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EDITORIAL

## CREED AND MATERIAL CONDITIONS.

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**P**RESS, politicians and official professors of capitalism, do, to be sure, assail Socialism on the ground of its “materialism.” But all these three agencies of the capitalist class as frequently admit material needs, not infrequently even turn over a somersault and ridicule Socialism for what it pleases them to call “the etherealism of Socialist principles” contrasted with the practical, that is, material solidness of capitalism. One quarter of the compass there is, however, that never forgets itself; never sneers at Socialism on the score of its “etherealism”; but ever assails Socialism on the score of its “materialism.” That quarter of the compass is the Roman Catholic prelacy. Significant, in view of this, is an admission of facts, coming from that identical quarter of the compass, and rendering solid confirmation to the materialism of Socialism.

The German correspondent of the Philadelphia *Catholic Standard and Times* reports “hundreds of thousands of souls are being lost to the Church,” and he explains why and how. Because of the devouring lion of heathenism going about converting these Catholics? No! Because, perchance, of the greater attractiveness offered to the senses by other churches! Yet, again, no! Because, in short, of any appeal to or effect upon the soul, as distinguished from the influence of matter upon matter? Not at all! How and why, then? Let the German Catholic correspondent of the *Catholic Standard and Times* state the “how” and “why” in his own way:

“Industrial development, facility of transportation, and the right of moving unceremoniously within the country” has brought about the result that “the number of mixed marriages increased enormously”; these mixed marriages arise, for instance, from “a sudden boom of industry which draws hundreds of Catholic workmen into the very heart of a Protestant province, such as Mecklenburg or Saxony or Anhalt. Catholic women or girls are not to be found, and as these men do

not generally feel called to lead a life of celibacy, they do the best they can and marry some Protestant girl or other,” with the consequence that the children of these Catholic fathers become Protestants; how many of them is to be judged from the statistical figures given by Krose, S.J. in the *Kirchliches Handbuch* (Ecclesiastical Handbook) of 1908, to the effect that “in Prussia there existed in 1905, 359,985, mixt marriages, 72,778 of these falling to the Rhineland, the stronghold of Catholicity. Of the children born of these unions, 423,895, or 56.8 per cent., were Protestant; 321,955, or 43.21 per cent., were Catholic. Nearly half a million children lost to the Catholic faith! Appalling figures certainly, and they are rising every year.”

Truth, like murder{,} will out. Whether it is concealed and suppressed intentionally, or unintentionally, through visionariness, truth is bound to be blurted out. It is so with the Socialist truth that material conditions determine man’s opinions—religious, so-called, as well as political. More than three hundred years ago the great philosopher Montaigne declared: “We are Christians by the same title that we are Germans or Perigordians.” Montaigne was denounced as un-Godly, just as Socialism is to-day, yet the truth of Montaigne’s observation, as of Socialist principle, is attested by no less a modern “Godly” authority than the *Catholic Standard and Times* itself, together with its Catholic German correspondent and the Jesuit Father Krose whom he cites.

He who honestly aims at the improvement of man’s morality must begin by improving man’s material conditions. The former is the truthful reflex of the latter.

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

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