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EDITORIAL

“MASTEROPATHY.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

WITH Pittsburgh, Pa., for his center of radiation, F.F. Wilcox has launched a book entitled *Masteropathy* in which book twelve reasons are given “why the Wilcox ideal educational manufacturing company should interest everybody.”

The tenth reason is: “Because the unemployed can at any time secure a market for any product they may produce, and receive the highest possible price for the same.”

Lo, a stunner!

Everyone in idleness is not an “unemployed.” The members of the capitalist class, who, under the various forms of “dividends,” “profits,” “interest,” “rent” absorb wealth enough from the labor of the working class to live comfortably—quite comfortably—quite a number of them even riotously,—live in idleness, yet come they not under the designation of “the unemployed.”

The unemployed are those members of the working class who are kept out of work whenever the capitalist sees no way of making profit out of their labor. Themselves without the means to work, and not allowed by the capitalist class access to the existing means of production, the unemployed are proletarians sentenced by capitalist conditions to terms of various length of un-productiveness. A short definition of the unemployed is: “human beings who own nothing whereby to produce, and are not allowed access to the things necessary for production.”

Now, then, if this definition is substituted for the word “unemployed” in the tenth reason of *Masteropathy*, we get this:

“Because human beings who own nothing whereby to produce and not allowed access to the things necessary for production can at any time secure a market for

any product they may produce, and receive the highest possible price for the same.”

Such a notion sounds hopelessly absurd; yet should it not be too hastily dismissed. Quite possibly the sentence is meant to convey a deep meaning; the solution of the seeming nonsense lies in the last seven words: “the highest possible price for the same.”

Seeing that a human being, who neither owns, nor is allowed access to, the necessities for production, can produce nothing, “the highest possible price” for that nothing is nothing, and nothing, indeed, is the highest possible price that he can receive, and that price he will receive.

That’s perfectly clear. But why go to *Masteropathy* to make the discovery?

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