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EDITORIAL

THE PRODUCTIVITY OF THE CRIMINAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SACROSANCT capital and the God-ordained capitalist—as they are exhibiting themselves by the gas investigation, the stenchful revelations of the Equitable Insurance Association, the Standard Oil highway robberies, the railroad frauds, the New York *Times*' principal stockholder, banker Shiff's sneaking defiance of law, etc., etc., all at the same time—are furnishing illustrations in a bunch of one of the most biting satires with which Marx castigated and demolished the capitalist's pretence of his contributing towards the national wealth through his “intellectual labor.” Said Marx:

“A philosopher ‘produces’ ideas, a poet poems, a preacher sermons, a professor text-books, and so forth. A criminal ‘produces’ crimes. If we look more closely at the relation in which this branch of industry stands to society, not a few prejudices will drop.

“It is not crimes alone that the criminal ‘produces’; he also ‘produces’ criminal legislation, and, as a consequence, he is also the first mover in the ‘production’ of the professors who ‘produce’ lectures thereon, along with the inevitable text-books in which these professors cast their lectures as ‘goods’ on the markets of the world. . . .

“Furthermore, the criminal ‘produces’ all the criminal and correctionary branches of society—police, judges, hangmen, juries, etc., besides all the several branches of industry demanded by these, and all of which constitute just so many categories in the scale of social labor, develop different faculties of the human mind, create new wants and new means whereby to satisfy them. . . .

“The criminal ‘produces’ an impression—good or bad, as the case may be. He thereby ‘renders a service’ to the moral and aesthetic sentiments of the public. It is not only text-books on criminal legislation that the criminal ‘produces’; he ‘produces’ not merely the penal law itself, and consequently the legislators of that law. He also ‘produces’ art, literature, novels, even tragedies as shown by the appearance of Mullner's *Tanjte*, Schiller's *Robbers*, the *Oedipus*, and *Richard III*. The criminal breaks the monotony and humdrum security of bourgeois life, he thereby insures it against

stagnation, and he arouses that excitement and restlessness without which even the spur of competition would be blunted. Thus the criminal furnishes the stimulants to the productive forces.”

It is only Truth that fits all times. The satire fitted the capitalists and their journalists who posed before Marx. It fits exactly the capitalists of our own country, their philosophers, orators and writers. How exactly, may be judged by the exhibition that sacrosanct capital and the God-ordained capitalist are making of themselves in these days.

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