

EDITORIAL

DR. SANGRADO GILDER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“WITHIN a few days the country has been shocked by the official figures of divorce in the United States”—with these words Mr. Richard Watson Gilder opened his anti-woman suffrage speech at the Berkeley Lyceum meeting.

With this opening statement of fact and sentiment none can take exception. The official figures of divorce are startling; they are well calculated to shock society.

Mr. Richard Watson Gilder then proceeded to argue from these premises that the woman’s suffrage movement “is a new, insidious and possibly disastrous attack upon the fundamentals of civilization—the home.”

The witty Le Sage photographs in his story of Gil Blas a remarkable Doctor. His name was Sangrado, which means bleeder. Dr. Sangrado had a unique system of reasoning. Was a man sick? he bled him. Did the man grow worse? he bled him some more. Needless to say what were the consequences. It is hard to distinguish the Dr. from Richard Watson Gilder as a social physician.

The home is on the rocks. Mr. Gilder admits that. Who should save the home, who is called to save the home? One should think that the home itself must do the work. And whom does the home consist of? It consists of husband and wife, together with their children, eventual wives and husbands. The home being on the rocks, and the adult members of the home being the husband and the wife, the conclusion is inevitable that husband and wife must co-operate in saving it. “Not so!” puts in Dr. Sangrado Gilder. “The co-operation of the wife would lead to ‘pathetically incongruous’ results. The wife must keep hands off.”

Either the ballot is a good, or it is a bad thing. If it is a bad thing for the wife leg of the social person known as “the home,” then it cannot be a good thing for the husband leg of the self-same entity. If it is a good thing for the husband leg, it must

be equally good for the wife leg. Dr. Sangrado Gilder would let the house hobble on one leg—amputate, if necessary, the wife leg.

The Dr. Sangrado style of reasoning proceeds from a Dr. Sangrado theory of the human constitution. So with Dr. Sangrado Gilder. The Dr. Sangrado Gilder theory of the “home” places the home outside of society—an absurdity. Whether the home be the pivot of society, or the reflex of society,—all laws and institutions either radiate from, or focalize in the home. The home is an integral part of society. Every adult member thereof must co-operate to its improvement. To smite woman with incapacity for co-operation by circumscribing her “functions” to those of a mare, for breeding, as Roosevelt implies and Dr. Sangrado Gilder evidently holds, leaves to man nothing but a “function,” which Mrs. Charlotte Gillman has well indicated with the question whether man would accept that other and supplementary function as all that is required of him?

If society does not promptly rally to her own succor, the Dr. Sangrados will yet be the death of her.

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

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