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EDITORIAL

## THE INSUFFICIENCY OF MISERY.

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**F**REQUENTLY is the remark heard in anti-Socialist circles: "The workingmen are too well off to join a revolutionary movement. They must first be more miserable." How false this is, and how utterly insufficient is misery alone to build a revolution, the recent developments in England prove to the full.

In that country the Royal Commission on the Poor Law and Relief of Distress has just rendered its special report. From this report the fact appears that unemployment and consequent destitution have hugely increased in the last year. For the year ended March 31 last, 196,757 persons out of employment applied for relief in England and Wales, London aggregating 49,239 of these, and outside of London 147,518. The previous year the applications were 32,624 in London, and 57,433 in the remaining districts—making for this year an increase of over 50 per cent. in London, and of nearly 200 per cent. outside of the capital.

From the report appears the further fact that destitution has now reached such a pitch in Great Britain that 31 persons out of every thousand were relieved in 1908–9, as against 14 out of every thousand for 1907–8, an increase of more than 100 per cent. over the previous year's number. The exact figures are given an 56,413, representing 150,971 dependents for 1908–7 {sic}, and 136,589, representing 376,043 dependents for 1908–9, an increase of nearly double the earlier year's record.

A third vital fact peers out of the Commission's report; namely, that miscellaneous or casual laborers, i.e., those who have been driven by the improved machine from the position of skilled workmen, or have been prevented by the division of labor from learning a trade, furnished 47 and 4-10 per cent. of the applicants. Furthermore, that the building trades furnished 16 and 9-10 per cent.,

and that the number of applicants from the engineering, shipbuilding and metal trades was 50 per cent. higher in 1908–9 than in the preceding year.

Finally, a fourth and momentous fact is revealed: that a majority of the unemployed are in the very prime of life. In London only 9 per cent. of the unemployed seeking relief were under 20 or over 60 years of age, and the enormous proportion of 51 per cent. were between 20 and 40.

Here then, is a picture of misery almost unexceeded. A great, a 100 per cent. increase in unemployment and destitution, thirty-one out of every thousand in the population driven to seek relief, nearly half the applicants deprived of a trade by the improved machine, and over half of them in the best working years of their life, yet denied an opportunity to work—and yet the revolutionary movement in England has been making of late no particularly great strides.

If misery were sufficient to build a revolution surely here were misery enough. But misery lacks that sufficiency by many a length. Misery is not enough; it must lead to discontent. Discontent is not enough; it must be enlightened on the causes of its misery, and the cure. Enlightenment is not enough; it must be organized, disciplined and drilled to effect the salutary revolution.

There is misery a-plenty in the world to-day. No need to wait for more. Education and organization are now the needs of the hour.

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