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EDITORIAL

CANDIDATE BRYAN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE mental evolution of William J. Bryan is instructive. It is the inevitable evolution of the middle class muddle head in the direction of insanity. His recent contribution to *Collier's Weekly* on "Industrial Combinations" is a gem of unreason without an equal in economic literature. In bold absurdity it dwarfs all his own previous utterances. No man, since Malthus wrote, ever so squarely stood on his head, seeing things inverted. And no quack, since Quack the First came into the world, ever seemed to believe so well in his own "remedies."

One brief quotation will suffice to expose the damaged condition of Mr. Bryan's thinking apparatus. "The corporation," he says, "is the institution through which monopoly develops, and as a corporation is purely a creature of law, the people can place on it such limitations as may be necessary for the public welfare and protection." Manifestly, an effect here is taken for the cause, and the cause itself is entirely ignored, as well as the relation between the cause and the effect.

Monopoly is the creature of capitalism. The corporate form which it has assumed is only a form; a convenient form, no doubt, but not a substance. Under capitalism monopoly becomes inevitable and if the corporate form was not available another would necessarily and very quickly be taken. Recognizing capitalism as the economic system of the people, the law must recognize all the forms under which capitalism develops; and so long as capitalism continues to be the system under which the people must maintain their economic relations, the law must afford it the most complete freedom of development. In other words, under capitalism, not only monopoly but the law is its creature.

It was by a like process of reasoning that Bryan had come to the conclusion that the value of money could be regulated by law. "Money," he said, "is issued by the Government; it is the creature of law; therefore, if the law says that one ounce of gold shall be worth sixteen ounces of silver, it will have to be so." We know what to think of this conclusion.

The result of the last presidential election had singularly lowered Bryan in the

esteem of the Democratic Party. His recent utterances are likely to put an end to him as a Democratic leader. Is he now already bidding for the nomination of that “third party” which is to “unite” in one mighty body all the “reform forces” of the country—the Populists, the Single Taxers, the Social Democrats, the Kangaroos, the Anti-monopolists, the Silverites, the Woman Suffragists, the Imperative Mandaters, the Municipalists, the Jonesites, the Yellowites, etc., etc.? A few strange words of his in the article from which the above brief quotation was taken induce the suspicion that such may be the case. Et vive l’Unité!

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