

JOBS AND JOBLESS.

Much is said during the commercial solstice regarding the man out of work. During the summer when enterprises in the open are under way, and when hoboing is a pleasant diversion for the indolent, the question of the unemployed is of comparative insignificance. But cold weather stops field work, and it drives the hobo to his haven, the city, where organized charity assumes the role of a special Providence. It is then that the problem of the unemployed bulks large in press, pulpit and settlement house.

Every man out of a job is an interrogation point, propounding to society this question: "What are you going to do about me?" The answers of those who concern themselves with social problems are various. Some, their ears ringing with "the poor ye have with you always," adopt a fatalistic view, and throw themselves into the work of organized charity. A few, filled with great energy, or enjoying the success that great energy and chance have already won, deny that there is any involuntary unemployment. Any man, they declare, can get a job if he really wants it. And to prove this assertion a vigorous, self-assertive man, his own feet firmly placed on the ladder leading to higher things, got four jobs in one day.

Each of these answers is limited by so many "if's" that it is of little use to any one who is earnestly seeking a solution of the problem. Granted an economic condition in which the raw material that man must use, the land, is arbitrarily controlled by some to the exclusion

of others, and most certainly the poor will always be with us. On the other hand, granted that a few men are robust and self-assertive, while the mass are not, it will be possible for those few to command jobs. But suppose all men were robust and self-assertive, what then? When Surajah Dowlah, in the Indian uprising of 1756, put 146 British subjects into the Black Hole of Calcutta, a room eighteen feet square, and having two very small windows, it was possible for those nearest the windows to survive the night. But it was physically impossible that all should endure till morning. As a matter of fact only 23 escaped asphyxia. It is unnecessary to say which 23 survived, or why. Though all were British subjects, and all had fought shoulder to shoulder, they no sooner found themselves in the death-trap than every man's hand was against his fellow; and it was the robust, self-assertive men who got to the windows. In the open they were heroes, ready to give up their lives for their country, or for each other; in the Black Hole they were beasts struggling for a breath of air. A robust, self-assertive man might have said in the morning: "There was no need that any one should die. I had plenty of air."

An economic order that is apologized for by pessimistic fatalists, and vouched for by robust, self-assertive men, may be lacking in some of the requirements for the average man. Nor would it be satisfactory if all men were robust and self-assertive. Had all of the 146 prisoners in the Black Hole been equally strong it is more than likely that some of the 23 who survived would have perished. It is possible, indeed, that all might have died. So, too, had

throat" principle that the man over fifty can get a job.

How long will those who profess to be leaders of movements to help labor persist in shutting their eyes to the truth? Why will they continue to walk backward? When will they cease to see things bottom-side up, merely from standing on their heads? Their very first profession, could they really understand it, should open their eyes. They would do something for Labor! Is Labor then so weakly and so helpless that it must be nursed and coddled as a child? What does Labor want? Wealth. Where does wealth come from? From labor applied to land. Is there then no more land upon which Labor may employ itself? There is plenty of land, but— Ah, yes, but! There is more land than Labor can possibly use, but it is hedged round about by legal barriers as effectually as the Garden of Eden was guarded by the angel with the flaming sword. Yet let us not be impatient with our less fortunate brothers. There are more today who see the truth than ever before, and they are multiplying at an ever increasing rate. Let the unemployed draw their belts a notch tighter, and summon what patience they can. We have wandered a long time in the Wilderness, but the Promised Land is almost in sight.

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there been no sickness or accidents among the unemployed, and no weakness, bodily or mentally from heredity or environment, and had all remained below the age of fifty, the man who secured four jobs in one day, while thousands of men were living on charity, might have had a different story to tell. Even had the unemployed escaped all the other ills that befall the flesh, still they would have grown old and there is no place that may be claimed of right in our modern economy by the man of years. Professor Osler was right in a sense that he did not mean and possibly did not know, when he suggested chloroforming men at the age of fifty. A man who has grown up in the same employment may continue in the service one, or possibly two decades past the half-century mark. But let him lose his job at fifty, either through the failure of the company in which he served, or for any other reason, and he will quickly realize that modern economy is based on the young and strong.

The very benevolence of employers is making it harder for the man out of a job. In all the insurance benefits it is stipulated that to become a beneficiary the employe must be under 30, 35, or 40 when he begins service. This is necessary in order that the company may get from him a reasonable amount of service before retiring at 65 or 70. Suppose for a moment that all employers had instituted such a system of benevolence, what would become of the man who for any reason lost his job after he was forty years old? It is only because such benevolence is not yet universal, and many businesses are still run on the "cut-