

# The People.

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SECOND EDITORIAL

## BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**O**ur “leading citizens,” the “pillars of Law and Order,” the first fiddlers of “Religion and Morality” in this city find themselves just now between two fires: On one side their posings are exposed, on the other their revenues are threatened. To save their revenues they will have to brace it out against public opinion; to preserve appearances and their falsely good name, they must bid adieu to goodly chunks of income.

One of those periodical spasms of morality and civic virtue has again seized certain reform elements in this city, whereupon they proceeded helter-skelter to raid gambling houses and dives, and, of course, greatly incommoded Tammany Hall, not a few of whose officers stand a good chance of being indicted for connivance.

This sort of thing is, theoretically, just the thing for our ruling class. They, the givers of SEELY dinners, subsidizers of LITTLE EGYPTS, and promoters of immorality generally, like nothing better than a big clatter for morality that enables them to pose in their hypocrite poses. But in this instance the thing does not pan out well: hypocrisy will have to pay through the nose now, or stand exposed.

It turns out that the leading and worse gambling houses and dives in the city are the property of just these “best citizens.” It turns out worse. Premises occupied for such purposes pay a rent clean above all proportion, and wholly in disregard of all single tax theories of rental values. The landlord owners accordingly, are, by reason of the swollen rents they



“Little Egypt,” an exotic dancer of the late 19th Century.

collect from such premises, well aware of the uses their property is put to, well aware of the polluted sources of their large incomes therefrom.

Now, then, here are these worthies between two fires: If the spasm of reform morality does not soon stop, these premises will suddenly wholly cease yielding revenues; on the other hand, to keep these revenues going, our “best citizens” will have to rank themselves speedily with the keepers of the dives and gambling houses, and invoking “individuality,” “freedom of initiative” and other slogans of this nature, to frown down “reform.”

This certainly is an awkward predicament for “pillars of Law and Order” to find themselves in. One is tempted to sympathize with the broad grin that the Tammany Tiger must be wearing at the sight of its “betters.”

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