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ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

OPEN LETTER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ANTHONY Comstock,
Sec'y New York Society for the Suppression of Vice.
Sir:—

Your letter of the 23rd of last month inviting us to help rallying “the good men” of the State in favor of a certain Act approved by your organization to amend the penal code relative to gambling, etc., has been received, and its arguments duly considered.

Your posture is false in reasoning, vicious in practice, hypocritical and Pecksniffian.

It is the acme of hypocrisy to set up a good principle, and under its folds to beat the tom-tom for the opposite. No decent man will deny the wrongfulness of gambling. Your proposed Act does not in the remotest aim at the evil. On the contrary, it cloaks it. You object to the “common gamblers”, the petty sneak-thief, and preposterously you impute to him the “beggaring of women and children, the wrecking of homes, the ruin and disgrace of families, the honeycombing and undermining of business enterprises, and the breaking out upon every side of defalcations, embezzlements, forgeries and larcenies”. The merest child knows that such dire results can not flow from such slight cause as the “common gambler”. True, “women and children ARE beggared, homes ARE wrecked, families ARE ruined and disgraced, business enterprises ARE honeycombed and undermined, and upon every side defalcations, embezzlements, forgeries and larcenies ARE breaking out.” This is all true, but if one has not wit enough to go to the bottom cause, and stops at such a result as “gambling”, then his conduct is more than suspicious when he shuts his eyes at the big gamblers and affects indignation at the “common gamblers”, the little fellows. Open any of the large dailies, Sir, you will find there

columns upon columns of reports of the big gamblers, the Dick Turpins, who, in their so-called Stock Exchanges, gamble openly, and whose gamblings result in defalcations, embezzlements, larcenies and often suicides to the crash of crumbling homes. These “un-common gamblers” are in league with the large dailies who publish their scores. To leave these alone, aye, to approve by silence both them and the dailies, who publish their worse than vicious prowesses, and to chase after the “common gambler” is not the part of an honest, if he is intelligent, or of an intelligent, if he is an honest man.

For these reasons we decline to be drawn aside from the big criminal class, upon whose trail the Socialist Labor Party is camping, and join in a crusade to suppress the “common gambler” by the enactment of laws, the only practical effect of which can be to give the spies, whom your Society keeps agoing, with further pasture grounds for them to ply their trade of blackmailers on.

EDITOR THE PEOPLE.

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