

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 321.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, MAY 16, 1912.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

STRINDBERG.

By DANIEL DE LEON

OF the Swedish “poet, novelist, dramatist, philologist, botanist and even chemist” Auguste Strindberg, whose death is just reported, this office knows comparatively little—it knows nothing of his botanic, philologic or chemical achievements, if he made any; while of his literary work, with which our acquaintance is only at second hand, we deem ourselves unqualified to judge. Strindberg’s literary productions seem, to a great extent, to belong to that category of literature which, if at all to be appreciated, requires an intimate knowledge of the language in which it originally appeared. Who but an expert in Swedish is qualified to judge of the merits, or demerits, of *The Scarlet Room*, pronounced the furnisher of a new literary school to Sweden, and said to give the keynote to the author’s other works?

For all this, the “foreigner” is not left wholly in the dark as to Strindberg. There breaks through the briars of language-difficulties in the path of the foreign observer one act in the life of Strindberg for the understanding of which no language medium is requisite.

Strindberg—born out of wedlock, the son of an aristocratic father and a plebeian mother, a servant girl,—who had often before remarked he knew not to what class he belonged, finally did find out, or, rather, deliberately took his choice.

Last January 22, the anniversary of his birth, a torchlight procession having been arranged in his honor by his admirers, Strindberg kept himself within doors until that section of the procession which was composed of workingmen came up. Then he stepped out on his veranda and watched it pass.

By that act Auguste Strindberg attested himself a limb of the Genius of the Age; by that act he made choice, deliberate choice, of the class that was his, and to which he belonged; by that act he denoted the class on whose brow shines the true

Star of Bethlehem, marshalling the world's choice spirits on the path to Human Redemption. By that act Auguste Strindberg revealed that he had a message to deliver. By that act he delivered the message.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded June 2013

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