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EDITORIAL

## “RIGHTS.”

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**M**R. THOMAS RYAN is a member of the circle of “high finance.” He is one of the elite who moves within the charmed sphere of the two groups of banks that hold the country by the throat. Mr. Ryan is, accordingly, a symbol, one of the symbols, of all the virtues that his ilk try to make the people believe are peculiar to the best of all possible social systems—the capitalist system. What drops from Mr. Ryan’s lips is, must be like emanations from the holy of holies of our rulers. In fact, every exhalation from the pores of such a being must be valuable. And so it is. Unfortunately, not frequently has the common herd an opportunity to be made acquainted with such emanations and exhalations. When the opportunity occurs it must be prized all the more highly. The supply is so rare. Such an opportunity the common herd of the American wage slaves now enjoy. It is not only a rare opportunity; it is a peculiar opportunity. Mr. Ryan is exhaling on the witness stand, under oath.

There is a suit brought against the Directors of the Metropolitan Street Railway Company to recover damages sustained through alleged misstatements of the value of the stock issued by the Company in 1903. If the charge is true the offence is felonious. Mr. Ryan is brought up in Court and examined. The attorney for the plaintiff informs the Court that he expects to prove that Mr. Ryan knew of the alleged false report. Plied with questions, which Mr. Ryan dodged, the following exhalation suddenly proceeded from the gentleman in a voice loud enough to be heard around the block, and in a tone angry enough to make the common herd’s blood freeze:

“I know my rights, and I insist upon having them!”

What may those rights be?

The common herd has heard about “The Rights of Man,” also about a certain

“Bill of Rights.” True enough, these Rights have, latterly, been very extensively trampled under the hoofs of mounted Police, and, off and on, made to smell bad with the odor of the dynamite contained in bombs judiciously “thrown at the police,” so judiciously that, like the mad dog rhymed about by Oliver Goldsmith, not the man who was bitten, but the dog that bit died. Of the Rights above named the common herd preserves some slight recollection. But what about Mr. Ryan’s “Rights”? They evidently are of a different pattern. They are cast in a mold that is different, slightly. The “Rights,” that Mr. Ryan invokes leave a peculiar ring in one’s ears. The ring is that of the “Rights” that felons invoke in the attempt to save their own hide, and that of their pals.

Can that ring, left in one’s ears, fit the case of Mr. Ryan’s “Rights”? Perish the thought! Is not the gentleman a Pillar of Law and Order? is he not a Patriot of Patriots? is he not a devoted church-goer? is he not an enthusiastic upholder of the Sanctity of the Family?—In short, is not Mr. Ryan a ferocious anti-Socialist, and has he not more than once declared that he would resist Socialism to his last breath, and, even if cut to pieces, his little toe would eternally wiggle an anti-Socialist protest?

This being thus, one is puzzled to know what the particular “Rights” can be that constitute Mr. Ryan’s palladium. The curiosity is all the more justifiable seeing that that very palladium is the arsenal of the “Rights” of the little bunch of self-sacrificing gents who have kindly assumed the burden of running and ruling the country.

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

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