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EDITORIAL

## PROF. ADLER, ETHICALIST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**N order to study the morality of the ruling class, its chief expositors of morality should be examined. Fortunately these need not be put under the microscope; it requires no enlargement of their performances to ascertain the turpitude of their conduct, and thereby to judge the class they are the pullers-in for.

It is a well established device of Crime to shut its eyes to what is near, and forge apologies drawn from great distances. It is likewise a well established device of Wrong to seek to profit by its own misdeeds by utilizing its victims. Prof. Felix Adler is by all odds an expositor of capitalist morality; on that line he distances the regulation moralists, or pulpiteers. Christianity may here and there have a raw flavor: the word ethics has not yet been contaminated: as the founder, head and soul of the Society of Ethical Culture, Prof. Adler stands pre-eminent as a capitalist moralist. Now then, this paragon wallowed in both the above-named sins at the recent Cooper Union meeting of the Civic Federation.

With the instance of Dolgeville, N.Y., yet fresh in the public mind, telling of the tragedy that illuminated there the fraudulent pretences of the Brotherhood of Capital and Labor, Prof. Adler leaped across the Atlantic over to England for an illustration of how brotherly Capital and Labor could be. It only aggravates the offence that the illustration is essentially forged, as forged it is in all such cases; the offence is sufficiently immoral in itself: no honorable man goes far away for an illustration of his point when near by are illustrations galore to knock him out: he who indulges in such practice seeks to deceive by suppressing the truth.

With the striking page in the country's history of petitions submitted to Congress by negro slaves requesting Congress not to yield to the outcry of the Abolitionists, because their condition was a "happy" one; with scores of other and more recent incidents in the land of workingmen, driven by the lash of hunger, obeying the order of their capitalist employers and of the Labor Lieutenants of these, the Gomperses and Mitchells, and respectfully requesting their fleecers to lower their wages, "in view of the hard times" that the fleecers are

experiencing;—with such facts bristling all over the country and right under his own nose, Prof. Adler quoted workingmen “in the cotton mills of an English town,” who “voluntarily suggested that their wages be lowered.” As Prof. Adler is not an idiot, he must have read the yarn about the operatives “in the cotton mills of an English town” by the light of close-by history; he must have understood it in its true sense, to wit, that the truer the yarn, all the stronger is the evidence of such class inhumanity on the part of the capitalist as to prove just the reverse of that which he stood up to uphold,—the fraudulent theory of possible and permanent harmony between the vampire capitalist and his victim, the workingman.

The morality of the capitalist class, as exemplified by this its leading ethicalist, spells turpitude. Cheering is that sign of the times that the audience of workingmen, whom Ethical Culturist Adler sought to bunco-steer, so far from flying up in a rage, as the capitalist press would like to have seen them do, sat back in their seats and roared with laughter in the face of this Professor.

When a Victim Class has acquired so sharp an eye as to see through the immorality of the false apostles of Morality, and got its indignation so well under control as to laugh at the Victimizers’ Class, the latter have every reason under the sun to feel uncomfortable.

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