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EDITORIAL

METHOD IN IDIOCY.

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“WHY hate the rich?” is a question often thrown by reformers at the Socialist.

At first, the Socialist is apt to feel knocked out of breath, the way one is who hears some superlative nonsense advanced against his argument. The idiotic answer is the hardest to contend with. The idiocy of the question, Why hate the rich? seems impossible to meet.

The Socialist does not hate the rich. If the rich are hated anywhere it is by the non-Socialist victim of capitalism. Only such as are steeped in ignorance, deep enough to hold the individual bourgeois responsible for the conditions that his class brings about, hate the rich. Only the non-Socialist sufferer under capitalism imagines that, by removing or chastising the individual, the class wrong is removed. It is essentially a bourgeois notion. The notion is the mark that reveals the bourgeois and the Anarchist kin. The Socialist knows much better than all that. He hates not the rich.

The Socialist can not, in the strict sense of the term, even be said to hate the bourgeois system. That is a purely Anarchist mental poise. The Socialist knows that the bourgeois social system is an evolutionary stage in the evolutionary chain of events; he knows that each stage has its mission; he knows that. bourgeois society had an important mission to perform and performed it. The long and short of the story is that hatred is a thing outside of the Socialist's make up. It is so conspicuously. The Socialist battles for the overthrow of the capitalist system upon solid scientific reasons.

Is then the question, Why hate the rich?, a bit of unqualified idiocy? Not so. There is method in the idiotic question.

Although the Socialist is not likely to be taken in, many an on-looker is ex-

pected to “bite.” The question, Why hate the rich? is just the kind of talk that would convey the impression that riches are an appendage of the rich, just as their hair, noses or nails—something natural, something “inborn,” something that it is absurd to hate a man for, as absurd as the hating of a man because he is gifted with a basso voice. With this conception of riches, it is folly to aim at depriving the rich of the riches they hold—and *this is the mystification that the method of the idiocy seeks to set afloat.*

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