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EDITORIAL

A HORROR-PARALLEL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is now nearly eleven years ago that this city was horrified by the latest New York Central tunnel accident. Seven human beings were burnt and crushed to death, many others were injured more or less seriously. The cause of the disaster was the condition of the tunnel. Smoke, fog and steam hid all signals from sight. The Coroner's jury that made the investigation censured the Company. And that was the end of it. The "Black Hole of Calcutta," as the tunnel has been styled, remained unimproved. Depew cracked ghastly jokes on the subject and was acquitted, and human life continued to be endangered.

Those were the days of Tammany. If the tunnel is not a nuisance, there never was any. It is a nuisance against health, it is a nuisance against limb, it is a nuisance against life. The City Government had ample power to deal with it, summarily. Those were the days of Tammany. The nuisance was left unmolested. Off and on a ripple of indignation would arise from residents in Park avenue. Investigations would be fitfully made,—and dropped. The nuisance continued unabated, aye increased. But those were the days of Tammany. Those were the days of the rule of "blackmail," "rake-offs" and "shake-downs"; those were the days when the elite of the city was not in power; those were the days when the city enjoyed no "Government of the people."

On Wednesday, the 8th instant, another shiver of horror ran through the city. Again that "Black Hole of Calcutta," the New York Central tunnel, was the scene of human slaughter. Again the same conditions—smoke, fog and steam—choked the tunnel, hid all signals from sight and caused a shocking butchery. The New York Central tunnel nuisance once more did its deadly work. So far the parallel is exact; is it exact in other respects? When the story of this accident shall be complete enough to be written as fully as that of 1891, it will be found that the parallel will

be exact all along the line. Instead of a capitalist crew labeled “Tammany,” the City now sports a capitalist crew labeled “Low-Movement.” Already the Low press sounds the note of apology for the Company; already the criminally negligent directors are being held free from responsibility; already the engineer is being made the scape-goat; already the Low District Attorney is praiseful of—what? Why, of the identical capitalist interests that, together with the others centred in New York, dictate the conduct of “Low-Movement” capitalism as distinctly as they dictated that of “Tammany” capitalism.

Duchess Consuelo’s class must live. What are such little things as accidents to them? Only a little concentration of the horrors that mark the trail of capitalism. Only occasions for “wild alarmists to shoot off their mouths”; nothing more. And to enforce these views Tammany worked assiduously, and the “Low-Movement” City Government will devote its efforts.

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

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