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EDITORIAL

FORUM RULES BROKEN.

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IT is not the fair thing to take advantage of an adversary's slip. For once, however, we shall be deliberately unfair. On the second of this month Judge J. Ward Healey delivered an address in Leominster, Mass., before a club called the Forum. The address was on "Education," and the judge opened his address with the statement that he decided to accept the invitation when informed that "the Forum was patterned after that famous body of ancient Rome, where every one was privileged to present his views and arguments." On this principle, the Judge invited the severest criticism. Now, it so happens that "that famous body of ancient Rome," known as the forum, was one in which "everybody" was not allowed to "present his views and arguments." Only the officers of the government were allowed to do so; the masses had to keep respectful silence, interrupted only by their vote; they could say "Aye" or they could say "Nay," and that was the limit of their "presentation of their views and arguments." We certainly, the memories of the Rome forum being invoked, would have kept our peace, except to utter as loud a "Nay!" as possible to the Judge's views. But the Judge having slipped and invited an un-forum-like criticism, we shall avail ourselves of the slip to demolish the gentleman's arguments.

Judge Healey argues for "practical education." He realizes that man does not live by bread alone, and, on the other hand that mental and moral training, without bread, stand on loose foundation. The Judge, accordingly, favors greatly the moral and intellectual development of the child that good schooling in these directions will impart; but he realizes that SOMETHING must be done to enable the child to earn a living when he is grown to manhood, and he correctly indicates that that SOMETHING remains to be done. So far Judge Healey is a veritable Daniel come to judgment. From there on, however, the learned gentleman becomes a Dogberry.

That SOMETHING, according to the Judge, is “manual training.” Plenty and good “manual training,” and the problem is solved. Evidently Judge Healey has run up against the Social Question like a compassless and rudderless ship may be imagined to run up the beach on a moonless night.

The problem is: How can a relatively and absolutely increasing working class be able to find employment under a social system where the number of workers needed must relatively decline?

Obviously, under such circumstances, “manual,” or any other training, is like a plaster on a wooden leg. So long as the superior training is shared by only a few, these few may have advantages over the many. But just as soon as the training becomes general, it can no longer affect any worker for the better. The only difference would be that the employing or capitalist class will be able to make still larger profits. All superior qualifications of Labor cannot choose but fall to the credit of that dog in the manger class that holds the plants of production without which the workingman cannot exercise his labor power.

The solution of the problem against which Judge Healey has bumped his nose will not be found in making the working class more proficient wage slaves. Work for all can come only when the opportunity for earning a living shall be free—and that is out of all question when the land on, and the capital with which to work are private property; it can only come about by making the citizens collectively the owners of the necessaries for work—THAT is the SOMETHING needed.

A more proficient, but toolless, Working Class, Your Honor, will be all the more helplessly plundered; on the other hand, a tool-owning Working Class, however unskilled to start with, will speedily rise to the highest notch of proficiency. The fruits of labor being guaranteed, as they can be guaranteed only under Socialism, the incentive to proficiency will take care of the rest.

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