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TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

CONVERSATION NO. 3.

By DANIEL DE LEON

[Under this head will be reproduced a series of conversations that were either listened to or partaken in by the editor of *The People* in the company of the capitalist passengers, whom he met in the Pullmans in the course of his recent extensive tour in the West.]

OWING to a washout some fifty miles east of Las Vegas and spreading over about eighty miles of the tracks, the trains from Salt Lake to Los Angeles on the Salt Lake & San Pedro road were prevented from running during the month of March. As a consequence a Pullman and coach left Rhyolite for Las Vegas, connected there with a stub train, and thus the rest of the journey was performed. Three young men, the oldest not over twenty-five, the youngest barely nineteen, were among the few Pullman passengers in the train from Rhyolite to Los Angeles on the morning of March 26. The youths hugged the smoking compartment. They kept it in an almost constant roar. They were going back to Los Angeles for a “lark”; they had left Los Angeles for a short trial in “roughing it.” That they were affluent appeared at all points; it also appeared from their talk that they derived revenues from mining stock. The subjects of their conversation were essentially immoral. They had the polish of manners and language. Not by gesture nor word were they obscene. Nevertheless, excepting at the intervals when they talked “business” their whole talk was upon the immoral plans they had perfected and were now within thirty-six hours of putting into execution. They discussed their “amours” freely; named names; considered a trip to San Diego with their charmers; etc.; etc. What was this ribald conversation, this minute preparation for a debauch the back ground of? What were the “business” interludes upon? The “business” interludes were upon the miners’ strike. The following are some of the expressions uttered:

“Damn that I.W.W. to hell!”

“I’d hang every one of those men!”

“They ought to be run out of the country.”

“They don’t care! What have they to lose? The strike is destroying property.”

“One hour of Sherman Bell here in Nevada would be worth a year of that sleepy Governor.”

“They had a meeting up in Rhyolite a week ago. Bell should have been there. He would have pumped them full of holes; or dumped them across the borders.”

Etc., etc., etc.

These utterances are brutal enough; they are blood-thirsty enough; they are reckless enough taken apart from their context. Taken in their context, as the accentuation of a conversation that contemplated a drunken wassail and otherwise unspeakable debauch, the utterances sounded infinitely more brutal, blood-thirsty and reckless.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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