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EDITORIAL

VELVETY WORDS.

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THE Draper Company of Hopdale, Mass., a manufacturing firm of cotton machinery, is out with a flaming advertisement to induce cotton mills to invest in its goods. One of the arguments used in the advertisement is: “Our automatic looms have already released 10,000 operatives.” This one sentence illumines the capitalist field. It is a stroke of genius by which the Draper Company places itself under the lime-light and simultaneously draws the mill owners within the illumined circle of capitalist hypocrisy, both “religious” and “patriotic.”

The more effective the machine is, the less should be the toil of man. If a machine enables 10,000 operatives to produce in ten hours as much, if not more, than 20,000 operatives could produce in the same time, the rational expectation should be that thenceforth the 20,000 operatives would need to work only half the time, five hours, and still be better off—at least better off in the amount of wealth that they would enjoy as the product of their toil, and better off in the number of hours that they would be free in which to recuperate and expand their intellectual and spiritual capacities. Such would be the rational expectation. The rational expectation is predicated upon the people’s ownership of the improved machinery, which means Socialism. The existing social system, however, is that of Capitalism. As a consequence, the result of improved machinery is, as the Draper Company admits, not shorter hours of work, but the wholesale throwing of operatives idle upon the street, there to starve and thereby to drag down the wellbeing of the whole Working Class. We say: “As the Draper Company admits.” This is not quite accurate. Frankness, truthfulness, boldness—these are not qualities that find lodgment in the capitalist’s bones. The Draper Company makes the admission clearly enough to the mill owners. One can almost see the Draper Company winking its left eye to the cotton manufacturers as it points out to them the prospect of

reducing their pay-rolls. Nevertheless, the Draper Company, knowing the impurity of the soul of its fellow capitalists, simultaneously winks its right eye, and wraps itself and them in the hypocritical mantle of religion and patriotism. It would be a shock to the religious sentiment bluntly to admit that the privately owned and capitalistically operated Draper Company looms are intended to thrust thousands upon thousands of operatives into starvation; and what would become of the firm's pretenses to patriotism if it pointedly claimed as the particular beauty-spot of its scheme that it would pauperize the toiling masses at the expense of the idling few? That would never do. And so, instead of saying point blank that its looms would throw thousands of operatives out of work, the Draper Company hypocritically declares that its looms will "release" Labor!

Commenting upon this term, even the Boston *Herald* appropriately observes that "to have a man turned out of a job is no doubt to 'release' him, just as death is said to be a release." The *Herald*, however, being a free trade capitalist paper, does not care to push the protectionist capitalist Draper Company too hard. It might otherwise have proceeded to show that the term "release" applied to the Working Class is one in a long list of sweet, religious and patriotic velvety terms with which free trade and protectionist capitalists alike conceal their claws.

"Released," or "free" Labor means out-lawed Labor.

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

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