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EDITORIAL

## RAPS AT OUR DOOR.

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**O**N the same day that despatches from Europe announce the double suicide of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Good in London, the press despatches from Philadelphia give the details of the suicide of Frederick Lutz, and his attempted murder of his wife and three children. The Goods had long struggled for existence in literature and art, wherein they were of no mean distinction, until finally, overpowered by want, they leaped, clasped together, into eternity by drowning. The story of their frame of mind is concisely told in the letter they left behind—"If you think of us in the future, do not do so sadly. Remember that we shall be asleep together, and what is better than sleep after the long day's work?" Lutz, a loommaker, overcome with the poverty-bringing toil of the wage slave, ended his sufferings by turning on the gas, and sought to end the lives of his mate and offspring also. These are not isolated cases. Hardly a day passes but the domestic press records some such instance of mass-homicide and murder as a result of—what? There is the rub, and the pathos, and, withal, the instructiveness of these "raps at our door."

Leaving aside the instances in which brooding has deranged the mind, it can not be doubted that in most of these instances of suicide and murder, the act is committed in cool deliberation. No insanity there. To impute the act to insanity is to conceal the immediate and real cause. That cause is IGNORANCE—ignorance of the social question—ignorance of the problem that faces the toiler—consequently, ignorance of the manner to untie the knot. To the thousands of Goods and Lutzes, the social phenomena present themselves in the light that the devastating natural phenomena present themselves to the Hindoo. The effect of these upon the Hindoo mind is to set his imagination atrotting, so that it conceives a Deity of frightful aspect before whom he cowers in abject impotence. The effect of the social

phenomena upon the Goods and Lutzes is to blot out the Star of Hope from the sky overhead, so that, equally impotent with the Hindoo, but of different stock, they depart from life and take their loved ones along, in order to save these the tortures that are supposed to be unavoidable. In the one case and in the other Ignorance is at bottom. Even in the instance of the Hindoo, such landslides, as that which recently buried whole villages in Turkestan, need Ignorance for their foundation on which to rear the superstructure of religious abjectness. In the instance of the Goods and Lutzes it is Ignorance of the social phenomena that causes the despair born of a sense of impotence.

Knowledge of the cause of the hardships, against which the Goods and Lutzes struggled, would not generate despair. Knowledge generates the fibre with which to combat and overthrow these hardships. Knowledge shows the "way out": thus Knowledge encourages and vitalizes. The pathos, and withal, the instructiveness, of such mass-tragedies as those of the Goods and Lutzes, is that capitalist Society is doubly guilty. It is guilty in that it creates the evils; it is guilty in that it cultivates Ignorance concerning their cause, and thereby promotes the despair that culminates in suicides and the murders of the suicides' beloved ones.

The Goods and Lutzes are rapping at the door of every Socialist Labor Party man. These are no fleshless, spirit raps. They are the raps of worn-out male, female and child knuckles, urging us to spread broadcast that information that will dispel Ignorance, that will impart Knowledge, that thereby will light the path to that political unification of the Working Class, without which civilized revolutionary propaganda is impossible, and to that industrial unification of the same class, without which all political action, lacking the physical force to back it, would be barren, if not disastrous.

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