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EDITORIAL

IMPOTENCE OF THE WAIL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AN otherwise esteemed New Orleans pure-and-simple physical force correspondent forwards to this office a copy of *The Daily Picayune* of his city dated the 13th of the current month containing a report, almost unmatched, of wretchedness through the cruelty of Property.

The story is to the effect that early on the morning of the 12th some men working in a stable on Saratoga street, near Gravier, heard the wailing of an infant in a shed, and, crawling over a lot of rubbish to investigate were horrified to find a white woman and a new-born baby. The babe was only a few hours old, but neither mother nor babe had any attention, or nourishment. Their plight was pitiful. The woman had not enough clothes even to cover the babe. She lay exhausted on some planks, and her ragged clothing was soaked with the rain that had drizzled over the two unfortunates throughout the night. Inquiry established that the woman with her husband and their little boy had been evicted from the one room in which they lived, but had been given permission to find such shelter as they could in the shed.

That much for the story.

Our pure-and-simple physical force correspondent accompanies the *Picayune* with a letter making the following comment:

“Here is a capitalist paper giving an account of the prosperous condition of the citizens (?) of New Orleans in the shape of a Christian (?) woman giving birth to a child in a manger after a Christian (?) landlord had evicted her from a room because her husband, not a Socialist, could not pay \$2.00.” And our correspondent closes with the words—

“Flow, flow, germinate—”

alluding no doubt to the passages in Eugene Sue’s *The Iron Collar*, in which the enslaved Gauls, smarting under the yoke of Rome, give vent, in caves and caverns,

at once to their wretchedness, their impotence and their ultimate hopes while keeping ominous time with the clank of their chains:

“Oh, flow, flow, thou blood of the captive!
Drop, drop thou dew of gore!
Germinate, sprout up, thou avenging harvest!
Hasten, you mower, hasten it is ripe!
Whet your scythe, whet it—
Whet your scythe!”

The letter supplements the picture drawn by the *Picayune's* report; the *Picayune's* report supplements the letter; each, letter and report, takes its turn as Cause and Effect.

Not wails keeping time to the clanking of chains does the Hour demand. The Hour is ripe for better things—as infinitely riper as the long distance that separates the modern wage slave from the Gallic slaves of Rome—as infinitely riper as the social and economic conditions of to-day are to those of near to 2,000 years ago—as infinitely riper as modern civilization is to the social stage where Revolution had to be hatched in caves and caverns, with trepidation in its heart for harboring Treason.

As John Swinton well put it—“The Constitution of the United States is legalized Revolution.” The only Treason to-day is the Treason to the Intellect—Treason to the Knowledge and Experience gathered by the Human Race. Guiltless were the Gallic slaves of such Treason. Theirs was pardonable the act of placing the cart of Physical Force before the horse of Political Action, that horse not yet being born. Unpardonable to-day is the same posture.

Atrocities like that reported by *The Picayune* have for their orchestration the song of Gallic slaves of old—impotent wails— energies, turned from the channels of constructive Socialism, and dissipated in the mists of Anarchy.

The Beast of Property is not to be whined, nor rhetorized off the face of the earth.

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