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EDITORIAL

A HOLLOW GOURD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Wiley investigating committee's report is not to see the light till December. Apparently the target of the benzoate and glucose interests has so completely turned the tables on his hireling maligners that time must be given for the affair to blow over. A turmoil involving Secretary of Agriculture Wilson, Attorney-General Wickersham and the rest would still further jeopardize the already trembling Republican hopes for 1912.

Wiley, more than any other one man, has become identified with pure foods and drugs. His advice, in official report and in lecture, has always been good. His attacks upon vested interests in the gentle trade of "pizenning the people's insides" have been spirited and clear cut. His decisions have been accurate and sound. The best scientists of Germany—where the ruling class still in some measure bends to the feudal duty of protecting its vassals—have endorsed the Wiley condemnation of benzoate, a condemnation which an extra-legal board, provided by Roosevelt for the manufacturers' benefit, saw fit to over-rule. So far as any fact has been proven, Wiley's conduct in pursuit of a wholesome food and drug industry has been above the breath of suspicion.

Yet what is the net result? Despite prosecution after prosecution, are the nation's foodstuffs markedly purer? Gaston G. Netter, manager of a Martin restaurant in this city, says No. "Every year," he declared on sailing for Europe recently, "there are millions of dollars spent in putting foods and drugs on the market that are filled with poisonous adulterations and preservatives. Less than one-sixtieth of these have been exposed, and the rest are still being sold each day."

Less primed with first hand knowledge, but nevertheless forced to bow its unwilling capitalist head to fact, the *New York Times* (August 17) editorially confesses: "The public now knows that the Food and Drug act has been officially disre-

garded; that scores of important cases against alleged adulterators and misbranders have been deliberately held in abeyance; that department officials did not hesitate to garble the terms of court findings, and that an organized effort was being made, by the cutting down of salaries and ‘star chamber’ proceedings, to drive honest public servants out of the Bureau of Chemistry.”

Could any admission be more damaging? Poisoning the nation’s foodstuffs is part and parcel of the social system of private production for profit. Honest though a reformer be—as honest as a Wiley, even,—his efforts are but dents in the water, unless the whole system be overthrown. “Reform” is a hollow gourd; social revolution and Socialism is the only sound melon.

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