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EDITORIAL

A SERMON OVER-HEAD.

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THE warning not to talk over the heads of your audience is undergoing a marked exception along the line of the Second Avenue Elevated road in this city. Electric motor trains are now cruising over-head. In a little compartment in the front car a sermon is being preached worth all the trash that is retailed from the pulpits.

In that compartment sits, as if in solitary confinement, the man who operates the train. Before him are two or three cranks. According as he moves them—with no greater expenditure of strength than a 13-year girl has at command—the train goes forward or back, quickens its pace or slacks up. But the sermon is still more emphatic.

Were the present electric motors a few years old, reminiscences of what was might be wiped out from the short memories of the “operator” and the public; and that way they might fail to understand the text of the sermon. But it happens otherwise. All the elevated trains are not yet run by electricity; not even all the trains on that line. Every little while, between terminus and terminus, an old style train comes down or goes up on the other track. As that train rushes by with its steam engine at the fore, and the same manned with two “skilled labor” men, a fireman {and} the other the engineer, the present “operator” in the compartment peeps out of the window and is given a gauge or measure of his fall. The public also is thus given a chance to remember. Do they realize how many illusions the old style train recalls to their minds? Do they appreciate the full wreckage of their illusions, held up to their thinking tanks by the modern trains?

It is to be hoped so.

Improved machinery, as here graphically illustrated, not only displaces men, but eliminates skill. The former fireman is gone; or is it the engineer? The former

engineer (or is it the fireman) can run the train without skill. What this means to the welfare of the working class it is needless to tell.

And so, over the heads of vast masses of our city population the sermon is being preached asking the question: Could free trade alter this? Could protection prevent the calamity? Could silver standard, or gold standard, or expansion or anti-expansion? In short, is there any help out of the fix but in the Socialist Labor Party, with its program that says that the machinery of production shall be in the workers' hands, and that points the path of the workers' emancipation to be over the prostrate bodies of Capitalist Society and of the Grand Chief Master Arthur class of the Organized Scabbery who are blind-folding the working class to their true interests?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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