

Those Who Reign

Ricardo Mella

1912

As the bourgeoisie acquires its full development, the empire of the mediocre increases.

In every order of things the half-measures, the indefinite and the anodyne triumph. In that of ideas, the best chances of success belong to those who lack them. In that of business and work it belong to those who, knowing nothing, seem to know everything. The phenomenon is easily explained.

The bourgeoisie has made good plans so that all activities and social capacities converge in the hunt for the peseta. It has been an axiom that if one is to be a good businessman, an abundance of knowledge is a hindrance. It has reduced the producers to laboring machines. It has transformed artists and men of science into servants. It has suppressed man, substituting for him for the automated puppet. The result has inevitably been the multiplication of nonentities with money. Soon imbeciles will rule. The triumph is entirely theirs.

The fatuity of these horrid bourgeois who fill the public road with their pomposity and their bulging bellies; the arrogance of these coarse peddlers who stink of fat and flatulence; the ridiculous pride of these disgusting toads who croak in emphatic tones: these are the three stables pillars of the victorious mediocrity.

Everywhere, the intelligent man, the artist, the scholar, the expert, the inventor and the industrious inevitably run up against these masses of pig's-meat dressed up as people. They are the barrier that blocks the way to all creative work, to every progressive undertaking and to every attempt at innovation.

For the bourgeoisie, lofty thoughts, deep feelings and strong voices are sinful. There is no right to be a person.

Servile from birth, they do not tolerate those who do not submit to their servitude. Little by little they are putting everyone under the leveling stick of their miserable mentality. And so industry is directed by the inept; unqualified men govern labor; the distributive function of wealth is in the hands of the most incapable; the administration of interests in the hands of the most clumsy. Above all these rises the privileged category of the canny idlers who rule the roost.

If a man of true value reaches the summit, he breaks down, degrades himself and gives in. Soon he will join the ranks of the grand army of triumphant mediocrity.

Do not ask anyone how much they know and what they are good at, but instead how much money or spinal flexibility they have. To own or to bend enough to possess: that's all there is to it.

With such morality the results are absolutely opposed to the development of intelligence and activity. Behind the spectacular facade of progress and civilization, brazen ignorance seethes, proprietress and mistress of the destinies of the world. With such morality, the simplest truths, proclaimed in a strong voice, become shrill cries in dreadful taste. Every idealism, aspiration or generous demand is translated by the monied mob as insane delusions, when not as criminal efforts. Madness and crime begin where the vulgarity and coarseness of the deified bourgeois ends.

The empire of the mediocre will end with the expiration of the bourgeoisie. In the meantime it will be pointless to dispute the dominion of the world.

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