

EDITORIAL

THE HOOKWORM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ACCORDING to Dr. Stiles, “the hookworm is a parasite that lives in the small intestine, where it sucks blood, produces minute hemorrhage, and in all probability also secretes a substance which acts as a poison.” Having so accurately described the insidious parasite one wonders that Dr. Stiles gives its habitat as “the South, where it ravages the ‘poor whites.’” From the description of the animile one would expect to hear that his home is the whole United States, its pasture ground the working class of all colors, and its name well known to science.

When scientists classify bug or worm, they ascertain its qualities, and by a process of analysis, elimination and synthesis, determine the Order, Genus and Species of their specimen. Let us submit Dr. Stiles’s parasite to this process.

It sucks blood—that places it in the general Order of the carnivorous.

It produces minute hemorrhage—that places it in the Genus of the sneak.

It secretes a substance which acts as a poison—that places it in the Family of the harmful.

Finally, it lives on the poor, the workers,—that places it in the Species of the cannibals.

What worm comes under all these categories? Only one—the capitalist vulgaris.

The capitalist vulgaris sucks blood, the blood of its employes; the capitalist vulgaris produces minute hemorrhage: the wound which its tentacles leave after the bloodsucking is done continues to trickle; the capitalist vulgaris secretes a substance that acts decidedly as a poison; it is the substance which spreads foul corruption and ignorance in the atmosphere; the capitalist vulgaris lives on workingmen, women and children only.

So then “hookworm” is only a Southern localism for the thing known in wormology as “capitalist vulgaris,” a nuisance and a pest against which the Socialist

anti-toxine is being directed the world over.

There are people for whom it is claimed that they discovered America before Columbus. The claim may, or may not be correct. False, however, is Dr. Stiles's claim that he discovered the "hookworm," To give a well known thing a new name is not a discoverer's work, it is the work of a god-father.

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