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EDITORIAL

SENSE AND NONSENSE OF LAWSONISM.

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IN his open letter to John A. McCall, President of the New York Life Insurance Company, Thomas W. Lawson enumerates the scoundrelisms of the Presidents and Directors of the big life insurance companies, and proceeds to say:

“I knew when I began my story that the big life insurance companies were in the hands of grafters and thieves, JUST AS ARE THE GREAT BANKS, TRUST COMPANIES, RAILROAD COMPANIES, AND BIG CORPORATIONS AND TRUSTS.”

This is sense. Every sane man must admit that, if as searching an investigation were made into any or all of the big capitalist concerns, whether they be factories, railroads, mines or what not, essentially the identical revelations would be made that are now being made in insurance. Theft, perjury, arson, forgery, in short the violation of all laws human and divine would be unearthed. The capitalist is an enthusiastic “protector of property”—of the property that he steals; he is a lyric singer of morality—of the morality that he knows of only in the breach, not in the observance; he is a rigid upholder of “law and order”—of the law and order that will terrify the oppressed against looking into his felonies; he is a devout religionist—of the religion that will bless the damndest error and approve it with a text. Investigate them, and none could escape conviction, if not the halter. By indicating as much in his open letter Lawsonism proves itself sensible.

But what stuff and nonsense is that which appears in the same open letter? What nonsense is the effort to establish “a system under which policy holders would be safe”? Policy-holder is a term that implies individual insecurity. Individual insecurity is a condition that implies a social stage of barbarism. In the barbaric stage of society individual insecurity is a feature for the reason that at that stage of society production can not be ample enough to guarantee well being to all. Under

such conditions the insurance scheme springs up. Under a civilized system of society, such as is possible to-day, production can be so ample, and progressively ample, that the worry for the future, implied in “policies” and insurance, is no longer necessary. Capitalism holds society back; capitalism hampers the productive powers of society; it is capitalism that renders the patch-work of insurance and policies a requisite. What nonsense to keep up the patch-work! What mental inanity is the notion to render the patch-work “safe”! What supreme folly is it not to devote time, energy and genius to check the evil consequences of a wrong! The thing to do is to abolish the wrong itself.

Saving breeds the miser and the thief. Where abundance is impossible, such material conditions raise saving to a virtue. Where abundance beyond the dreams of man is possible and within reach, the former virtue becomes a vice, and to nurse it is, to say the least, nonsense. The sense of Lawsonism must be supplemented with the constructive sense and aspirations of Socialism. Civilization demands not the pinching that is implied in “policies”; civilization demands the heart’s and soul’s and mind’s expansion that comes from abundance.

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