EDITORIAL

ESPECIALLY CRYING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

EVERY little while that happens in bourgeois society that should warn one against holding, at any given epoch, that the bourgeois has reached the highest point in his career of infamy. Every little while the bourgeois performs some act that tops the previous top. The highest peak yet reached in this line is reached by a Tacoma, Wash., firm's advertisement in the Tacoma *Daily News* of last April 25. Under a flaming first deck headline—"Friday Hourly Sales"—, there is a second headline—"Watch for the Tacoma Day Nursery Window Saturday." Then come ten lines of double column reading matter. To condense the reading matter would be to do it injustice. It might be considered incredible. It is here reproduced literally:

> "Saturday is Tacoma Day Nursery Day in Tacoma. It is the day when the women having this charity in charge are going to call on the business and professional men of Tacoma soliciting their financial aid to this glorious cause. 'What is the Tacoma Day Nursery?' you ask. Well, it is a place where mothers whom necessity compels to work during the day may leave their babies to be cared for properly while they are out earning their daily bread. But why go into detail. Come Saturday and see the Tacoma Day Nursery in operation in our big corner window. The babies will be there in their little rompers playing, eating, drinking, sleeping (perhaps) and crying, too, no doubt. Bring the children to see this unique display. But most important, come yourselves and meet with liberal purses the ladies of this committee."

The smallness of the wages, paid to the abundance-producing male proletariat, tears the wife away from the home, forcing her into the factory to eke out the home's existence. But the wife may be, usually is, a mother. The baby acts as a bond, rendering next to impossible the mother's absence in the factory. Does the distressful dilemma that mother and father proletariat is confronted with—either let the three,

father, mother and baby, depend upon the starvation wages of the father, and then endanger not only the parents' lives, but especially the still more precarious life of the baby; or let the mother leave the baby in the unmaternal care of some acquaintance, and then give it a better chance—does the distressful dilemma touch the heart of the "religion-upholding" bourgeois? Does the dilemma prompt to bourgeois society the relinquishing of a portion of its plunder, thereby the raising of the father's wages? No. The law of bourgeois existence checks the prompting.

The dilemma only suggests a "philanthropy," that is, a move whereby the starvationness of the wages is preserved, the gratitude of the wage slave is fished for, and jobs are furnished to the menial pets of the "philanthropist." Thus is born the "Day Nursery." The wages of the father remain low as ever; the wages of the mother remain low as ever; but the bond that prevented her from going into the factory and sweating surplus values to the employer is loosened. The baby is put in a "Day Nursery," usually a place put in charge of some menial favorite of the philanthropists who organize the nursery.

That would seem bad enough; cruel enough. It is not. The babies are now farmed out to business men. The use that the Tacoma firm puts them to is that of attracting customers in the show windows with their "romping," their "eating," their "drinking," their "sleeping (perhaps)" and their "crying, too, no doubt." Thus even the baby's cry after his mother—the most powerfully weak and weakly powerful of appeals—is coined into profits.

It is said of the Chicago slaughterhouses that nothing is lost of the pig, not even his squeak—that is taken up by the phonograph. In the slaughterhouse of capitalism nothing is lost of the proletariat, not even the baby's cry—that attracts customers and shekels.