobs on our place for the past ten years. Just how old he is I don't know, but he's pretty old; his hands are gnarled and calloused and his finger nails chewed up and broken by hammer blows; there are knotted veins in his forehead and his hair is grey and thin. But he works like a beaver, and don't you ever hint that he should slow up—he will hoot at you, and say that he can lick any young feller with one hand. He will hitch his harness into place—he has a rupture, and wears some kind of truss—and will slide under the house to connect up a gas pipe, and come crawling out with his hair and eyes full of cobwebs, and my wife will say, "Come out of there, you old gopher." He adores her when she talks to him like that, he would lift the side of the house to please her. The two of them engage in violent arguments as to how a door ought to be hung or a tree pruned. "Nobody ever did it like that," Judd declares—and considers that sufficient reason. He does it her way, so long as she stands over him; but if she leaves, he is apt to finish it his way—for, after all, it is manifest that a man knows better than a woman.

Ten years ago our home was a row of vacant lots on a hillside, covered with weeds and rusty cans. Now it is an old-fashioned Southern house with a long veranda and a row of white columns, surrounded by rose gardens and grape arbors and fig trees and oranges. The house was made out of five old houses, bought for a little more than nothing, and moved onto the place and joined together; the gardens were made by my wife sticking baby plants into the ground, and holding a hose over them all day and part of the night. I helped a little; and two school boys helped after hours; but Judd was the Hercules who did most of this mighty labor. He would rout us out of bed in the morning, and many a time we have worked after dark, to get a roof over something before it rained, or finish a concrete job before it set. What is there we haven't done together?—digging ditches and setting fence-posts, hoeing weeds and pruning trees, laying shingles and tacking down tarpaper, cleaning old furniture and painting an automobile, moving a garage and installing a sprinkler system. And always with a presiding female genius hovering over us, exhorting and appraising, mostly on the debit side! Never was there such a woman for saving, and for devising, and for utilizing. Once Judd in his digging came upon a rusty iron

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