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EDITORIAL

ELIJAH III.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHILE New York, the modern Babylon, is making merry over John Alexander Dowie, a city rose near Chicago, conjured into existence by his wand, and at this very moment a farmer, Aman Schwert, living near Valparaiso, Ind., sells his farm, valued at \$20,000, and turns the proceeds {over} to the "Restorer." These seem contradictory facts. New York, the city with largest opportunities for intelligence, sneers; while other people look on with admiration and self-sacrificing ecstasy; and yet others, animated with equal admiration, though not so self-sacrificing, fall into line with Dowie's industrial army, and rear under his command a manufacturing town in which they earn a living and lead decent, pure lives. Is New York right? or are these others right? Can both be right? They are. Most contradictory are the forerunning events of great social upheavals. As at the hunt, the bloodhound starts both game and birds of all descriptions, and is himself but the forerunner of the hunter, so with social upheavals.

The starting point to understand the Elijah III. episode, that we are traversing, together with the manifold phenomena produced by the "Restorer's" advent, is man. Man is a complex being. Material needs ally him to the animal; intellectual powers raise him to the spheres. The former quality is the basis of the first: the second quality, however, like the sails of a ship, has its driving effect upon the former. Man's acts are the result of these combined agencies: according as the one or the other predominates the individual acts. Social distress is working upon the people. The capitalist system of production has reached a point where all its prophecies of weal are belied. Our people, in ever increasing numbers are, like game at the hunt, being startled by the bloodhound of the capitalist hunter. They are driven from the lairs of their former confidence. Their conduct serves as an exact barometer of the

degree of solidity of their intellects.

Those whose minds are a blank readily fall into two main categories: those with whom the animal predominates, and those with whom it does not. The latter, see visions beyond earth. Their earthly havings cease to be of value to them: they relinquish them: they get ready for the “New Jerusalem”: They are seized with a fervor, named religious, and drift to the borders of insanity. The former, those with whom the animal predominates, surrender the little mind they have; they become ready followers of whomsoever will save them the necessity of thinking—PROVIDED HE AID THEM TO SATISFY IMMEDIATE ANIMAL NEEDS. There is a third category under this general head. It is not a class by and of itself. It is the connecting link of the other two. That category is the sneerer,—the despiser of man as an agency of intelligent salvation. Out of the ranks of these cynics comes the mob that went to take in the “Show of Elijah III.,” and OUT OF THOSE VERY RANKS COME THE ELIJAHS III. THEMSELVES. It is no wonder that New York should furnish the mob: it’s the irony of fate, however, that Elijah III. should travel hundreds of miles to have the mirror held up to him in this city. No wonder he became furious. Possibly he never understood himself so well as when that mob gaped upon him with their cynic leer—the leer that says “man loves to be humbugged.”

Coxey Armies, Salvation Armies, Volunteers, Sankey and Moody Revivals, and what not, down to “Zion Restoration Hosts,”—lo the dust raised by the approaching social upheaval, whose infantry body, the Socialists of the land, are the architects of a new social system, in which, not the cynic’s material, “humbugged and humbuggable men,” but the Socialists’ material, intelligent and self-respecting human beings, shall constitute the corner-stone and structure—the Socialist Republic.

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