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EDITORIAL

NOVEL SISTERS OF CHARITY.

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THE Sister of Charity type was furnished in the Dark, or Middle Ages. She was a woman whose earthly illusions being seared, devoted her life to assuaging the sorrows that surrounded her in this "Vale of Tears." The type of the Sister of Charity was a woman of macerated flesh, with thoughts turned heavenward, and heart weaned from earthly joys. While feudal society bred the original Sister of Charity, capitalist society is breeding the novel Sister of Charity. Duchess Consuelo of Marlborough and the millionairess Mrs. Mackay, visiting prisons and devoting time, heart throbs and money towards "easing the conditions of prisons," are types of the novel article.

The contrast between the original and the novel manifestation of the Sister of Charity marks a development that speaks volumes.

The original sister, if not of a "barefoot" Order, was roughly sandaled; the novel specimen has silk hose and finest kid gaiters, ermine-lined.

The Original Sister, if she ever used conveyance for transit, used the plainest and roughest; the novel specimen moves about in \$20,000 automobiles, equipped to suit, with a costily gotten-up chauffeur as part of the equipment.

The Original Sister sallied forth upon her deeds of mercy either after the simplest of repasts, just enough to keep body and soul together, if not upon a positive fast; the novel specimen preludes her "deeds of mercy" with a "lunch at the Lawyers' Club," where champagne flows, and daintiest dessert rinses the lips of the dainty grease of canvas-back ducks.

The Original Sister returned to a cell where the chores were done by herself, and where the flesh was macerated; the novel specimen returns to a palace where scores of human beings, rigged-up like clowns and degraded to the level of lackeys, almost carry her to the softest of lounges and deposit her carefully down, lest the

least laceration be inflicted upon her precious hide.

The Original Sister justly felt she was guiltless of a single sorrow that she alleviated, of a single wound that she dressed, of a single tear that she wiped, of a single sigh that she comforted; the novel specimen feels, not only exactly the opposite, but glories therein; as a beneficiary limb of capitalism, she sings praises to the social system whose practical result to-day is to fill prisons, and whose largest staple product is human woe.

The Original Sister preached the turning of human wishes heavenward, and she practiced what she preached; the novel specimen preaches the identical gospel, but practices the opposite, all her thoughts and aspirations being after terrestrial wellbeing.

If feudality—a social system in which the Sister of Charity acted like court-plaster—was one day rebelled against, what chances are there for capitalism—a social system in which the Sister of Charity is a galling thorn—to permanently keep the working class in dumb subjection?

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

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