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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {362}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (looking rocky, and acting rocky)—Hic!
UNCLE SAM—Been drunk again?

B.J. (straightening up)—No; not 'xactly. I don't call a man drunk when he has been merely celebrating.

U.S.—Is “celebrating” your latest name for “drinking”?

B.J.—No; I mean celebrating. You see, I have been celebrating the New Year, the New Century.

U.S.—No, I don't!

B.J.—Oh, yes, you do. I mean that I was feeling very happy to think that I was one of those privileged beings that lived to see the 20th Century after having helped to make the 19th Century the wonderful thing that is {it was?}.

U.S.—I can't quite understand you.

B.J.—Will you deny that the inventions of the last century were wonderful?

U.S.—No!

B.J.—Were not marvels accomplished in engineering?

U.S.—They were!

B.J.—Were not great discoveries made of natural laws?

U.S.—Yes, indeed!

B.J.—I need go no further. Isn't that ground enough to be proud to say we were of that century?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—Do you imagine, do you hold to the belief, that “wonderful inventions” are just subjects for joy whether or no they benefit the human race?

B.J.’s eyes open.

U.S.—Do you imagine, do you hold to the belief, that “wonderful inventions” are good things if the very men who make the inventions, and the very men who work at them get nothing from them, while idlers sponge up all the good there is in such wonders?

B.J.—No! But is that the case?

U.S.—There is a thing happening just now that may help you to answer your question.

B.J.—Which?

U.S.—Did you read about the great railroad deal or consolidation?

B.J.—I should think I did! \$300,000,000 and more on one side joins hands with \$300,000,000 and more on the other, and the two will make the most powerful combination of that sort, extending from the Atlantic across to Seattle, on the Pacific.

U.S.—Could that combination have anything to combine on, were it not for the wonderful inventions of the last century, for the marvels accomplished in engineering, for the great discoveries made of natural laws?

B.J.—Course not.

U.S.—Now, who are the beneficiaries?

B.J.—Who?

U.S.—Yes. Are the inventors in possession of this gigantic railroad marvel?

B.J.—Can’t say they are.

U.S.—Are the workingmen, who operate this marvel and are slaughtered by the wholesale, in possession?

B.J.—Guess not, they are poor and getting poorer.

U.S.—Accordingly, all these prodigies have accrued to a few idlers who can’t invent anything except ways to defraud the workers. Is that a thing to celebrate?

B.J.—That does look funny. But what would you have us do? I thought all these inventions were good.

U.S.—And so they are!

B.J.—Oh! Then we may celebrate.

U.S.—It don't follow. There is to-day only the potentiality of human happiness to celebrate. All these achievements of the past, great as they may seem, are small and incomplete. They cannot really be complete before that greatest of all achievements, the establishment of the Socialist Republic. Not until then will inventions benefit the inventors and workers; not until then will they benefit the human race. So long as that is not done, these great achievements in the natural sciences are scourges on the human race.

B.J.—Scourges!

U.S.—Yes, scourges. What does this war in the Philippines, devastating both to us and the Filipinos, mean? What does the bloody war in the Transvaal mean? What means this threatening inter-continental war, but that these great inventions, not being utilized by the Socialist system of society, are producing the natural result of their being the prey of private individuals?

B.J.—Hem!

U.S.—Jonathan, you were premature in your celebration, this time. What you should do is to help bring on the day when we can celebrate.

B.J.—How?

U.S.—By joining the army of the unterrified who, with the Arm and Hammer of the Socialist Labor Party, are cracking every skull that keeps or helps to keep up this social system of to-day. We can celebrate then, but not before. Now we must work, and keep sober to work well.

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