

The People.

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FIRST EDITORIAL

Available for Other Purposes, etc.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The \$100,000 fan given by Howard Gould to his bride serves an even better purpose than to illustrate the existing contrasts between luxury and misery.

Those who observe the mechanism of Capital superficially, declare off hand that, while it is true that concentration of industry displaces workingmen, yet, they claim, the evil is only temporary, because, to use their own words:

“The discharged men become available for other useful purposes.”

Last week we showed the falseness of the theory that the evil of being displaced is any longer temporary, and also its cruelty. To-day we desire to call attention to the nature of those “other and useful purposes” to which those among the workers are forced to turn, who, being displaced by concentration, are lucky enough to get some other job.

The account of Gould’s \$100,000 fan tells how, “each stick employed a carver a month; that polishers and bleachers worked arduously at it; and that many other mechanics, who would otherwise have starved, got work thereat.”

Such are the “useful purposes” for which labor, rendered superfluous in the production of the necessities of life, becomes available.

With the congestion of wealth in the hands of a few, comes the craving for ostentatious superfluities that, so far from being useful, are useless and often degrading. Neither art, nor ethics, nor yet science is promoted by \$100,000 fans; and yet this superfluity is among the most innocent. The lackeys, flunkeys, footmen, and long retinue of menials whom snobocracy loves to sport in evidence of its towering wealth, are certainly “other,” but can not be termed “useful” purposes for which the displaced workers become available; the concubines, which, like veritable harems, the

Capitalist “pillars of morality” love to sport with, are certainly “other,” but surely not “useful” purposes for which the displaced working girls became available; the dancers of immoral dances at Seeley Dinners, who delight the hearts of our Capitalist rulers, are assuredly “other” but not “useful” purposes for which displaced working women become available; the spies and body guards with which our Capitalists surround themselves, and innumerable such occupations, denote the character of the purposes for which human beings, deprived more and more of the opportunity to labor honorably, are forced to stoop for the sake of existence.

Once Capitalism has reached its present stage of development, it becomes an unmitigated nuisance, to the abatement of which every decent man should devote his full powers.

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

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