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EDITORIAL

WELL SHE MAY!

By DANIEL DE LEON

WASHINGTON dispatches announce that the gilded eagle which surmounted the historic mace at the right hand of the Speaker in the House of Representatives, tumbled down from the perch, from the height of which she had these many generations listened to the eloquence of the House.—Well she may!

If that eagle could really hear and remember, and had discernment enough to put two and two together, her head must long have been reeling.

The eagle in question listened to the impassioned oratory of the abolitionist Representatives. She heard them declare that chattel slavery was theft, a theft committed upon the labor of the Negro; she heard them declare that chattel slavery was “degrading alike to the master and the slave” in that it debauched the family of both, and tore at least one of them to pieces. Chattel slavery being the cause of all these evils, the eagle, even with a brain of wood, must have concluded that the abolition of the “stain upon the escutcheon of the Nation” would abolish also the evils that the stain led in its wake. The eagle, even if her heart was of wood, must have beaten with joy when she heard in that same House that the “stain” was abolished, smothered in the blood of the “stainers”; her heart must have thumped with delight at the enraptured speeches that announced the event. And then?—what followed then?

Then followed a new set of thrilling speeches. One set was for “Protection”—this set announced that, unless the tariff was mountain-high, the whole American working class would be plundered by the foreigners abroad, and, driven out of their homes in search of work, the members of the workingman’s family would be torn apart. The other set shouted “Free Trade!” Its contention was that Protection had the workers by the throat; that it robbed them, that it scattered their families. “Give

us Free Trade!” they shouted, “or at least a lower tariff, and the goose will hang high!” Victory swung from the one to the other. Protection one time ruled the roost, and then the Low Tariff got in a peg. And then it was the conflict between Silver and Gold; and more recently between Monopoly and Anti-Monopoly. And the eagle, ever listening, ever seeing, saw and heard that the horrors, charged to slavery, are to this day rampant in the land. Each set, when bounced out, would “tell” on the other. Between the two the full truth came out—and it has been coming out down to the 5th instant when sick at heart, the gilded wooden eagle collapsed.

But there is another eagle—not made of wood—not gilded over—not perched on top of the Speaker’s mace—an eagle of flesh and bone—clad in rags—cast out—the WORKING CLASS EAGLE. That eagle, so far from being discouraged is gathering strength. THAT EAGLE WILL NEVER DROP DOWN DESPONDENT. On its side is the Genius of the Age. It can resist grief and disappointment, betrayal and torture, defection and deception—on its eyes shine the rays of a sun that nothing can extinguish. As those rays are unextinguishable, so also is the vitality they inspire. It is the rays that are shot ahead by the sun of the Social Revolution.

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