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EDITORIAL

THE NEBRASKA CELESTIAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A NEW biography has been flashed upon the wires that should make us pause. The Nebraska Republican caucus nomination for the short term in the United States Senate having fallen upon Mr. David E. Thompson, the biography of the gentleman is forthwith published. No doubt the beauty spots thereon are numerous. One, however, is of extraordinary brilliancy.

Lincoln, Neb., Mr. Thompson's home, though virtually a straggling village, has many an ugly characteristic of a large town. It owes this distinction to its being a railroad shop and emporium of the Burlington Road. Thanks to the railroad, Lincoln is drawn into the whirl of capitalist "blessings," and one of these—a robust army of unemployed to help drag down wages and keep the capitalist at all hours supplied with a reservoir of cheap Labor—is very conspicuous. The presence of the unemployed is everywhere a symptom. It denotes want, grinding and torturing; it denotes, in short, the existence of the poor. Mr. Thompson, a Lincoln millionaire, of course, overflows with charity. His biography informs the country that "every Christmas he gives a carload of flour to the poor of Lincoln,"—a drop in the Ocean of Hunger!

In China, a nation almost exclusively agricultural, to the extent that the national color is taken from the color of the fields, agriculture is held in high esteem; that is to say, the idle, ruling class of China consciously owes its existence to the tillers of the soil. To live without work, especially to enjoy luxury without laboring for it, seems to strike the mind in an agricultural country as absurd and wrong more quickly and forcibly than in industrial countries. Both the idle and the toiling Chinese must at an early date have realized the fact. But in "heathen" China no more than in "Christian" America is the knowledge of doing wrong a check upon a wrong-doing sponge class. The only effect of such knowledge is to sharpen the wits of that class in the art of cajoling, hoodwinking, deceiving, humbugging, the wronged class. That's what happened in China. Accordingly, once a year,—that is,

just as often as Mr. Thompson, with blow of trumpets, dropped his grain of flour into the ocean of Lincoln's famine—the Emperor of China, ostentatiously and in full regalia, put his hand to a plow, and furrowed an inch of the soil of an agricultural land considerably larger than all the United States!

One need not go to the Celestial Empire to discover Celestial fraud. We too have our Celestials, and the Hon. David E. Thompson is the Nebraska specimen. In China, the gentry mesmerize the thinking powers of the exploited agriculturists by cheap official mummerly that humbugs the workers into the belief that the Emperor is one of them, a tiller of the soil; in Nebraska, the gentry palsy the brains of the exploited poor with a once-a-year, on Christmas, recurring cheap demonstration of benevolence, that hoodwinks them into the notion of a common brotherhood;—and both here and there the plunder of the toiler continues unabated.

Whether Nebraskan or Celestial, whether landlord or capitalist, the exploiter is a vampire and his charity the vampire's cooling air, flapped by its wings upon the spot where it sucks its victim's blood.

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