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EDITORIAL

THE HOLLOWNESS OF LAWSONISM.

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THAT Lawson has raised a storm is undeniable; that the storm thus raised can not fail to do some good can not be successfully gainsaid. That, however, the storm is a purely destructive {one}, without depositing a particle of constructive seed, is brought out clearly by the man's latest sallies.

Lawson does more than to castigate, he does more than to flay, he does more than to pillory the elite of the Capitalist Class. He gives an insight into the system of the capitalist madness. But after all he has said, what is there to build upon?—NOTHING, at least nothing for the wage earning, or wage slave class. In fact, if Lawson is the man of deep penetration that he is taken for, he can not but be aware of his concealing the very information that would benefit the workingman. His latest broadside against the life insurance companies brings out the fact clearly.

Column upon column of scathing eloquence is bestowed upon the swindling insurance presidents and directors; it is shown there how these swindle the—whom?—the stockholders of the company. No sane man will suppose that any workingman is a stockholder. Lawson works himself into a fury upon the official felonies of the officers of the companies, but he does not dare to say, his fury only implies it, that the policyholders are sufferers. Not all the peculations of the directors can be supposed to affect the policyholders. Lawson does not say that these suffer; he tries to imply as much; but does not venture to go so far and he stops short, just where the wage earner “comes in.”

The screw that is pressing down the workingman is privately owned improved machinery. That displaces labor and thereby overstocks the labor market. In order to acquire these improved machines the capitalist needs cash. Banks furnish him that but at interest, and he must return the principal. He prefers to get the cash without interest and to keep the principal. As a director or the kin of a director in

one of these insurance companies where the directors, from Depew down, stick their hands up to the elbows in cash the ready cash can be got “for keeps.” It is not in “French dinners” that all these misappropriated hundreds of thousands of dollars have gone. French dinners did absorb some thousands. Were it, however, possible to trace the “loans” that the directors raised on worthless securities, or the lump sums that they bestowed upon one another, these would be found to go towards perfecting plants, and that means towards throwing out workingmen. The process would go on anyhow; by the theft system it proceeds faster.

Why does not Lawson mention this? Is he not aware of it? Hardly! The fervid language of Lawson would then greatly urge the advent of the day when general information would be had upon ills that follow in the wake of the private ownership of the machinery of production. The spreading of such knowledge would be to goad a real revolution. Such a revolution would swallow up the Lawsons themselves. Hence the goad of Lawson’s articles must be made hollow and even prickless—as far as Labor is concerned.

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