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EDITORIAL

## DISTRACTED MISSIONARIES.

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**T**HAT the capitalist is a missionary, a perambulating lump of benevolence, he has so often told us that we should finally believe it. Not, however, until the National Association of Employing Lithographers came out this week with its pronouncement upon the wages of its employes, and the *New York Times* undertook to popularize the information contained in the pronouncement, has the fact become clear that the capitalist missionary is more than a fair weather affair. His predicament is that of a missionary among cannibals and blood-thirsty heathens. Before him is the alternative—either allow himself to be turned into missionary Hamburger steaks for the greater glory of God, or prove untrue to his great calling, and run away from danger.

The National Association of Employing Lithographers is there for the express and sole purpose of promoting efficiency and skill among lithographers. Its mission is to be the Providence of the Muse. “Profits,” “dividends,” these are but side-matters, as much as food and raiment are only incidental necessities to the missionary’s labors. True to its lofty, disinterested and self-sacrificing principles, the Association is just shocked at the idea of skillful and efficient workers being held down to the pittance paid to the skill-less and inefficient. Obviously such a process nips thrift and industry in the very bud; it hamstring incentive. What is the Association, groping after radiant Justice, to do? Raise the wages of the skill-less and inefficient so that, by keeping such higher wages to these, the skillful and efficient may receive their just reward? That would be to encourage skill-lessness and inefficiency. Human nature, which, according to all missionary tenets, always tends downward, would simply be demoralized. It would be playing into the hands of the one-time superstition about “human equality,” a vestige of which is still seen in that other superstition, “One man, one vote.” In many and devious ways have

the capitalist missionaries been doing missionary work to correct that evil. What incentive can there be for any one to become a millionaire, and running fast automobiles and faster women, if a Corey, or a Schwab, have no more votes than a dull and inefficient workingman with no bank account or automobiles to his name, and only one wife? Obviously such a practice is keeping the most skillful down to the level of the dullest, obviously that is “setting the pace of the squadron” to the pace of the “slowest horse.” Obviously that is wrong; the Coreys and Schwabs should have as many votes as they have dollars, the workingman as few votes as he has no dollars. Clear as this principle is, it requires delicate handling by the Association missionaries. If the point is pressed too close it may give rise to impudent questions on the part of “dull and inefficient” workingmen. They may ask, If skillfulness and efficiency are to determine income, by what right do the cigarette-fiend, shallow chested, narrow-browed brats of the capitalist missionaries draw dividends upon stock at the identical rate of the most hustling of missionaries? By what right does a Thaw, locked up in murderers’ row, draw dividends on coal mines at a rate equal with Henry Clay Frick? These be bothersome questions. They indicate quite strongly the dread alternative before the capitalist missionary—if there is to be pro rata wages, according to skill and efficiency, consequently, also pro rata privileges at the hustings, then there would also have to be pro rata clipping of coupons. The former would promote missionarydom, the latter would send it hiding into dark corners.

Enough has here been said to indicate the dilemma that the National Association of Employing Lithographers are in, in pursuit of their self-sacrificing missionary calling. Whose heart is so flinty as not to go out to these sorely beset missionary dearies,—or to the missionary press that sings their woes?

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