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EDITORIAL

## HAPPY NEW YEAR!

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**H**APPY New Year!” is the cry now on every tongue and lip. On all sides the holiday greeting is heard, and it is carelessly echoed, seldom with so much as a thought on the chances of its being fulfilled. In the midst of the reckless well-wishing, let the thoughtful pause and consider what the prospects and promise are for this new year, if 1904 is to be, for the proletarians, a really happy one.

Many and several are the tendencies in the economic world that must be taken into account.

First there is the tendency of machinery to become ever more perfect; and in the ratio that it perfects itself, to reduce, first, the number of men required, and later, the skill required of them.

Secondly the tendency, a direct result of the first, for the ranks of the employed to contain fewer and fewer men and an ever increasing number of women and children, while the ranks of the unemployed are swelled by the now useless fathers and husbands.

There is the tendency toward ignorance among the masses, owing to the depopulation of our schools. Younger and younger children are each year compelled to lay aside the books for the tool; while every year a greater number of the most needy are left without school-room, because of criminally insufficient accommodations.

There is the tendency toward physical decline. The long hours, the intensity of labor, the insufficient respite for meals, and the adulterated poisons which the masses are forced to buy as food are having their effect. Uncle Sam is now the greatest consumer of patent medicines in the world. Born of fathers whose days are refreshed by visits to the tonic-bottle, and of mothers whose days, even at critical

periods, are passed amid the whirr of steam sewing-machines or cotton looms, if not at still more arduous toil, the future generation bids fair to excel the present in the number of physical culture schemers which it will support.

To cap the climax, and intensify all the miseries caused by the preceding tendencies, there is the cost of living advancing with seven league boots, so that it is now estimated at 38 per cent. higher than it was eight years ago.

These are only tendencies, or the chronic disease. The country is now on, if not already over, the verge of an acute attack the like of which it has never experienced. An industrial crisis has been slowly gathering, and is now about to break out with terrific malignance, affecting every part and organ of our body social. Every day brings in fresh reports of failures, bankruptcies, lock-outs, wage-reductions and—as the most natural, though most terrible results—suicides. Looking at these facts, the anticipations for the new year would seem anything but cheering.

But it always is darkest before dawn. If there were no remedy for this crushing evil, if there were none skillful enough to apply it, the outlook would indeed be black. But, fortunately, there is a remedy; though no one person can apply it alone, yet there is a teacher patiently instructing all men how to. That teacher is the Socialist Labor Party; the remedy is Socialism! When the Party's work shall have been done, when all the laborers of this broad land shall be gathered beneath that standard,—then rotting wealth and pinching want, “prosperity” floods and industrial crises will be at an end forever: the workers will know the remedy and the means to apply it in unison—at the ballot box, backed by resolute hearts to enforce the decree of their suffrage.

The men of the S.L.P. and her sister organization, the S.T. & L.A., are everywhere girding up their loins for the struggle. From ocean to ocean are flying words of cheer, hope and encouragement. Comrades, grown old in the service, are clearing the way for their younger brethren. Preparations are being made for a more active and unremitting propaganda; and all over the land vows are ascending on this New Year's day, that the present system of slavery shall die.

So again, this time soberly and with a depth of meaning, the Socialist Labor Party cries out:—

“A Happy New Year, ye Proletarians of America!”

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