

EDITORIAL

“VICIOUS JOURNALISM.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

AN organization, called “The Citizens’ Protective League,” has been organized in Colorado for the express “purpose of elevating the tone and moral standards of the newspapers of Colorado.” With this purpose in view the League has issued a booklet—*Vicious Journalism, The Octopus Which Throttles the Industrial, Moral and Social Advancement of Denver and Colorado*.

The booklet is only 15 pages large, but as full of matter as an egg is of meat—matter for thought.

The charge is made that the Denver papers practise “blackmail.”—Blackmail is a two-sided crime. There is extorter of money to hush up a wrong, and there is the wrong doer who hates publicity, and who is rich enough to pay therefor. The poor are not blackmailed.

The charge is made that the Denver papers publish “grossly immoral stories.”—An ugly thing. It betrays the existence of a depraved reading public and the existence of those who are ready to speculate upon the same.

The charge is made that the Denver papers publish “fake riots.”—A bad habit, which uncovers the status of a population which likes to be humbugged.

The charge is made that a Denver paper has charged Denver with having “the most openly disreputable quarters in the civilized world.”—The charge, pregnant in itself, is rendered doubly so by the lamest of denials; indeed, by no denial whatever, unless to hedge be to deny.

Finally, an outside paper, the *Gunnison News Champion*, which says “there is no more abject coward on earth than the average business man” is quoted without contradiction, thereby accepting and announcing as correct the moral photography of Denver’s quota of “business men.”

Now, then—

Colorado is a "Suffrage State"; she is the next oldest "Suffrage State" of all: she has been a "Suffrage State" for full twenty years. If one-hundredth part of what the Suffragists expect from the Suffrage is justly expected, then we are confronted with a paradox—the capital city of a Suffrage State a sink of depravity.

Yet there is no paradox.

While not an argument, made against the Suffrage by the Antis, is aught but an insult to the human intellect; while the inequality under which woman is held is an outrage that degrades at once her and man; all that notwithstanding, the planting of the Suffrage upon sex and claiming for the female portion an occult power powerful enough to cleanse society is, as the Denver situation demonstrates, a sociologic absurdity.

Wishing the Denver "League" all possible success, and because we wish success to its efforts against vicious journalism, we admonish it that, on the identical principle which makes the liquor trade uneradicable so long as there is profit in it, just so long as the present social system prevails will the carrion be there to which the vicious crows will flock—women employees will, as they are doing in the Suffrage State of Colorado, themselves violate the factory law that was enacted in their behalf, by purchasing stock in the corporations that employ them, and thereby becoming, under the law, their own employers, free to work as long hours as they "choose"—children will be taken by the shoals from school, as happens every season in the Suffrage State of Colorado, and sent to work on the sugar beet fields to eke out their own and their parents' existence—militia officers will declare, as they did in the Suffrage State of Colorado, "To hell with the Constitution!" and, unchecked, even unprotested against, dragoon husbands, fathers and sons of Colorado women into the subjection of dumb wage slavery—and—and—the carrion crow of Vicious Journalism will inevitably hover overhead.

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