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EDITORIAL

THE ACME OF SHAMELESSNESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

EVERY well read person knows of the posture of the Southern slaveholders in and out of Congress who demanded slavery “in the name of the Negro and for the Negro’s good.” That was shameless.

Every person, even if not “well read,” but who lives with eyes and ears approximately open has seen and heard protectionist capitalist utterances to the effect that what they strain after is protection to their employes from the “pauper labor” of backward races. That, in a way, is still more shameless, considering that the more highly protected the industry the lower is the living of the wage earners engaged in them.

Every person, “well read” or not, who walks across life awake and not in a trance, has had occasion to arch his eyebrows at the pretence of free trade capitalists that the sleepless nights they spend in scheming how to tear down the tariff are spent in the interest of the overburdened poor, whose burden the philanthropic free trader would lighten. Unquestionably this posture strikes a still higher pitch of shamelessness: no sooner prices go down than down go wages.

Nevertheless, the acme of shamelessness is not reached by any of these worthies. It was left for the women, who are said to be back of a certain manifesto now issued against a certain schedule in the proposed tariff bill, to reach the peak of Mt. Shamelessness.

The proposed tariff bill raises the duty considerably on the choice kid, lamb and Schmaschen gloves for women imported from Europe, especially upon those over 14 inches in length. That by no process this tax can fall upon the proletariat is obvious. Proletarian women do not indulge in kid and other choice leather gloves 14 inches in length—at least not to any alarming extent—and not then usually until they meet in the slums the slum element of the plutocracy. This notwithstanding,

rushing by the slaveholders who wept in favor of slavery in behalf of their slaves; taking a spurt beyond the protectionists who “voice the needs and wishes” of their starvation-waged employes; and outstripping the free traders whose heart throbs only to the tune of “lighter burdens” for the wage slaves whose shoulders they are ever engaged in rendering weaker—out-shaming all these, worthies, the issuers of the Manifesto against the proposed schedule that raises the duty on women’s kid and other gloves, especially those over 14 inches in length, appeal to the women of “the poorer classes” to “make themselves felt” by writing to their Congressmen in protest against a schedule that “taxes most highly the poorer classes”!

Does the broad-based mountain range of capitalist shamelessness boast of any peak more shamelessly insulting than this?

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

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