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EDITORIAL

## THE SAME OLD PADDED BEAUTY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**H**AD Marx lived to this day, and watched the performances of the Tariff Reform bourgeois, now that the Democratic landslide in Rochester has confirmed the two previous landslides in Brockton and Missouri, forecasting a pending Democratic sweep all over the country, he would have been furnished with many a score of additional shafts for that exquisite satire of his “An Address on Free Trade.”

That the Free Trader, or his half-brother, the Tariff Reformer, sails under false pretences is well known. Bent upon a reduction of the cost of living so that he can pay lower wages to his employes, and thereby rake in all the larger profits, the Free Trader ever steps forward as the particular “Friend of Labor” whose breakfast table he hates to see plundered by a high tariff. Bent, accordingly, upon establishing capitalism upon the firmest footing possible, the Free Trader puts on all the allurements of a “revolutionist” whereby to entrap the latent anti-capitalist sentiment of discontent. All this is well known. In these days of high prices, however, when the depreciation of gold is raising the cost of living to a dangerous pitch,—in these days the Free Trader is exhibiting himself with peculiar perfidy.

As a bourgeois the Free Trader is in nowise affected by rising prices. He can recoup himself, and recoup himself nicely: as is done by all bourgeois, whenever they have to recoup, they “recoup” themselves so thoroughly that come out the gainers. The “necessity to recoup” is one of the most welcome “necessities” to the pious bourgeois. There ever is money for him in the “necessity.” In this particular instance, however, the “necessity” is made to perform two jobs—first, the job of “recouping” with a vengeance; second, the job of stampeding the unwary with the false cry that “The Tariff is to blame.” Accordingly, the existing and towering high prices are a god-send to the Free Trader. People who have adjusted themselves to a

certain standard of prices might remain deaf to the suggestion that Free Trade or Tariff Reform will benefit them; people, however, who find themselves suddenly plunged into unbearably high prices, are more likely to respond to the false cry—and thus be made to pull the chestnuts of Free Trade out of the fire for the Free Trade bourgeois. And that seems pretty clearly to be happening.

Free Trade loves to present herself in the light of the Goddess of Liberty. Under the lime-light of facts the Old Beauty is discovered to be all padding and paint.

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