

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 351.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 1912.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“SCATTERING” PROPERTY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ALTHOUGH it should seem superfluous, at this late date, to adduce illustrations and proofs of the principle which Socialism establishes to the effect that Capitalism accomplishes, through economic laws, what feudalism required the sword to accomplish, to wit, the concentration of property—altho', accordingly, it should, at this late date, be equally superfluous to adduce illustrations and proofs of the claim made against the Socialist principle by bourgeois economists that “the institutions of Capitalism provide for the scattering of property almost as fast as it is concentrated, it will not be amiss to stop for a moment and ponder over the estate that the drowning of John Jacob Astor left to his 20-year-old son Vincent, as lengthily set forth in the columns of the large metropolitan dailies.

According to these reports, the property that the original John Jacob Astor left behind him when he died sixty-four years ago was barely a twentieth part of the \$150,000,000 of property that his great-great-grandchild has just come into possession of. During these five generations, the snow-ball, that the writer of *The Book of Daniel Drew* incidentally sketched John Jacob Astor to be rolling together towards the close of the XVIIIth century, so far from “scattering,” or melting away back into its elements, grew to an iceberg. Despite some meltings, due to minor bequests adown these years, the iceberg waxed in hugeness—and, as it traveled down the stream, must have been, and was the cause of the wrecking of many a craft that crossed its path.

Differently from the icebergs that descend from the Arctic Regions, the Astor iceberg typical of all other icebergs that descend from Class Rule, instead of sending the wrecks it makes down to the bottom, absorbs them and transmutes them into parts of itself.

In some instances, as usually in the instance of stock corporations”, the fact of

“concentration” is concealed under a seeming “scattering.” In the Astor instance the fact of concentration is so tangible to feeling and to sight that no attempt is made at concealing it.

The economic laws, that Capitalism quickens into life and enforces, are the equivalent of the sword that Feudalism wields—they concentrate property.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded July 2013

slpns@slp.org