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EDITORIAL

THE LIE, ALL-PERVADING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN the recent application for the custody by the mother of the sixteen-year-old son of William Corey, the divorced president of the Steel Trust, Miss Corey, William Corey's own sister, declared that her brother was not a fit person to bring up the lad; and the lady added, "I do not think any New York man is fit to have charge of a boy of his age." "Do you mean all New York men?" "I mean wealthy New York men." The qualification of "wealthy New York men" obviously implies men of wealth anywhere. Miss Corey's remarkable admission has since become the text for moralizing professors, press and pulpiteers to sermonize on. They are of opinion that the gilded youth has too much pocket money; they suggest less luxurious college clubs; they prescribe more democratic methods; etc. These opinions are of a piece with the cheese-paring policies that petty capitalism resorts to as preventives for the ruin of its business. They are up-to-date applications of Mrs. Malaprop's broom to sweep the flood of the Atlantic driven into her back-yard by a storm. The unfitness of wealthy men to bring up children is the consequence of a cause that no petty devices, no court-plasters, or salves, can remedy, any more than a plaster can affect a wooden leg. The cause is the LIE that pervades the capitalist's home, and all his surroundings into their remotest corners.

The child brought up in the capitalist atmosphere is bound to become a degenerate—with hardly an exception. Poisonous is the atmosphere inhaled at the hearths, and the purlieus of the hearths, where the Lie of capitalist society is of steady, continuous application. Under previous social systems, even under capitalism, when in its infancy, the necessity of popular suffering, universal well-being not yet being a possibility, found its palliation. The abstract Wrong had its temporary vindication, and the atmosphere of the ruling class was not wholly polluted. Even then the Wrong wreaked vengeance upon its beneficiaries. Now,

however, when popular suffering is no longer a social necessity; now, when wealth is producible in such a vast mass that physical comfort is possible for all; now, accordingly, when human suffering no longer need be the lower rung of the ladder up which to climb to progress;—now, then, the continuance of class-rule is nothing short of Sin. The home whose sweetness is the distilled sweat of male, female and even child-labor; the home whose brilliancy consists in the light stolen from the eyes and the roses plucked from the cheeks of girls in factories; the home whose laughter is the bottled laughter, pilfered from the children of the poor; the home whose female chastity is paid for by prostitution as an “uneradicable evil”; finally, the home, whose Lie, some sober brow habitually blesses and approves with a text—such a home is a spreader of social pestilence. Such a home is the home of all “wealthy men.” Such a home can not choose but blight the purest instincts born with its babe heirs, and mature them into degenerate monstrosities—into a Morgan, or a Thaw, a Depew or a Whitney, a Baer or a William Corey.

The emancipation of the Working Class implies the uprooting of the capitalist LIE, and the fumigation of society. Self-defence demands it. Nor, as the sermonizings on Miss Corey’s admission demonstrate, can the work of uprooting and fumigating be entrusted to the hands of the class and its lackeys who are themselves saturated with the LIE. The uprooter and fumigator must be the triumphant Working Class.

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