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EDITORIAL

THE THAW CASE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

HARRY THAW, who has been remanded to the asylum for the criminal insane, declares positively that the Judge's decision is a wrong done to him. He is positive that he is "perfectly sane"; and his mother and sister, in whose atmosphere Thaw was brought up, join him in the declaration.

Lightheaded people will shrug their shoulders at Thaw's protestations. They will say few lunatics admit their own dementia; while the mother's and sister's views will be brushed aside with the good-natured remark that they are born merely of family affection.

There is in the posture of the Thaws infinitely more than a lunatic's conviction of his sanity, and than the sympathy of relatives.

Thaw was convicted of paranoia, that is, of a vanity so excessive and egotistical that he is dangerous to the community. What richling, born in affluence; reared in the capitalist atmosphere of utter disregard for the comforts, the limbs, aye, even the lives of the working class; brought to man's estate by the standard, that silently sets up the maxim that the success of the capitalist is of such prime importance as to justify any amount of cruelty to encompass it, and that enforces the maxim;—in short, what richling, who goes through such a training, is free from the taint of paranoia?

The following incident happened within the last six months in this city: A well-dressed passenger on the rearmost car of an elevated train opened the rear door and stood on the platform. The conductor approached him with the information that passengers were not allowed on the rear platform, and that his orders were to enforce the rule. The passenger insisted in staying where he was. An altercation ensued. Throughout, the conductor was courteous, but firm. The passenger began to use angry language, but finding that did not avail, and realizing he was no physical

match for the conductor, came in, sat down uttering a volley of imprecations, and gave the conductor this parting shot: "I've more money than you, anyhow!"

The fumes of "money," acquired as it has to be acquired under capitalist conditions, unsettle Reason. If acquired in the volumes that the plutocrat acquires it, "money" turns its possessor into a paranoic. Alcohol is said to have upon some of its victims the effect of causing them to believe that they are "the greatest thing that ever came down the pike." There is a subtle gas emitted by "money" that has the same effect, only intensified many fold, and with results many fold worse.

When Thaw and his relatives declare that he is sane they mean that he is no worse than anyone else of their social set; that such a state is proper and God-ordained; and that he should be free seeing the others are at large.

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