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EDITORIAL

CHILDREN AND ANIMALS.

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BY one of those “accidents” that Providence delights in, the Census report upon Day Nurseries and the revelations made at the January 25 meeting of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals coincided almost to the minute.

Day Nurseries are a comparatively new “philanthropic idea.” It is intended to “free the mother” of the “burden of her babe,” and enable her to go to work in the factory. Aware of the “hardship of motherhood” upon her, inasmuch as it prevents her from helping to increase the family earnings, the philanthropically minded capitalist of both sexes, hit upon the thought of the Day Nursery. There the mother leaves her babe during factory hours. The idea has struck root. In the measure that the earnings of the father declined in the factory States the Day Nursery commended itself. To-day there are such establishments in all but 26 States, and of the 166 Day Nurseries accounted for no less than 118 are mentioned in the four States of New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New Jersey—the leading States of industrial exploitation. The inhumanity of such “philanthropy” is obvious. For the class that reduces the earnings of the father to call “philanthropy” a scheme that deprives both mother and babe of the mutual warmth and support that Nature furnishes and demands, and to place such claims of philanthropy upon the fact that, without it, the family’s necessities of life would be insufficient, is a manifestation of moral and mental perversity. It is an instance of profiting by one’s own wrongdoing. Nevertheless it may be argued: “Such are the conditions, and they being such let’s be thankful for the salve upon the wound, although it be the wound maker himself that furnishes the salve.” The Census figures of Day Nurseries knock the pins from under even that supposition. The total cost of maintenance of the Day Nurseries was \$327,659 in 1903; there were 7,411 “inmates,” that is, babes in that year; and

680 PAID EMPLOYES to run the establishments! No wonder this Census report announces “a not uncommon reluctance on the part of institutions to give even the general facts concerning income and cost”! Even if all of the \$327,659 went to the support of the children, there would be only \$44.03 to each of the poor waifs. That would just be enough to increase the doctors’ bills before the undertaker was called in. That the 680 PAID EMPLOYES fare better needs no saying. In fact, it is obvious enough that the “philanthropy” is not intended primarily for the children: they are the pretext: the real object is to furnish berths for paid employes, the retainers of the capitalist class. The children are but the pretext.

The revelations concerning the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals furnish the companion-piece to the Census revelation concerning Day Nurseries. Bequests ranging from \$16,000 to \$91,000 are spent in \$3,000 for salary of “the President’s assistant”; \$6,000 for “legal expenses” [Depew is not mentioned this time]; \$6,000 for “office salaries and expenses.” In every item the word “other” appears, leaving unspecified the wherefore of the large sums that accompany them. Items are found “to have been carried as assets which were not assets.” Property of the valuation of \$50,000 is rented out [to whom?] for \$100 a year; etc., etc. In short, the benevolence implied in the prevention of cruelty to animals is but a pretext: the real object is jobs of different fatnesses, and opportunities for perquisites of different magnitudes.

The Day Nursery and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals mutually illumine each other. Their joint light, furthermore, illumines capitalist philanthropy as a whole. It is even worse than “stealing wholesale and returning retail,” as the witty Lafargue called it. It is a false pretense, with sanctimonious aid of which to graft.

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

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