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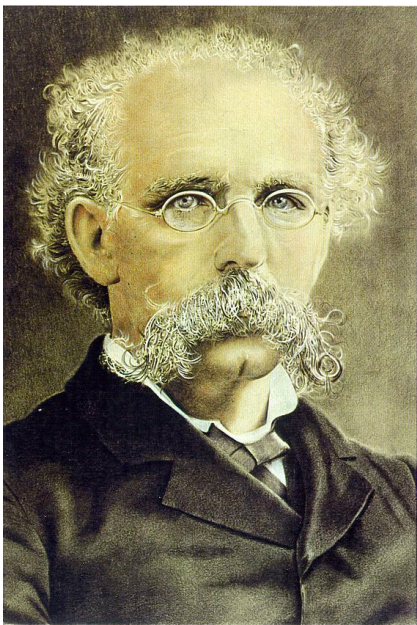
EDITORIAL

PLAYING TO THE GALLERIES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

MR. [Terence V. Powderly](#) and his lieutenant Watchhorn occupied considerable space in yesterday's morning papers. Strange to say, or, rather, not strange, but quite naturally, their antics did not appear under the head of "News from the Theaters," as they should. They occupied a separate place and appeared under a separate heading.

Powderly is Commissioner of Immigration. This is equivalent to saying that Powderly draws official salary to play a farce. The labor-fleecers of America can not (they are too dyspeptically nervous) accommodate themselves to the slow decline of American wages. They are in terrific hurry. They are cutting one another's throats



TERENCE V. POWDERLEY (1849-1924)

so rapidly that the margin of profit must be broadened: reduction of wages is the simplest method to the end. Foreign workmen are, to this end, more desirable than native; and of all foreign workingmen, the Chinese is the most desirable; indeed he is ideal; none fills the bill so well: besides working for next to nothing, he is not likely to arouse any popular sympathy should he be maltreated after being plucked by the capitalist. It thus happens that, from the dowager supreme ruler of Leland Stanford, Jr., University down, fleecedom likes the immigrant, loves to see him pouring in, feels happy in proportion as the importation of that article—Labor—rises, and actually dotes on the coolie.

Even a Bismarck could not drive things wholly to his own liking. The capitalist Labor-fleecer realizes that. He would like the immigrants to pour in from all sides; but, in order to profit thereby, he must remain in political power. In order to do that, he must keep the wool down over the eyes of the workingmen voters so as to

secure their suffrage. Now, then, it so happens that the workingmen—however erroneously many of them apply the theory, and however blind these remain to its deductions—understand that their wages depend upon the supply of Labor in the Labor Market, and have taken a notion that the way to keep the supply down is to keep the immigrant out. The error is crass. For every workingman that immigration throws into the market, privately owned machinery throws in two. To call the attention of the workers to this fact is, obviously, not the cue of fleecerdom. That would turn the workers' faces straight to Socialism. Consequently, the capitalist class humors the delusion of the workers anent immigration; and thus the Commissionship of Immigration is set up. It serves to keep the working people in false gaze, and it is put in the hands of some Labor actor, whose periodical antics may convey to the unthinking, the idea that the immigrants are being kept out.

This, in a nutshell, is the "plot" in the comedy to which long-drawn reports were yesterday devoted, and in which Powderly and Watchhorn appear as star and sub-star, scurrying through the country to keep out 7 coolies at El Paso, 3 at Vancouver and as many as 5 near Montreal.

It takes the smile of Ah Sin, child-like and bland, to do justice to the light comedians Powderly and Watchhorn while they are playing to the galleries—the Labor Vote.

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