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EDITORIAL

WICKED WU YEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE second secretary of the Chinese Legation at Washington has turned the tables on the American moralists, and in ways that are wicked implies the thought that, not China should take America for her model, but America China; that the stream of missionaries, on a mission of morality bent, should run, not westward from America to China, but eastward from China to America. Mr. Wu Yen does not say so in so many words; the point is, nevertheless, clearly made out in his contribution to the American Association for International Conciliation.

Quoting Sir Robert Hart, Wu Yen takes for his starting point the principle that the Chinese believe in right so firmly that they scorn to think it requires to be supported or enforced by might. This is “morality,” as the thing is preached by our civilization, but not practiced. And particularly timely, too, are Mr. Wu Yen’s words.

“Morality,” as the thing is understood on this side of the Pacific Ocean, stands just now in great risk of overthrow:—

A musician, whose Muse so exalts him to the spheres that he can think of nothing but sweet melodies, one Erwin F. Grabowski, is brought into court by his wife on the ground of his insisting with excessive vigor on \$70 a month from his mother-in-law.

Still worse—Delia M. Gilbert, a Christian Scientist, demands of the mother church \$5,000, which amount, if furnished, will be “a leader” to her that she was wrong in the thoughts she harboured, but, if not furnished to her, will be equally “a leader” that the cause of morality will be best promoted by her adhering to the afore-referred to damaging opinions.

And worse still—a set of leading American Negroes, so leading that their gathering is graced by Dr. Booker T. Washington, come to the conclusion that what the Negro is in need of is to “cultivate the religion of saving,” the Negro having

“tried every other kind of religion but that”; what the conclusion means may be gathered from the following passage in the address of one of the speakers: “For forty-three years we Negroes have been singing ‘You can have all the world, but give me Jesus.’ Now we are just beginning to find out that the whites really have the whole world, while we have merely prayed the knees of our trousers out.” The passage gathers all the more significance from the circumstance that it was uttered by a deacon, the Rev. P.E. Jones; that it was uttered in a church, the Zion Church of this city; finally, that it “took” tremendously with the large audience.

When a “morality” that was affected is brazenly thrown overboard and material might is preached with equal brazenness accompanied with sneers at the former “morality”—when that happens, the Wu Yens are timely apparitions to lead us back to the “moral law.”

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

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