

EDITORIAL

THEIR REDEEMING FEATURE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ONE of the charts, prepared by the community survey under the direction of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago, conveys the charming information that the number of registered voters in the Twenty-first ward of that city—a ward notable for its rich men and contributions to official life in Washington and Chicago—exceeds the number of minors, and is becoming childless, less than 20 per cent. of its inhabitants being under 21 years of age.

A passage, well worth pondering over in Auguste Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, is that in which Death is extolled as a positive promoter of progress. Indeed, were it not for that providential dispensation that gathers the aged to the "bosom of Abraham," the world would stand stock still. True enough, David had his Absalom; five centuries later, the children of Aristides, a brood of mountebanks, earned their living as jugglers on the steps of the Pantheon in Athens; still later, and on the portals of modern history, William the Taciturn, who struck the blow that set the Netherlands free from the yoke of Spain, begot a son that turned upon his father, a bigoted, blood-thirsty Jesuit; and later still in our own country, the illustrious Franklin's son William took up arms against his own father's side, and in behalf of the British Crown;—all these descendants being recurrences of ancestral types that their parentage had left behind them. Nevertheless, leaving these exceptions aside, it is evident that, if the Abrahams, the Pauls of Tarsus, the Charlemagnes and the Alfreds still lived, the population that now peoples civilized lands would be "moss-backs," if they were not even worse than "moss-backs," the driveling dotards whom Dean Swift's Gulliver came across in a land where men did not die, with the Dust of Ages accumulated so high upon their heads that light could not overpeer. The scythe of Death is a path-clearer for Progress.

The surveyers of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago present in commodious chart shape cumulative evidence that it is not simply as organizers of industry for the Social Revolution that the bourgeois fulfill a mission; they also facilitate matters by giving Death a helping hand and extinguishing their own breed—a decidedly redeeming feature.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2014

slpns@slp.org