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EDITORIAL

IMPORTED AND HOME FELONS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

COMMISSIONER of Immigration William Williams has started to bestir himself on the subject of the physical, mental and moral cripples that are being “dumped” upon our shores by the steamship companies, who “care for nothing but their fares.” The Commissioner’s cue has been promptly taken by the bourgeois, Republican as well as Democratic press. It is blossoming out in a neat crop of editorials and correspondence invoking the Goddess of Liberty to “guard our gates.” Some of the invokers break out into poetry.

George Eliot referred somewhere to “Abroad,” meaning the continent of Europe, as the vague term, applied by all shattered reputations in England, to the asylum whither they flee. What the continent of Europe is to England the United States is to the whole of Europe, insular as well as continental. Sharpers of all degrees who have been over-sharp flee hither. Hither come as to an asylum the embezzlers, the blackmailers, the fraudulent bankrupts, in short, that numerous class of people who live by their wits, and who, as such, usually have but little wit to spare. The charge that these mental cripples are dumped upon our shores is true; and sad it is ’tis true. But saddest of all would be the misfortune of the truth being turned and put to the use of concealing another, and still more weighty, truth.

There are in America more frauds and cheats than in any other country. Whence come they? Are they all importations? Far from it. A goodly number, aye, the majority are domestic products. America produces its own felons in abundance, more numerous than any other country. This is natural. The largest capitalist country in the world cannot choose but yield the largest crop of frauds. For every one crook whom we import, we ourselves produce a dozen. Keep out the foreign cheats? Yes, if it can be done. But let us be on our guard against imagining, or being made to imagine, that by “guarding our gates” the country will be kept clean.

There is a suspicious anxiety on the part of the above referred to invocers of the Goddess of Liberty. There is a distinct note of the “Stop thief”! cry in the invocations. It looks as if our domestic felons are trying to play the “Protection” trick. It very much sounds as if they are afraid of foreign competition in felony. The home felons are no better than the imported ones. There is but one disinfectant that will stead—the Socialist Republic, otherwise known as “Rough on Felony.”

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

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