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EDITORIAL

## THEIR GREATNESS THE NATION'S WEAKNESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**iographies are already gorging the columns of the plutocratic press with accounts of the recently deceased Phil. D. Armour, the "Packing House" multi-millionaire. There will be many more of these biographies for the next month or so. The purport of one and all is and will be to make the apotheosis of the deceased; to sing his praises; present him as a bright exemplar to follow. One and all will contribute to set him up as a great man. In this they will succeed, but—in the very measure of their success in this respect, these biographics will defeat their real purpose. Their real purpose is to imply the Nation's greatness by the establishment of Armour's greatness. They will prove, they are already proving, that the greatness of the Armours implies the weakness of the Nation.

Armour, all these biographies hasten to announce, "furnished employment" to 28,000 working people. A stronger symptom than this of a Nation's weakness is unimaginable. The statement is in itself a summary of National calamity.

Where thousands of people are "furnished employment" by an individual, it means that they are dependent upon him for their existence. Where thousands of people depend upon an individual for their existence, it means that they are his subjects, he their master. Where one individual can be the master of such a gigantic number of human beings, it means that the social system, that makes such wholesale vassalage possible, stands, like a pyramid, upon its head, in unstable equilibrium, subject at any moment to topple over, certain some day to come down with a crash. Where such a vicious social system prevails, it means that the Nation that tolerates it is

Weaker than a woman's tear,  
Tamer than sleep, fonder than ignorance;  
Less valiant than the virgin in the night,  
And skill-less as unpracticed infancy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, Act I. Scene I.]

A great, because strong, Nation consists of men, self-reliant: Its people furnish themselves with employment. Being self-employers, they owe their existence to themselves alone. Such a Nation we are not now. Such a nation we shall be only when our people shall have cast off the Armour class of "employment furnishers," and that modern Old Man of the Sea, Capitalism, shall have been rolled for ever into the ditch to make room for the Socialist Republic.

He who points to the greatness of the Armours, points out the weakness of our Nation.

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