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EDITORIAL

AT THE THRESHOLD OF GREAT SOCIAL CHANGES.

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IN every transitory stage in the history of social development there are certain premonitions of impending changes. At such times, the very atmosphere seems surcharged with the indications of revolutions, both peaceful and bloody. The present transitory stage between Capitalism and Socialism is no exception to the rule. Despite the apparently undisputed victory of Capitalism at the polls last election, the signs of coming social transformation multiply from day to day. Beginning with that victory itself, there was apparent in the language of the victors themselves, a sense of power at once stupendous and fraught with possible serious results—a realization that dangerous ground is being tread, and a false step or move would precipitate all concerned over a social precipice of fearful depth. Coincident with this state of feeling and mind, there existed a recognition of the fact that now—owing to the complete rout of the discontented bourgeois elements that made that victory possible—are the opposing forces of Capitalism and Socialism brought more unmistakably face to face in battle array.

Coming nearer to the present date, there looms up on the horizon a convention of employers, who believe in war on the industrial field, and mock those who cry “peace, peace,” where there is no peace, as “banquet-eating failures.” And it was only a week or two ago that a Brooklyn colonel addressed a body of officers on the duties of the State militia in times of strike and revolution. On December 20th, Dr. Edwin A. Alderman, president of the University of Virginia, addressing the annual banquet of the Associated Bankers of the City of New York, said:

“I believe that we are on the threshold of a great social change. We are caught in forces which we partly control and which partly control us. Our democracy is in danger. It is always in danger, as a man’s character is

always in danger. It is in danger now from vulgarity, greed, cruelty. This is a crisis, and in this crisis the vital thing is to have a proper frame of mind—a respect for the hopes of the past.”

Thus it goes. On all sides there is evidence presaging great changes. In truth it may be said that these are times that furrow the thoughtful man’s brow, and oppress the heart with a feeling of stern duty yet to be performed—times pregnant with great significance and calling for action commensurate with the profound tendencies stirring within them. These tendencies proceed mainly from the development of machinery and invention. The latter have changed the material basis of society. They have transformed the isolated individual workers into armies of interdependent and co-operative wage earners, small private production—the cross road shop with its puny owner—into collective production—the trusts, with their few powerful capitalist possessors. This transformation can have but one logical result, and that is the collective ownership of collective production, that is, collective ownership of the land and capital by the millions of interdependent and co-operative wage earners whom industrial evolution has been organizing and developing for this great consummation. In brief, these tendencies make from the class exploitation, domination and war of Capitalism, to the human, fraternal and international solidarity of Socialism.

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