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EDITORIAL

CORRUPTING THE YOUTH.

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IN the *Youth's Companion* for February 10, W.M.R. French, Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, using that paper as a medium, or the paper using M. French as a medium, it is hard to tell which, informs the magazine's readers of tender age that "there can be no better indication of the will of Heaven than the actual conditions of life."

If there be a Heaven—a theological question which it is here beside the point to discuss; and if that Heaven be the benign, all-loving, tenderly providing place it is pictured to be—another theological question which it is here beside the point to discuss, one of two things must follow:

Either it is not the will of Heaven that the workingman be a chattel on the market, bought and sold for what his purchaser can squeeze out of him, the same as a horse or a lemon; it is not the will of Heaven that the workingman be deprived of all opportunity for a full civilized physical and mental life; it is not the will of Heaven that workingmen and women suffer so that they refuse to become parents lest they create victims for the same merciless exploitation; it is not the will of Heaven that the ancient maxim that to live man needs "food, clothing, and shelter" be twisted into a patent-right for giving him, no matter how hard he toils, only "food, clothing and shelter," and not even enough of the poorest kind of that; it is not the will of Heaven that workingmen be slaughtered outright or starved to death gradually by the tens of thousands yearly for the sake of their masters' profits—all of which are conditions obtaining far and wide in the land to-day;

Or else, if these things are the will of Heaven, if whatever is is right, simply because it Is, and quite apart from any moral fitness, then no less so will it be the will of Heaven when the workers, exasperated by their age-long servitude and enlightened as to its causes, rise in their political and economic organization, smite

down the exploiters from their places of power, and establish the Industrial or Socialist Commonwealth.

Safe to say, nobody will reject this latter horn of the dilemma with more vigor than both Mr. French and the *Youth's Companion*. Hence they must be considered as accepting the validity of the first horn. Hence, again, admitting that the pitiable condition of the working class to-day is not the "will of Heaven," and trying to trepan their youthful readers into supinely accepting it as such, they pillory themselves as corruptors of the morals of children—for what is more immoral than willing submission to iniquitous and unnecessary poverty?

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