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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {337}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN holds a Bryan button in one hand and a McKinley button in the other; he seems to be absorbed in deep meditation.

UNCLE SAM—You look as if you were trying to solve a mystery.

B.J. (sighing)—So I am!

U.S.—Perhaps I can help you.

B.J.—Perhaps you can.

U.S.—What is it?

B.J.—You see, this is the 17th of the month. Within three weeks the dice will have been cast. Within that time we shall have to make up our minds whom to vote for.

U.S.—I have made up my mind.

B.J. (astonished)—Which of the two are you going to vote for?

U.S.—Which of which two?

B.J. (holding up the two buttons)—These two, of course.

U.S.—I'll vote neither. My ticket is the Socialist Labor Party ticket straight, from Malloney and Rimmel down.

B.J.—But don't you think there is some good to be had now from one of these two?

U.S.—You voted and elected the Republican ticket in 1880, didn't ye?

B.J.—I did.

U.S.—You expected some good from it, didn't ye?

B.J.—I did.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Did you get it anywhere, except in the neck?

B.J.—No, that was just where I got it in.

U.S.—Then, in '84, you voted and elected the Democratic ticket, didn't ye?

B.J.—I did.

U.S.—You expected some good from it, didn't ye?

B.J.—Yes, but again I only got it in the neck; I must admit that!

U.S.—Then in '88 you went back to your vomit, and voted and elected the Republican ticket, didn't ye?

B.J.—That's just what I did! And, Lord didn't we get {it} in the neck! That was the administration that first sent Federal troops into Idaho to browbeat the miners.

U.S.—Thereupon, four years later, in '92, still expecting some good from these worthies, you turned around and again voted and again elected the Democrats, didn't ye?

B.J.—Nods assent.

U.S.—And as regularly got it in the neck?

B.J.—I still shiver to think of it! That was the administration that shot down the Pullman strikers.

U.S.—And, lastly, four years later, at the last presidential election of '96, you once more turned a somersault back and gave your support to and elected the Republicans once more, didn't ye?

B.J.—It never struck me before how I see-sawed—

U.S.—Every time looking for something—

B.J.—And getting it in the neck—regularly! Why, this time it was even worse than ever. Our wages have declined like never before!

U.S.—Now, Jonathan, did you ever see a Bartlett pear tree?

B.J.—No, never. I have lived all my life in the city, as close to the factory as possible to save car fare.

U.S.—Now, suppose I were to put you in front of a bramble bush, and told you that that was a Bartlett pear tree—

B.J.—I would believe you.

U.S.—And the spring came along, and the summer and the fall, and you would find no pears growing on the thing, but simply thorns. Would you still believe me, and

continue to take the bramble bush for a pear tree?

B.J.—Hardly!

U.S.—Now, good man, exercise in politics the common sense you exercise in other things. The proof of the pudding lies in the eating.

B.J.—That's so.

U.S.—Being uninformed, you are to be pardoned for having been taken in with the Republican talk of '80, and believing the capitalist bramble bush to be a labor Bartlett pear tree. But when you saw the fruit of that tree during the four years that followed, your confidence must have been shaken.

B.J.—So it was; and I voted Democratic the next time!

U.S.—Again you were to be pardoned for taking the bramble bush for the pear tree that you expected. But the fruit of that tree proved to be the identical thorns of the four previous years.

B.J.—So it did!

U.S.—Now, then, five seasons have passed; five different administrations. The pears never ripened, all that ripened were sharp thorns that pricked us all. Is it not insane to still cling to the belief that that Capitalist bramble bush may produce pears?

B.J.—It is, by Jericho! We have been bunco-steered! It is a bramble bush they have been shoving into our hands and making us believe it was a pear tree!

U.S.—Then join us Socialists to hew down that prickle-bush with the Socialist Labor Party scythe, and plant on the spot the genuine pear tree!

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