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EDITORIAL

WHERE INNOCENCE IS HARMFUL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

COMMENTING favorably upon four bills before the Minnesota Legislature—one providing for the punishment of habitual drunkards, one making wife desertion a felony, one for the establishment of a State labor colony for the detention of tramps, and a fourth ordering a State commission to investigate and report the causes of poverty and sickness—the Duluth *Evening Herald* of March 28 urges that, seeing all the four bills can not be passed, due to the session being too far advanced, the last of the four should be the chosen one, because, valuable tho' all the four are, this one is pre-eminently so. In support of its opinion the *Evening Herald* informs its readers that the Duluth Associated Charities thinks so too.

To the readers of the *Evening Herald* who have passed the kindergarten stage on social questions, and who might have had some doubt concerning the paper's sound judgment, the information that the Associated Charities of the city share the paper's opinion must have turned the doubt into conviction.

Each one of the four bills is a nuisance. They, one and all, are aggravations of evils that now pester society. They are charitable moves, only in the sense that all bourgeois "Charities" are charitable—charitable schemes for the charitable purpose of charitably providing berths for pets, not always worthy ones, of the alleged Charity organization. In other words they are schemes for graft. Worst of all is the fourth bill, the bright particular favorite of the *Evening Herald*.

"To punish a drunkard, the victim, and leave unwhipped the cause of drunkenness, the victimizer, is stupid enough; to visit with punishment felonious the wife deserter and say nothing of the wife-desertion-promoter is queer; to set up State colonies for vagrants is setting the cart before the horse. All these schemes are truly "charitable." The jobs stick out at all corners. However, to set up a State

commission to “investigate the causes of poverty” is besides being “charitable,” hence, sufficiently objectionable, a decidedly vicious plot.

To order an investigation implies the absence of the knowledge wanted. The causes of poverty are not unknown. So thoroughly known are they that the bourgeois press is extensively subsidized to keep the lid down on the knowledge, and impart all manner of misinformation on Socialism and Socialists.

Time often brings help. It is to be hoped that the fears of the Duluth *Evening Herald* concerning the shortness of the time left for the Minnesota Legislature to adopt the four bills may have proved well founded.

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