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EDITORIAL

THE MILLIONS SPENT IN TRAVEL.

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IN the current discussion of the social problem, much is heard of the “thrift and abstinence” of the Capitalist Class. To the possession of these attributes, the great wealth of the trust and other magnates is held to be due. Yet one cannot take up the newspapers and magazines of the day without becoming aware of the fact that the Capitalist Class is the most extravagant and wasteful class in society, expending millions with a lavish hand, and yet, all this notwithstanding, their wealth increases with leaps and bounds. Here, for instance, is a recent magazine article treating of foreign travel, in which it is estimated that at least \$150,000,000 will be spent abroad this year. The article, discoursing on the expenditures of the various kinds of travelers, observes:

“Andrew Carnegie, who will spend the summer at Skibo Castle in Scotland; J. Pierpont Morgan, who will cruise on his yacht along the shores of the Mediterranean; or Charles M. Schwab, touring with his friends in an automobile in France and Switzerland, will spend in a single summer as much as fifty ordinary tourists to whom a trip to Europe is the event of a lifetime.”

And, the author of those lines may have added, when they return home, instead of finding their wealth diminished, they will find it greatly increased, while that of the fifty ordinary tourists will have decreased to the extent of their expenditures.

Whence comes this paradox? Whence the phenomenon that, despite their waste and extravagance—despite their lack of thrift and abstinence—the wealth of the Carnegies, the Morgans, and the Schwabs grows at an ever greater ratio than their outlays? The history of the stock-jobbing connected with the United States Steel Corporation and the United States Shipbuilding Company, in which the middle class were plucked of millions, answers the question somewhat. But the true answer

is to be found in the ownership and control by the Capitalist Class of the economic, financial and political institutions of the country—the factories, banks, and legislatures, which depend for their success on the operation, savings and support of social forces. In brief, the wealth of the capitalist is due to social exploitation, and not individual thrift or abstinence. Whatever thrift or abstinence exists is that enforced upon the Working Class as a result of this robbery. Thus it comes that the capitalist may live in luxury and waste and yet roll in wealth. Thus it comes that, with the capitalist increases in abundance, despite his dissipation and debauchery, there goes the poverty of the great Working Class—the major part of society—despite its pinching and its suffering!

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