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FIRST EDITORIAL

THE REAL THING

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One of those periodical “Tammany Investigations” is now again on the stocks. From the Albany eyrie of “political purity,” the “Washed crime” of the State, represented in the State Legislature, has again swooped down upon the “Unwashed crime” of the State, whose headquarters are located in this city and are known as “Tammany Hall,” and has started to “investigate” and “uncover corruption.” As usual, the proceedings create excitement. The hall, in which the investigation is carried on, is packed full with eager listeners; and the evening and the morning papers teem with long and sensational articles on the “disclosures” made, the “corruption of Tammany” and matters of that sort. But we fail to find as much as the slightest hint that the “investigators,” or the capitalist press, realize the fact that THE REAL THING that is disclosed is, not the corruption of the investigees, but the parasite foundation upon which both investigators and investigees stand; in other words, that THE REAL THING that is being demonstrated is the soundness of the Socialist principle that the capitalist system of society is one in which the workers are fleeced and the enjoyers of wealth are idlers. Of this principle the investigation has furnished a remarkable illustration.

Placed on the stand, interesting truths were elicited from the son of the Tammany Chieftain. Questioned concerning a certain company in which he became a stock-holder, the following queries were put to and answers made by the young man:

Q.—Did you know that, although their bid was \$25,000 lower than any other company, they were not allowed to put it in the Syndicate Building, on Park Row?

A.—No, Sir.

Q.—When did you first learn that? A.—I think I learned it just now

Q.—Is this the first you ever heard of that? A.—Yes, Sir.

Q.—Very well. Now you have learned something about your own business, in which you have invested all the capital you are going to ask your father for—that

on a great contract that they had, for \$100,000 and more, for doing the fire-proofing on this Syndicate Building, although their bid was \$25,000 less than anybody else, they were not permitted to carry out the contract and not permitted to make a contract. What do you think about that? A.—I haven't thought about it.

Q.—Mr. Croker, do you have anything to do with the actual management of the business of your company? A.—No.

Q.—May I ask you what you do for your salary of \$2,500? A.—I am at present learning the business.

Q.—You are learning the business and getting paid for learning it. You have got to do something for that salary of \$2,500? This is a business concern, isn't it? A.—Yes.

Q.—And if \$2,500 is paid to somebody who is not doing anything, that is a wrong to the stockholder, isn't it? A.—Well, I am trying to learn the business. I suppose, in time, when I learn it, I will help the company along and help it run the business.

Q.—Don't you do anything else for that salary of \$2,500? A.—Do anything else?

Q.—Yes. A.—I am down to the office there all the time, every day.

Q.—What are you doing there? A.—I look over the mail: get familiar with the different people around the country that are using our system.

Q.—What records have you got as Secretary? A.—What do you mean?

Q.—Records of the company. What books and records do you hold, as Secretary of the company, in your office—in your office as Secretary, understand? A.—I hold the minute book

Q.—Are there any minutes in it? A.—Yes.

Q.—Of the first meeting? A.—I have got the minutes: they are not copied in the book yet. [Laughter.]

Q.—That meeting was held in January? A.—Yes.

Q.—What other books have you? A.—That is all I have. [Laughter.]

This is the important fact elicited. No sane man doubts that, if the tables were turned, "Unwashed Crime" could compel "Washed Crime" to make equally damaging admissions of corruption; nor does any intelligent man wonder thereat: a social system that raises Want and the Fear of Want to the dignity of a Social Institution, as does the capitalist system, can not choose but produce official corruption. The fact of deep significance is, however, that which brings out the total ignorance concerning a business on the part of its stock-holders; the total idleness in its administration on the part of its stock-holding officials; and, seeing that the business does move, the fact that it is the wage slaves, manual and intellectual, whom it employs, and, consequently, skins, who are the real workers, toilers and administrators!

This and this alone is the really valuable disclosure made by the investigation. To the Socialist the disclosure is, theoretically, nothing new; may it enlighten those wage slaves who are not yet Socialists, and let not the Socialists overlook it.

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