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EDITORIAL

## BLESSED ARE THE CREDULOUS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HAT is an eye-opening article contributed in this month's *Chautauquan* by Delia Lyman Porter, the woman factory inspector of Connecticut on "How Connecticut Got Her Woman Factory Inspector." In so far as the steps taken, and the difficulties encountered by the steps, are concerned, there is nothing to distinguish the Connecticut venture from similar ventures in other States. The remarkable, hair-on-end-with-joy setting episode in the affair occurs in Mrs. Porter's closing paragraph—"If every member of a Chautauqua Circle and of a Woman's Club throughout our land becomes thus interested, the threatened contest between labor and capital will never become the terrible fact which is so often foretold." In other words, the labor problem is solved in Connecticut. The solution was reached when a woman factory inspector was appointed.

Such news should be an eye-opener.

Hitherto the impression prevailed that Connecticut was, economically as well as geographically, part and parcel of the United States. The distinction attributed to New Jersey, that it is outside of the country, seems to be a distinction enjoyed also by Connecticut. Elsewhere in the land—men factory inspectors, or women factory inspectors, and factory inspectors or no factory inspectors—the condition of the workers has been going from bad to worse; the unemployed have been growing more numerous; wages, if they rose at all, never kept step with the rising cost of living, which increased over 50 per cent.; the insults, which the factory girls have to put up with, have remained unchanged for the better, in short, all the symptoms that point to an acute contest between the working class and the capitalist class have been on the increase. But this does not seem to be the case in Connecticut—at least not since the appointment of a woman factory inspector.

The eye-opener given by Mrs. Porter throws light, not only on Connecticut, a

State which seems to travel in a blessed orbit of itself. It also throws light upon the Census reports. The light it throws justifies the conclusion that the Census bureau high-handedly insists on keeping Connecticut down to United States conditions—a slander upon Connecticut, according to the rosy picture of Mrs. Porter, a picture that none would gainsay, seeing the lady, being a woman factory inspector in that State, surely must know the conditions prevailing there. The Census reports, accordingly, slander Connecticut most vilely. According to the Census, in Hartford, for instance, the average early earnings of the workers is only slightly in excess of \$500; in New Haven just above \$480; in Bridgeport still lower, \$479; in Danbury lower still, \$469. With such yearly earnings and towering prices, such wages would not point to the Arcadian conditions that Mrs. Porter suggests as the consequence of the State having an additional office-holder in the shape of a woman factory inspector. The Census figures are a slander—wicked, malicious, and with malice pretense—upon the Connecticut Legislators, in Senate and House assembled, and presided over by the Governor, whose hearts were moved with benignity at the prospect of improving the condition of the women workers through a woman factory inspector; the Census figures are a slander on the Connecticut capitalists, who, Socialists say, are no better than capitalists anywhere else, who gladly seconded their political agents in the effort to appoint a woman factory inspector to keep themselves, the capitalists, in order; finally, it is a slander upon the woman factory inspector herself.

Of course, there is an alternative to all this. The alternative is that, sincere though Mrs. Porter is in believing things are as she portrays them, the lady is in error. In which case we must say: Blessed are the credulous for they shall not know horrors—until they fall over their heads like a pile of bricks.

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