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EDITORIAL

TIPPED BY MALTHUS.

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MALTHUS is a land-mark. Not that his science is worth a pinch of snuff, but that his tactics denote whence modern capitalist tactics have drifted in their evolution towards present perfection—as exemplified every day in some way or other—and as they are being exemplified to-day in the heated denials that are proceeding from several “authoritative sources” of there being any starving school children.

When MALTHUS stepped upon the scene the capitalist class had the daring of inexperienced youth. It had not yet grown sly. There was poverty, there was suffering, there was death among the workers as a consequence of their unrequited toil. The capitalist class did not care to deny the fact. It had not yet grown “wise,” “diplomatic,” and, above all, hypocritical. Malthus was the man of the occasion. Forward he stepped, and brutally admitting the vast suffering of the toiling masses, he set up the brutal principle that such conditions were inevitable. “To him,” said he, “for whom there is no cover laid at the banquet table of Nature, Nature says, ‘Begone!’” As a scientific proposition the utterance was just so much twaddle; as an ethical proposition the utterance was that of a cannibal. It had, however, the merit of being frank. The capitalist class said to the workers: “You suffer? We know it, and care not.”

Thus things started. Then came a change of tactics. Experience had made the capitalist class shrewder, though no better. The Malthus stage was a clumsy one. The next stage was adroiter. It consisted in lying. Thenceforth the spokesmen of capitalism simply, coolly, calmly, brazenly denied there was any suffering among the workers. They even had statistics gotten up to order which proved, “black upon white,” that the condition of the workers was improving; at times it was claimed that the condition of the workers approached that of Paradise. The “full dinner pail”

campaign of 1900 was a sample.

The tip has been taken by the “authorities” on the condition of the school children. At first the shocking instances of starvation at school came out. Yellow and other Dem-Rep papers gave the facts publicity. Then there came a sudden change. Or, perhaps, it was gradual; until now the denials of starvation are flatfooted. The next step will be glowing articles describing the “plump faces” of the school children, and the Delmonico menus upon which they feast for breakfast, dinner and supper.

Tipped by the experience made by Malthus, whose false science was speedily ripped to shreds, the school “authorities” have hastened to take the “advanced” position of looking pious and denying the fact that school children in this city are actually starving.

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

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