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EDITORIAL

A RAID ON THE “SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN.”

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THE *Scientific American* for the 9th of March, in an article on “Our Marvelous Automobile Industry,” bursts into this rapturous strain:

“An industry which has grown with such startling rapidity, and which is valued at so princely a sum, naturally gives employment to an army of mechanics, all of them skilled men handsomely paid. Thus we find that the mere wages paid for mechanics in 1910 will amount to about \$101,000,000.”

Smiles burst out all over the automobile worker’s face as he reads this passage. Visions of juicy porterhouse steaks, flanked by potatoes nicely browned in their own gravy, and calling to his buxom wife and bouncing youngsters “Come eat me!” dance before his eyes. Good warm clothing, a fitting habitation, all the good things civilization offers to the fortunate are to be his and his cherished family’s. Is he not “handsomely” paid? Does he not share in that “about \$100,000,000” dealt out in wages? Not only that. Not only the automobile worker is so affected by the passage. Every other workman—the trolley-car conductor, the excavator, the shoe-store clerk—inferentially and by sympathy shares in that “handsome” pay. Their bosoms swell with surprise and joy. They no longer feel so pinched and hungry as they just now did. Things can’t be as bad as that sore-head Socialist press would make them out, after all.

They read on. Precisely five and one-eighth inches further down the same column, they come across this other statement:

“The actual number of employes in the industry is 125,000 in motor-car factories, with employes in parts factories reaching not less than 40,000, a total of 165,000.”

The smilers become nervous. The smiles freeze and fade out. Hats are pushed back from anxious foreheads. Grabs are made for chalk, for pencil, for paper, for anything to figure on and with. The number \$100,000,000, the amount of wages paid out in the industry, is set down. Beside it, and to the left, the figure 165,000, the number of employes among whom that 100,000,000 is divided. The customary lines for division are drawn, the operation performed, and the quotient is—\$606.06!

Gone are the porterhouse steaks the browned potatoes. Gone are the health-giving clothing, the smiling abodes, the advantages of civilization. Emptiness, vast and desolate, settles down into their place. Then the trolley-car conductor, shoe-store clerk, excavator—all the other workers—with the automobile worker in the lead, pull their hats down over their ears, double up their fists, and execute a marathon raid on the *Scientific American* office.

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