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EDITORIAL

THE MISSION OF DISASTERS.

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THE repetition and continuity of sufferings and calamity have one of two effects—they either summon the best there is in man to resistance and redress, or they habituate his mind to sorrow, break the springs of his energy, and leave him an abject wreck.

Which of the two roads is the American Working Class to travel under the afflictions that beset it, many of these afflictions being of a nature to appall? Of these the recent series of mine accidents furnishes the most recent illustrations.

In short succession, hundreds of miners have been during the last few days entombed in West Virginia, in Alabama and in Pennsylvania. The record shows that, during the last ten years, the appalling number of 72,840 miners suffered from “accidents,” 22,840 of these being killed, the other 50,000 more or less severely injured.

But it is not in the mines only—on railroads and in factories the “accidents” are of daily occurrence. The recent mine disasters come in to accentuate the series.

Is the repetition of these capitalist outrages—for outrages they are: “accident” is a word to conceal criminal negligence—to accustom the popular mind to such calamities? Is their steady recurrence, with increased frequency and in increasing magnitude, to break the springs of popular indignation, and cause the children of Twentieth Century Civilization to sit dumbfounded in sight of these visitations, like the children of the Dark Ages lay prone upon their faces in sight of the pest—impotent?

Our people stand to-day where the road forks, with the monster calamities marking the forking spot—one road leads to abjectness, the other leads to resistance, and to that intelligent organizing of forces that brings about redress.

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