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EDITORIAL

## ARSENIC AS AN EDUCATOR.

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**T**HE American Book Company has just sent to the Philippines several thousand school books, the covers of which had been saturated with arsenic. This is done to prevent the white ants from eating the paper, and destroying the books. The American Book Company evidently does not care whether it kills a few Filipinos or not. Arsenic is a deadly poison, if you take even a little of it, and in the minutest quantities{,} it has a lasting and injurious effect.

As the books are not to be eaten by the children—though any one acquainted with little boys and girls knows they have a tendency to chew covers and leaves—the poisoning will come through the fingers. This will make it worse than if they were poisoned outright, as they will be affected by it all their lives.

It is absolutely false to say this will not be the consequence. The fingers will slowly absorb the deadly drug, and in a damp, warm climate such as that of the Philippines, the operation will be facilitated. When book covers, or the leaves of a book, are subjected to damp and to heat, they naturally sweat. That will bring the arsenic to the surface, and the constant thumbing and turning of the leaves will transfer the poison to the systems of the children.

It is a fact that the veriest tyro in medicine knows, that the human body is like a great sponge, and that it will absorb, through the countless tiny pores, a large amount of matter. Patients who are ill are even fed in this way. They take medicine through the skin. They can be rendered unconscious by immersing the feet in water that contains an opiate. This is so well recognized that it is one of the commonest methods of treatment.

What can be done with medicine and food, can just as readily be done with poison. Only a tiny amount of arsenic is needed to kill, and it can be taken through the fingers as well as through the mouth.

What right has the American Book Company to experiment in such a manner that the lives of thousands of children, utterly unconscious of wrong, should be placed in the way of death or disease? By what right does it send these drugged and

pestiferous books to any school? Who made the American Book Company the executioner of these children?

Capitalist government makes the claim that it conserves the lives of citizens, but the falseness and hypocrisy of this claim is shown by the fact that not a word has been said against poisoning the children of the Philippine schools. In fact, the government is a partner to the crime when it allows such a thing to be done.

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