

EDITORIAL

DANTE'S HELL IN PERU?

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Paris, France, *Siecle* has an article on the atrocities committed by American and European capitalists upon the Indians who are made to work in the Putumayo rubber district on the frontier of Peru.¹ The *Siecle* sums up the indictment with "Dante's Hell in Peru."

Dante's hell in Peru, exclusively? To be sure there is hell in Peru, but not the whole of Dante's hell. Only one of the pits or circles of the Inferno. The other pits are distributed throughout the world, wherever the proletariat are gathered, that is, wherever the capitalist class has corralled them, and—as the fiend attachments in the Inferno keep the victims to their torture—keep the proletariat to the grindstone with the whip of the Political State.

Peru has no monopoly of Hell.

The saw-mills of Minneapolis, where workmen are virtually lashed to the swift and perpetually operating machine, the slightest neglect being promptly visited with the loss of a limb, if not of life;

The plants of the Steel Trust where, a veritable Fourth Circle of the Inferno, human bodies are twisted out of shape;

The silk factories of New Jersey, where workers of all sexes are systematically squeezed out of their substance, and, Inferno-like, are given just enough wherewith to return for some more squeezing;

The Gould match factories, where, again exactly as in one of the Infernal circles, women and men are eaten into by noxious gases;

The hat factories in which women are unsexed, the railroad lines where every four years as many employes are maimed or killed as are employed on all the lines

¹ [A department of Colombia, South America, bordering Peru to the south.]

on any one year;—etc.;—etc.;—etc.;—

Dante's Inferno IN Peru! Purse-proudly does our American Capitalism scorn the imputation. Proudly does it claim the bulk of that Inferno for itself.

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