

Hopes

Ricardo Mella

1906

Everything in material life has changed in a marvelous fashion. In social life, the worker, a wage-slave, still exists to feed, entertain and preserve a caste of men who hold on their side the supremacy of wealth.

For the rest of the human beings who do not belong to that caste, civilization is abstract, an ideal not translated into deeds; progress is a deceitful illusion of whose conquest of which the privileged servants of the enriched third estate can boast.

The people lack everything—and first of all they lack bread. Civilization, progress, science, art and industry are for them only terrible lies, tortures invented by the new inquisition of the sated.

What effect can be produced by the museums filled with artistic wonders, the scientific cabinets with their gigantic orations, the factories with their colossal workers, the warehouses bursting with the glut of unsold merchandise and the beautiful shop windows with all the refinements of luxury and taste?

Speak of all this to the thousands of ragged folks who painfully bring their hands to the vicinity of the empty stomachs, who drag their bare feet through the mud of the streets, who barely cover with rags the skins that serve only as the covering for a bunch of bones, which creak at each step as if ready to break, and you will simply get a pained gesture, the expression of an annihilated organism, indifferent, on the edge of the grave, waiting impassively for death, rather than seeking the prolongation of life.

Who would dare to maintain that this permanent disruption, this immense imbalance is natural and eternal?

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