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EDITORIAL

THE DAY OF THE YOUNG MAN.

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“**T**HIS is the day of the young man.” Every boom speech of every manufacturer assures us of the fact, and even E.H. Harriman, a few months before his death, lent his signature to the statement that “the opportunities for young men are far brighter to-day than they were forty years ago.”

Before the young man, however, ventures himself too far on the sea of life upon these buoyant promises, he would do well to turn them about a bit and scrutinize their seaworthiness. Here, for instance, is a letter which appeared in a leading capitalist paper, the *Evening Post*, on September 28:

“I want to tell you{r} readers of a striking case of a middle-aged man with a fine education and an excellent record as a teacher, who, temporarily out of work through ill health, has not been able to ‘come back,’ chiefly because he is no longer young. I have been acquainted with him for almost two years, and know him to be faithful, conscientious, and diligent in his work.

“He has tried his best to secure employment for himself, to support his dependent family, and is not too proud to accept an humble position. Yet he tells me that he is more than disheartened ‘to hear again and again the cruel “You are too old; there are young men who have a future.”’

“He has been for twenty-six years in public and private schools, both as principal and as teacher, and has excellent testimonials as to the quality of his work. He has given satisfaction also as a bookkeeper and as a cashier. He could act as interpreter or as translator in French, German or Spanish. He has the degree of Ph.D., from the University of Munich, and has studied at other universities.”

This letter does not depict an exceptional case, but one which could be duplicated by the hundreds and thousands. The great, the undoubtedly great, opportunity of the young man to secure employment, translates itself in practice into the opportunity to squeeze the old man out of employment. Even this requires

qualification, for the young man who obtains a job does it by squeezing out not only the old man, but also all other men, even though they be as young as himself, who for some cause or other happen not to be as profitable to the employer. Nor does the disastrousness of the illusion concerning the opportunity of the young man end there. The fuller the young man is of the illusion, the harder and more enthusiastically he plunges into his duties, all the quicker does he cut the ground from under his own feet. The more energy he uses up on his toil, the sooner he too is old, and to the triumphant shout of “the day of the young man” he is displaced to make room for a still younger.

The young have their place and work in the world. So have the old. As long as the jungle competition of capitalism continues, the two can but mutually crowd upon each other. Only Socialism can give each their rightful equal opportunity for labor and reward.

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