

EDITORIAL

## GOOD FOR MARY GOODE!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**H**AVING testified before the Curran Aldermanic Committee that, judging from personal experience as the keeper of a house of prostitution, she estimated the number of women making vice a business in New York at 35,000, and that this number included “many girls who worked in stores all day, but whose weekly wages of \$4 or \$5 made it almost compulsory for them to turn to illegal employment as a means of livelihood,” and that the fact was rapaciously utilized by the police by extorting hush-money from the keepers of such houses;—having delivered that testimony Mary Goode made a suggestion. In making her suggestion she did not switch off on the trodden path of cheap, of blatant, of tinsel morality.

Mary Goode did not suggest revival meetings for the shop girls, nor “social clubs for moral uplift.”

Mary Goode did not remotely take the hint of Jane Addams, and advocate a political party of Bull Moosian capitalist morality backed by Charity Trust pills.

Nor did Mary Goode suggest a civil service examination on virtue for police appointments and promotions.

No. Mary Goode did none of these, or kindred things, that would have betokened her a woman of insufficient information regarding facts; of no grasp upon whatever information she did possess; and of a hypocritical mind. Her suggestion proves her a woman of sound, practical sense.

The suggestion was “the establishment of a citizens’ committee, or other commission of unimpeachable character” to—to do what? to “stamp out vice”? No. Mary Goode knows her customers better than that—to “regulate vice and to save those employed in such pursuits from the rapacity of the police.”

This was a bull’s-eye.

Of course, Mary Goode is no Socialist. If she were her proposition would be

quite another. Mary Goode's mind has the capitalist bias; it is formed and hardened in the capitalist world. The only thing she has in common with Socialism is frankness and truthfulness, and a grasp of facts. Hence, the admirable fit of her suggestion to the capitalist body:—

According to Capitalism, prostitution cannot be abolished. "Always was and always will be." To deny that would be to deny the inherent wickedness of man, woman included. Whatever the capitalist is he will not be impious, not he.—Fact No. 1.

Disorderly houses could not flourish if they were to depend upon the poor. Their patrons are the rich, the capitalists. The richer these, all the more profitable their custom.—Fact No. 2.

Low wages to girls accomplish a double end in the noble system of Capitalism. First, low wages spell profits proportionally high: the lower that portion of its product that Labor receives, all the more is left of the product of Labor for the capitalist to pocket as profits. The size of Profits is the gauge of Civilization. Secondly, low wages to girls forces them into prostitution, and thus prevents the prophecy of capitalist prophetdom from running the risk of being impiously disproved.—Fact No. 3.

At present the police share with the capitalists the glorious benefits that flow from low wages to girls. "Concentration of industry" is the device of the Age. The Socialists, otherwise moon-calves, say so themselves. Consequently the police must be eliminated from the partnership.—Fact No. 4.

There is no possible way to tie the hands of the police so as not to graft. If the police have a chance they will graft. The chance of the police to graft upon prostitution is the folly of pronouncing prostitution illegal. Call a thing illegal, and the thing will surely be done, with the ultimate result of affording the police the opportunity to levy blackmail.—Fact No. 5.

There will be no possibility for the police to graft on prostitution if prostitution is legalized. To regulate prostitution is to legalize it, somewhat like the regulation of saloons.—Fact No. 6.

Keepers of houses of prostitution have to get out of the inmates the graft that the police now levy. Remove the graft by the legalization of prostitution and the charges now made upon their girls by the keepers will decline.—Fact No. 7.

With lower charges made by keepers to their “boarders,” or “lodgers,” or “tenants in transit,” the girls will keep a larger share of their receipts.—Fact No. 8.

Finally, there comes Fact No. 9, the culminating one of all—with larger receipts, the wages of the shop girls, whose weekly wages now are \$4 or \$5, can drop to, say \$2 or \$2.50 a week, without leaving the girls worse off than they now are, and yet materially increase that portion of the girl’s product that the unimpeachable citizens now pocket.

The net result of these combined facts, or, to put it scholastically—Mary Goode being said to be a college graduate the scholastic term was probably upon her mind—the synthesis of the 9 Facts is—

“The establishment of a citizens’ committee, or other commission, of unimpeachable character to regulate vice and to save those employed in such pursuits from the rapacity of the police.”

Good for Mary Goode! If she does not understand the intricate mechanism of capitalism nobody does.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)