

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 3.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JULY 3, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

WHOM IS MR. DOOLEY AFTER?

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE latest dart of the talented satirist, Mr. Dooley, is barbed with the following passage:

“I’m sthrong f’r anny rivolution that ain’t goin’ to happen in my day. But th’ truth is, me boy, that nawthin’ happens annyhow. I see great changes takin’ place ivry day, but no change at all ivry fifty years. What we call this here counthry iv ours pretinds to want to thry new experiments, but a sudden change gives it a chill. It’s been to th’ circus an’ bought railroad tickets in a hurry so often that it thinks quick change is short change. Whin I take me mornin’ walk an’ see little boys and girls with their dinner pails on their arms goin’ down to th’ yards, I’m th’ hottest Socialist ye iver see. I’d be annything to stop it. I’d be a Raypublican even. But whin I think how long this foolish old buildin’ has stood an’ how many a good head has busted against it, I begin to wondher whether ’tis anny use f’r ye or me to thry to bump it off th’ map.”

Into whose groin does the dart’s head bury itself? In the groin of the Socialist, or in the groin of the capitalist?

We hold that the satirist’s mark is the capitalist class, at least that element of the capitalist class that indulges in that fatuity of the doomed which history gives so many examples of, and which, at least until recently, was the feature of the Czar and his Grand Dukes—the complacent reliance upon the stability of a social system that has “stood so long,” against which so “many a good head has busted” and which, “consequently,” stands so firm that only folly can conceive the thought “to thry to bump it off th’ map.”

We hold, on the other hand, and in confirmation of the above opinion, that, to suppose the dart to be meant for the Socialist, would be an insult to the unquestioned penetration of the genial Mr. Dooley. In order to suppose the gentleman to have aimed at the Socialists, one must first suppose him to be blind to

the fact that in the short career of this country, within the short 130 years of the country's independent existence, it already has gone through no less than two bloody revolutions. It has seen systems that had "stood so long" and against which "many a head had busted" neatly "bumped off th' map." Mr. Dooley certainly knows history. In the absence of positive evidence to the contrary, Mr. Dooley must be given credit for some knowledge of the evolutionary force, obedient to which the "great changes takin' place ivry day" eventually do reach their culmination—revolution. With us in America the culmination has not heretofore had to wait much longer than fifty years;—it won't this trip either.

In these days of ours, the precariousness of existence is such that even Science has been prostituted to the uses of the capitalist—electricity does not light the houses of the masses in this state, it is turned to a means of dealing death to murderers; chemistry is used to sophisticate foodstuffs; algebra is used to falsify statistics; medicine is used to promote or quicken inheritances; mechanics is used to contrive ingenious implements of war. It is not unlikely that genius also may often succumb. Did Mr. Dooley succumb? Did he utter a witticism against his better knowledge, but simply for the sake of a sandwich? We decline to take that view of it, however the capitalist class may think he did. Indeed, the very glee of some capitalist papers at this bit of arch Dooleyian satire contributes to enhance in our opinion the excellence of the satire.

Mr. Dooley not only aimed at the capitalists, fatuous in their habits of thought, he has caused them to prove his point by having them exhibit themselves with the dart quivering in their flesh—and not know it.

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

Uploaded April 2009

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