

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 353.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JUNE 18, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

AS TO EDUCATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

QUITE recently Mr. E.C. Mercer delivered an address in St. Paul's Chapel of Columbia University in the course of which he said:

“One night I counted thirty-nine college men of my acquaintance in the Bowery bread-line, and another investigator found 400 college men in the Bowery in a single night's search.”

A time was when the current theory ran: “Give a child an education, that will insure his living.”

The experience, only confirmed by Mr. Mercer, of the large number of paupers and consequent criminals with college education, caused a new theory to spring up. It sprang up from religious organizations. It was to this effect: “Education alone, without religious training, is worse than no education at all: the principle thing is religious training that will insure the child's conduct through life.”

The theory also suffered shipwreck. The large number of paupers and consequent criminals with religious training, strained through all denominations, proved the theory false.

Is there, then, no help in man? If left ignorant he is brutalized and his chances in life are poor; if educated, so large a percentage turns out no better that education alone offers no relief; finally, if trained religiously, with or without education, the large percentages of life-wrecks conclusively prove that neither religious training alone is a panacea.

Of course, neither religious training alone, nor education alone can be a panacea. Education only tends to render the pauper's crimes more heinous: the crimes of the brute ignorant are brutish, the crimes of the educated are mischievous. Similarly with religious training alone. Religious training enables the

needy to resort to a special line of fraud that neither the simply ignorant, nor simply educated man can resort to—means of hypocrisy that spread immorality.

It is strange that the educators have not yet fathomed the secret of the failure of either college or religious training to secure a man's life and guard him against vice. Bumped from the rock of education only to that of religious training only, backward and forward, to find insecurity of living remain unaffected and crime to be rather promoted, the educators have yet to learn that neither college education nor religious training can substitute the material basis, upon which the good that there is in education, and the morality that is claimed for religious training, can cast root and flourish.

Whether educated, or religiously trained, or left in ignorance, larger and larger masses of the population are thrown by capitalism upon the identical heap. They are either thrown, or in constant dread of being thrown upon that heap—the heap of the proletariat—a heap, which, rising ever more mountain-high, is the Sinai from which a new dispensation will yet be thundered out to the world amidst the flashes of the condensed aspirations of the race—THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.

Then, only then, will education and other training uplift, instead of acting suicidally.

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

Uploaded September 2010

slpns@slp.org