

defense or to prevent an escape, and then only as the very last necessity,—they are the murderers. Unless responsibility is placed higher up for this crime, precisely such deadly mistakes as this may become one of the exciting possibilities of peaceable use of the sidewalks. It is only by guarding all human life as sacred—securing even the lowest and the worst from arbitrary official assault—that any can be safe. If police authorities may give orders to shoot to kill “notorious criminals” for whose arrest there is no warrant, or may pour bullets into the bodies of strangers whom they fear but might master with their hands, fatal mistakes are almost certain to occur with more or less frequency.

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Judicial Immorality.

When a narrow little judge down in New Jersey decided that “Progress and Poverty” is an immoral book, Henry George characterized him in an editorial head line as “an immortal ass,” and the highest court of the State affirmed George’s judgment. But George was in error on the point of immortality, as it now appears—for the narrow little judge has been forgotten. This episode of twenty years ago is recalled by the recent decision of a narrow little judge down in Philadelphia, that Swedenborg’s “Conjugal Love” is immoral. There seems to be a species of insanity which confuses the unfamiliar and the immoral as if they were the same; but its victims pass away and advancing society forgets them.

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Censorship in the Philippines.

In a lecture at Philadelphia, Frederick Starr, of the University of Chicago, made this statement: “Ten thousand inhabitants died from cholera, and the outside world did not know anything about it. But the United States government does not want you to know anything that is likely to put a truthful aspect on the Philippine situation. We were informed that the cholera interfered with the fleet’s pleasure, but that was about all that was known of the conditions existing.” As Professor Starr was several months in the Philippines (p. 130) and was sent there on a government expedition, his exposure of the way in which this Republic plays at educating its political dependents up to the level of self-governing ability is rather significant.

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The Philippine War goes far to cancel the debt of liberty that the world owes to the United States.—G. P. Gooch, in “The Heart of the Empire.”

PROSPERITY.

Whether or not it be true that “an empty vessel makes the loudest sound,” certain it is that an empty-dinner-pail prosperity fills the greatest number of newspaper columns.

Repeatedly, during the past few months, have the leading metropolitan dailies published “prosperity” articles in a persistent attempt to convince their readers that prosperity had returned once and for all; and as often have they given the lie to their own work by publishing similar articles, seeking to convey a similar impression. If prosperity has returned, how can it repeat the process to-morrow and next month?

In society a lady may be in at three o’clock, out at three-ten, and in again at three-fifteen, without once leaving her boudoir; but until it can be proven that prosperity frequents naught but polite society, the newspapers are wholly unjustified in imputing polite society’s tricks to so prosaic and businesslike a thing as prosperity. Either prosperity is here, or it is not here; and if it be here this week, it cannot come next week, unless it leave meanwhile; and that very leaving is the last thing which the prosperity newspapers will admit.

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Have we prosperity?

Perhaps no better indication of its presence can be secured than that furnished by the extent of unemployment. Unemployment is always present, but at some periods it is much more widespread than at others, and the extent of unemployment, indicating roughly the extent of a lack of demand for labor, is the best procurable index to general prosperity. It shows, with considerable accuracy, the number of empty dinner pails.

The only complete figures on the subject of unemployment are furnished by the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics, and even these figures fail to cover the general situation because they are collected through the secretaries of local labor unions and therefore report employment, not among the working men of the State, but among members of unions. The members of labor unions are, on the whole, more skilled, and therefore more likely to retain their positions than the non-union workers. Figures of unemployment for union members give no idea of the conditions among the unskilled non-union workmen. Nevertheless, the union figures are the only available ones, and, well compiled as they are, they furnish a very fair basis for discussion. The bulletins of the Bureau for June and December, 1908, present some unemployment material of vital interest.

In June, 1908, the Bureau says editorially, on page 129 of its bulletin: "On the last working day of March out of 387,450 members reporting, 138,131, or 35.7 per cent, were idle." In short, at the end of March slightly more than one in every three of the members of the New York trade unions were out of work. Surprising as this may appear, the bulletin continues with a still more startling statement: "Out of 386,115 reporting, 101,466 or 26.3 per cent were idle continuously during the three months of January, February and March."

In view of the fact that a quarter of the members of the New York trade unions were without work during the first three months of 1908, it is small wonder that the Bureau goes on to say:

This is a degree of unemployment unapproached by any previous year since 1897, when the temporary slump in business activity momentarily interrupted the improvement which had set in after the hard times following 1893. For the generally prosperous decade 1898-1907, the highest figures for the first quarter of the year were 27.2 for the last day . . . These, however, were exceptional figures, due to an abnormal amount of suspension of work by strikes and lockouts.

It is therefore perfectly apparent that unemployment was more severe at the beginning of 1908 than at any time since 1897, when the New York Bureau first began its careful collection of statistics on the subject.

The latest figures available are furnished by the bulletin for December, 1908, which has just been published. Editorially this bulletin says:

Not in a dozen years have the percentages of idleness in the third quarter—July, August and September—been much over half as high as in 1908, while for the most recent years the contrast is even greater. Out of 358,706 members reporting, 80,576, or 22.5 per cent were returned as idle at the end of September. The previous high record since 1896 was 13.8 per cent in 1897, while since 1900 the highest figure was 10.5 per cent in 1907.

Thus a condition of affairs prevails in September, 1908, which is wholly unparalleled in the annals of the New York Bureau of Labor. Among the building trades one-third of the men are unemployed; among the clothing and textile trades, 30 per cent; among the wood workers, 31 per cent, and among miscellaneous trades, 37.8 per cent.

Those who are familiar with the figures of unemployment are aware that the summer months always show the lowest percentage of unemployment, and that the percentage of unemployed in September is normally very low. Thus in 1899,

4.7 per cent of the trade union members reporting in New York were unemployed at the end of September; in 1902, 5.6 per cent; in 1905, 5.9 per cent; and in 1906, 5.7 per cent. To these figures, September, 1908, stands out in startling contrast, with the phenomenal percentage of 22.5 unemployed. Thus the last available data shows almost one-fourth of the union membership reporting in the State of New York as unemployed, in a month which normally shows an unemployment of only one-twentieth.

As to the causes of idleness, "lack of work" is made responsible for 88.8 per cent of the number unemployed at the end of September. Of the 80,000 union members unemployed in New York State, nine-tenths are unemployed because there is no employment to be had.

It is interesting to note that the American Federation of Labor, which publishes each month the percentages of unemployment among about 100,000 union men reporting to it, sets the percentage of unemployment for January, 1909, as ten, while for January, 1908, it was nine, and for January, 1907, two. These figures are not at all conclusive, because of the uncertainty of the character of the trades in which those reporting are engaged. They are interesting, however, as indicating the tendency noted by the New York Bureau, toward a greater unemployment in 1908 and 1909 than for twelve years previous.

Unfortunately, no authoritative figures later than September, 1908, are available, but from those already quoted, and from the figures prepared by the American Federation of Labor, this much can be fairly inferred, that the blatant newspaper statements scattered broadcast and heralded with flaming headlines regarding prosperity, are as unjustifiable and as unfounded as statements could conceivably be; and that at the time when the latest complete statistics are available, in September, 1908, unemployment presents a more formidable problem than at any time since 1897, when the New York Bureau of Labor Statistics began its collection of data on the subject.

SCOTT NEARING.

Yet when I go out of doors in the summer night, and see how high the stars are, I am persuaded that there is time enough, here or somewhere, for all that I must do.—Emerson.