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EDITORIAL

DROWNING RATS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

BARELY twelve years, less than a third of a generation, have passed over the heads of our people since the day after the elections of 1896, when the New York *Sun* published as its leading editorial the “Te Deum” poem of Whittier, written thirty years before in thanksgiving over the Nation’s narrow escape from secession and slavery.

Of course, there was hypocrisy in the devout fervor implied by the conduct of the *Sun*. Of course, the defeat of Bryan was not quite in the nature of the defeat of Southern Bourbonism. Nevertheless, there was sincerity in the *Sun*’s gladness. Mistaken though Bryan’s economics of 1896 were, there was in the Bryan movement the distinct whistle of the approaching tornado to be heard. The ears of the *Sun* tingled at the sound. The sound boded ill to the usurping class of capitalism. Malefactors ever are in fear. The day of doom was apprehended. When the returns announced the election of McKinley, the heart of the *Sun* leaped for joy. The *Sun* construed McKinley’s victory as the defeat, not of the errors of Bryanism, but of that spirit of just indignation and of consequent revolt that uttered itself in million(s of) votes through Bryan. The *Sun* imagined its class saved for all time. It sang Whittier’s song—and sat back, imagining the rest of the row easy hoeing.

Barely twelve years have gone by since then, and the *Sun* is again in the same old stew. It started earlier this time. And well it may.

The waters are rising. Things are coming to a head. Civic Federation manoeuvres could not keep the hosts of Labor in the Wilderness. Capitalist outrages increased and multiplied, as increase and multiply they could not choose but do. The demand for curbing the Courts in the exercise of their “God-ordained” right to fire “Gatling guns on paper,” euphaneously named injunctions, is pushed before the Republican Convention. It mattered not that the convention, even if it granted

anything in this direction, would grant only husks. The fact that the move was made is in itself alarming enough. It is so alarming that the *Evening Post*, notwithstanding it declares confidently and justly, that an anti-injunction plank would be “nothing else than a pure sop,” is foaming at the mouth and feeling several sorts of chills cavorting up and down its spine.

The feeling of uneasiness in the camp of the capitalist class is well reflected in their press. Not for ever will Labor apply to capitalist parties for redress. Every year brings its enlightenment. Every year the waters rise higher. The capitalist rats don't like that. They are not expected to like it.

The demands urged before the Republican convention, weak as they are, still endeavoring, as they do, to conciliate Capital and Labor, are beginning to take a turn that “means business.” The *Sun* may have occasion to sing Whittier's “Te Deum” this November also. But its voice will sound cracked. So soon as further experience will render the masses of the workers clear upon where the shoe pinches, there will be no more requests to capitalist conventions, neither will there be any Te Deums to be sung by the *Sun*.

The waters are rising. The rats are drowning.

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

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