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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {369}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (looking no ways as cockish as he did last week)—Will you take up again that matter about Director of the Mint Roberts?

UNCLE SAM—With pleasure. Only, I shall demand of you that you again read the whole passage.

B.J. (takes out of his pocket the St. Louis paper in which the squib occurred and reads):

“Director of the Mint Roberts made a good point in an address delivered last week. ‘It is the common error of those who attack the existing order of society,’ he said, ‘to treat of distribution as of more importance than production. But the real problem is to get more from nature. Careful statisticians have estimated that the total production of wealth for even so efficient a population as that of the United States including the yield of the soil, the output of the mines and all the earnings of capital scarcely exceeds \$2 a day for every person engaged in gainful occupations.’ An equal division all around at the close of each day would greatly disappoint the socialistic theorists. Mr. Roberts points out that the amelioration of conditions must come from increased production.”

U.S.—So; that’s a good target. Last week, I fired a shot clean through the Malthusian inhumanity that underlay this Robertsianism.

B.J.—You did that!

U.S.—So I did. Now hold up the target steady, and see me drive another hole through it.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J. holds up the squib.

U.S.—It states there that “the amelioration of conditions must come from increased production.”

B.J. (passes finger over the squib).—Yes; here is the passage.

U.S.—That means that all that is now wanted is a greater amount of wealth, eh?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—And that, in the measure that that greater amount of wealth is produced, you and I and the rest of us workingmen would enjoy a larger per capita of wealth?

B.J.—Yes. Isn't that so? It sounds true?

U.S.—Don't trot so fast. I'll let you answer your questions yourself, and in that way I shall, so to speak, help you to hold the gun yourself and yourself fire the shot that will put hole No. 2 into the precious Roberts. Now listen: Are there produced to-day more trousers in the country than fifty years ago, or fewer?

B.J.—Infinitely more.

U.S.—Do you enjoy to-day a larger per capita of trousers?

B.J.—No, I don't!

U.S.—What you “enjoy” is a larger per capita of patches on the seats of trousers, eh?

B.J. (surreptitiously passing his hands under his coat-tails over the patches on the seat of his trousers)—By George, that's the size of it!

U.S.—And as to shoes, do the workers produce more or fewer of them to-day?

B.J.—Incredibly more; I should say 300 per cent. more than 50 years ago.

U.S.—Just so. And have you now more shoes than formerly?

B.J.—The deuce! I have a dog-gone bigger lot of holes in my shoes. I actually have got to get along with fewer shoes than 25 years ago!

U.S.—And do you eat better to-day?

B.J.—Not by a long shot!

U.S.—And yet the production of food has increased immensely. Do you occupy more spacious quarters so as to enjoy the privacies that decency requires.

B.J.—More crowded quarters, you mean. We are being herded closer and closer.

U.S.—And yet the production of houses and building material is phenomenal.

Do you save up larger rolls of gold and silver coin?

B.J.—Save up! I'm getting more and more in debt!

U.S.—And yet the production of gold and silver in our mines is to-day fabulous. Now, Jonathan, take aim: The production of wealth has increased enormously; that notwithstanding, we got none of the increase: the increase fell to others, to us fell an increase of poverty. That is the experience in the past—

B.J.—That Roberts is a confounded liar!

U.S.—Bull's-eye!

B.J.—He holds out a snare and a delusion!

U.S.—Bull's-eye again!

B.J.—And the St. Louis paper that puffs his "good points" is no better than he.

U.S.—Jonathan, you have become a crack shot. You are right. It matters not, so long as the capitalist system prevails, how much production increases, as far as we workingmen are concerned. The fleecers of our class get all the increase; we don't get any of it, on the contrary, our share, absolute and relative, becomes ever smaller. He who, like this Roberts, says "increase production" and at the same time plants himself on this capitalist system, is trying the saw-dust game on us. The thing now, is not to increase production, but to throw off our backs the capitalist leeches, who alone grow fatter by our increased production. The thing to do now is to smash the Capitalist System with the S.L.P. ballot, and rear the Socialist Republic. Increased production will then be to a purpose.

B.J.—That fellow Roberts is the veriest bunco-steerer!

U.S.—Next week I'll rip hole No. 3 into that bunco-steerer. Now put up your target.

B.J. carefully folds up the St. Louis newspaper slip and departs saying things.

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