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EDITORIAL

INNOCENTS AT HOME.

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THE New York Child Labor Committee has applied to Gov.-elect Higgins for the removal of John McMackin, the Commissioner of Labor in this State. The ground that the Committee gives for McMackin's removal is that his "inefficiency is such as almost to render useless the present laws for the protection of working children." The Committee substantiated its charges with photographs of children five, six and seven years of age working in the factories of the State, and with further evidence of rafts of other children under the legal age working in all portions of the State. The Committee also brought proof that in not less than 2,607 factories there were found children employed illegally, yet only five of these firms were prosecuted, and one of these escaped conviction. The Committee concluded that "despite the fact that we have the best law of any State in the Union, yet conditions here are little better than the conditions in the South, concerning which the country has been aroused".—All of which means that this certainly well-meaning Child Labor Committee consists of a lot of Innocents.

The plunder of adult Labor, which means the feeding on the marrow of men and women, by the Capitalist Class is the inevitable result of the capitalist system in its normal state; and he who says capitalism in its "normal state" also implies "frenzied capitalism"—unless he be an Innocent. Frenzied capitalism is the inevitable tail to the "normal capitalism" head of the comet. The atoms in the "frenzied capitalism" tail of the comet are drunkenness, prostitution, legalized Wall street gambling and unlegalized gambling named "poolrooms", torn homes, crimes of all descriptions, and, last, not least, child labor. The feature of the capitalist comet is that its head ever grows smaller, its frenzied tail ever more sweeping, more frenzied, more devastating. Among the correct points, that President Roosevelt unwittingly scored in his message to Congress against the social system that he upholds, is that the problem of child labor "is rendered

excessively difficult” by the circumstance that, in States having the same industries, “the worst tends to drag down the better”. The Child Labor Committee of this State proves the point when it declares that conditions here, where we have “the best law of any State”, are little better than in the South, where the law is notoriously bad. The competitive struggle for existence sets the pace. The same scourge that in this State alone drives at least 2,607 firms to violate the law against child labor, and batten on infant flesh, drives, in turn, Labor Commissioners to violate the law against bribery, and batten on these cannibalistic firms. It is an endless chain. It starts in crime—the crime of capitalism, of the private ownership of the land on, and the tool with which to labor; it can not choose but evolve a widening coil of criminal links. It is an evil that can sooner be ended than mended. And ended it must be.

Man is not naturally a cannibal. When he turns into one he is driven by stress. The fiend is not imaginable who would love to live on the marrow of his fellow man, let alone of infants. What IS imaginable, what IS seen daily, is the spectacle of men who adjust their morality to conditions that their own uninformed or indolent minds conveniently present to them as natural and unavoidable. They are shipwrecked mariners turned cannibal, and who, holding such conditions to be stable, have accommodated themselves to them; have come to like them, and are even ready to fight for them and approve them with a text.

It is the duty of him whose knowledge is abreast of his moral instincts and aspirations, and whose virility is of a piece with both, to join the ranks of the Socialist Labor Party, which, as the Republican Party of the days of Lincoln, marches to-day along the only route that leads to the uprooting of the great National Crime of our generation—Wage-Slavery.

Mark Twain has set the world roaring ever since he wrote his work *Innocents Abroad*. The Innocents at Home of the New York Child Labor Committee, in their posture of seeking to hold back the runaway horse of capitalism by its tail, would add to the hilarity were the subject not so tragic.

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