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EDITORIAL

Like Oxen Before a Hill.

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The Rev. Herman Paul Faust and the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst are together by the ears, and both stand before the social problem of prostitution like the proverbial oxen at the foot of the proverbial hill.

The Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst has “drawn the sword against prostitution.” He has prodded the police to prod the houses of ill fame, and his activity has made the existence of these “institutions” so burdensome that they have melted away. Out of existence? As collective institutions, yes; as individuals, no. And here it is that the Rev. Herman Paul Faust steps in.

The Rev. Herman Paul Faust also has “drawn the sword against prostitution,” and the way he wields it is by swinging it against the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, whom he accuses of “disseminating prostitution.” He argues thus: Formerly prostitution was circumscribed to certain streets; the leprosy was under quarantine, so to speak; the disease infected the community no more than hospitals of infectious diseases, kept in secluded spots, spread the diseases held within the hospital walls. The leprosy of prostitution was thus rendered harmless. Now, however, comes the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst, cleans out these virtual hospitals of their leprous inmates and scatters them broadcast throughout the city. The prostitutes have gone into decent neighborhoods, have there hired flats, and, coming in contact with the young and the innocent, have spread the disease with which they are infected. They have spread prostitution.

This state of things presents a veritable social lock-jaw: Burn out the houses of prostitution, and the prostitutes spread all over creation; drive the prostitutes away from “decent creation” and they gather into “factories,” where they ply their trade. Before this problem stand the Rev. Charles H. Parkhurst and the Rev. Herman Paul Faust with jaws pendent.

But their predicament is not theirs alone; they only typify a class, the class that

would eat its cake and yet have; the class that would have capitalism and escape its inevitable results; the class that wants to live on the labor of others and yet wishes that there be not the ulcers that such a social system must needs produce; lastly, the wondrous class, a compound of stupidity and viciousness, that never would think of abolishing prostitution by the only method possible, to wit, abolishing themselves, and who, at the very mentioning of such a method, compose their own internal class quarrels, and turn like furies upon the proposer as “un-American,” little realizing that the logic of their denunciation is that: “Prostitution is Americanism, and Americanism is Prostitution.”

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

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