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EDITORIAL

IN TOKEN.¹

By DANIEL DE LEON

AND now comes the Philadelphia *North American* to the rescue of Capitalism. Like a knight errant of old, it steps into the arena, mounted and armed, to do battle for the old dame and against Socialism.

Watch the doughty knight. He cavorts on his steed and runs at Socialism with this lance:

What the Socialist promises and believes would be the result of the acceptance of his doctrines is alluring to the discontented.

Socialism parries the blow with its mighty shield, and with its mightier lance unhorses its adversary thus:

Certainly Socialism appeals to the discontented. Never yet was a revolution accomplished by the contented. It was not the “contented” Crown and Parliament of England, nor its decidedly “contented” placemen in America, who made the Revolution, and uttered in the very city of Philadelphia the “promises and believes {beliefs?}” that overthrew the “contented” of that time. The feat was performed by the “discontented” colonists, who, decidedly “discontented” at the prospects of being taxed out of existence into the condition of East India pariahs, rose and smote the “contented,” who, in those days, were indulging towards the Revolutionary Fathers the identical language now used by the “contented” Philadelphia paper towards the Socialists—“the American rebels’ appeal to discontent.”

The capitalist knight being thus unhorsed, Socialism then crowds him with its lance, thus:

¹ [Corrections from *Weekly People*, Vol. XII, No. 40, Saturday, January 3, 1903.]

Soho, Sir Knight of Capitalism! So then there ARE “discontented” in the country, and in numbers large enough to frighten the “contented”? Hitherto you asserted the reverse, and prated of “popular, unprecedented prosperity”! Take this; and this; and this for your contradiction!

The capitalist knight, having been thus driven to his own slippery ground of self-contradictory assertions, and made to fall, and the Socialist lance sticking in him, he makes a desperate effort to overcome his assailant. He draws his sword and takes this furious lunge at him:

The Socialist forgets that the State is no wiser, no better than the men who compose its legislative and administrative bodies.

He is then despatched. Socialism, too, draws its sword, parries the thrust, and whacks the capitalist knight to pieces thus:

Socialism knows that. It knows it so well that it is intent upon bouncing out of the legislative and administrative bodies, out of the public powers, in short, the capitalist class that now controls them. And that, Sir Knight of Capitalism, is the issue. You want the State to be no wiser, no better than the robber class of Capitalism now in possession; Socialism is bent upon making the State as wise and as good (no wiser and no better) than the toiling class of Labor. And by this token it will.

The token is the “coup de grace” with which Socialism puts an end to the dying agonies of the Knight of Capitalism, and sees to it that he be buried quickly, lest the malodorous gases escaping from his carcass infect the atmosphere of the Socialist Republic.

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