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EDITORIAL

SUPERSTITION IN ECONOMICS.

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LONDON and Chili despatches bring the news that financial conditions in Chili are very much as they are here in the United States. The Mobiliario, a leading bank of the republic, failed; the paper dollar currency has depreciated to about ten cents; and conditions, generally, are worse than alarming. All this is natural enough. It is the regulation phenomenon of a social system which leaves to the discretion of private individuals the management of a nation's vital concerns. The mutual competition implied in such a system besides the absence of full knowledge, implied in the management of a private office, can not choose but result in periodical break-downs. The break-down in Chili is as natural as it has been here. There is nothing surprising in that. What is surprising is the explanation that accompanies the break-down. Chili pundits blame the breakdown in Chili to—what? To the EARTHQUAKE! That opinion should make one pause!

Here we are in the plain glare of the XXth Century sun, and the explanation given by the luminaries of capitalist society to the consequence of economic causes differs in nothing from the explanation with which pious generals in the Dark Ages used to explain the loss of a battle. That the battle was lost through their unfitness; that it was lost owing to their not having kept themselves posted on the movements of the enemy, its numbers, its arms; that it was lost because they knew nothing of the field on which the battle was to be delivered, and cared less; in short, that the battle was lost because they were meant for cobblers and not generals—that never occurred to them. The battle was lost, according to them, because Providence so willed it. The generals of the Dark Ages were, however, modest. They were as ready to attribute their victories to a miracle, as to blame their defeats to it. Not so with our capitalist Captains of Industry. According to them their success is all their own; their failures the effect of a miracle.

The mentality of the modern Generals on the battle-field of industry is steeped as deeply in the ignorance that promotes superstition, as was the mentality of the ironclad Generals in the Dark Ages. Engaged, as the friars of old were, in the work of stuffing the people with absurdities that would keep them in awe-stricken submissiveness, the friars themselves, at no time any too sapient, succumbed to their own false teachings and very generally were tainted with the mental disease that they spread. So with our Captains of Industry. Engaged as they are in stuffing the working class with economic and sociologic absurdities to the end that the latter may be kept in dumb subjection, the Captains of Industry themselves succumb to their false teachings. Accordingly, hard times have been blamed to sun-spots, and now they are blamed in Chili to earthquakes.

Capitalism in its early bourgeois days was a rank infidel. Superstition then was its horror; to-day Superstition is the capitalist's palladium.

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