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EDITORIAL

BRUSH UP ON YOUR JEFFERSON!

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHERE are we at?

By this time the dust must have been pretty well settled that the Standard Oil decision, followed within two weeks by the decision on the Tobacco Trust, raised in the land.

By this time the politicians, whose function it is to play the rattle in the people's ear, must have exhausted their eloquence in promises of prosecuting criminally the "guilty manipulators of monopoly."

By this time dapper lawyers throughout the country, especially those with a "pull," have set their wires agoing to secure for themselves the job of "assisting the prosecution," or of "assisting the defence"—they are not particular which; they are non-partisanly for fees—in the criminal actions that they devoutly pray will speedily start against the "guilty manipulators," etc.

It is now seasonable to turn the pages of Jefferson's works; to turn to the passage where he comments upon the Constitution of the United States; to turn especially to those passages that touch upon the Supreme Court. Perchance we may find there—Socialists though we are, hence, grounded in the principle that it is the system of production and distribution that determines social institutions—perchance we may find in those Jeffersonian passages some hint instinct with the Jeffersonian spark. Indeed, we shall.

Commenting upon the constitutional clauses which provide for the appointment for life of a supreme judicature Jefferson said:

"The germ of dissolution of our Federal Government is in the judiciary, an irresponsible body working like gravity day by day and by night, gaining a little to-day, and gaining a little to-morrow, and advancing its noiseless step like a thief over the fields of jurisdiction until all shall be usurped."

This passage is up to the mark of Jeffersonian poetic incisiveness, and seer-like penetration.

The Socialist will not be tripped by such an utterance. He will only profit by it. He will not be thrust by it into the Reformers' quagmire of supposing that, were the Constitution different upon the subject of the judiciary, the germ of dissolution would be disinfected out of existence. The Socialist will be enlightened by the passage, helped by it to understand exactly the political course that Tyranny is traveling in the land. Leaving the capitalist politicians, press, professors and pulpiteers to play their rattles of praiseful interpretation of the Standard Oil and Tobacco Trust decisions, the Socialist will read the decisions by the light of Jefferson's brilliant forecast.

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