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EDITORIAL

SUGAR AND COAL; OR “MORALITY” ON THE STOCKS.

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WHOLE pages have been taken up by the Democratic, the Republican and the Reform press exposing the frauds committed by the Sugar Trust, with the knowledge, connivance and even the support of Government officials, high and low. Columns upon columns continue to be taken up by these “public organs” with the matter; and the pulpit, the “drum ecclesiastic,” that other supposed organ for the dissemination of morality, has in many a place been holding up the Sugar malefactors to public scorn.

At about the same time 400 human beings are buried alive, burned and suffocated, in the mines of the St. Paul Coal Company in Illinois; and the space devoted to the calamity is trifling in comparison to the space devoted to the Sugar affair. As to the pulpit, it has so far remained silent.

Why the difference?

Why? Simply because the Sugar issue concerns capitalists exclusively, while the coal mine disaster concerns the workers.

No doubt the conduct of the folks involved in the Sugar scandal is immoral. Theft is not a moral act. But the moneys stolen “remain in the family.” It is a row that concerns capitalists only. Whether this or that batch of capitalists and their political agents steal or do not steal from, cheat or do not cheat that batch or this, the wages of the workers are affected by not a copper; the condition of their servitude is altered not in the slightest. Such an issue, to use a vulgar, yet expressive term, of the vernacular, “is pie” for the upholders of bourgeois society. Reeking with immorality from the crown of their heads to the heels of their feet, the apostles of the bourgeois social system have an opportunity to indulge in cheap declamations concerning morality.

Otherwise in the matter of the coal mine tragedy. To harp upon that won't do. The prevention of such tragedies takes money out of the pockets of the newspaper stockholders and out of front-pew payers. To raise the voice of protest against the iniquities that are directly responsible for such wholesale slaughter of workingmen, directly suggests conditions that capitalism is guilty of, and that can not be checked with methods, such as Sugar frauds may suggest. The coal mine disaster points to the necessity of nothing less than the dumping of capitalism. Such events must be hushed; they are passed over lightly.

And thus it happens that the organs of capitalism, aglow for morality in the one case, are cold as ice in the other.

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