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EDITORIAL

THE ACTUAL HERCULES.

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EDITORIALLY commenting upon the marked increase of the Socialist party's vote in Texas—7,870 in 1908; 25,742 this year—the *El Paso Morning Times* of the 26th of last November says:

“Socialism in Texas is rapidly reaching the point where it may soon constitute as grave a menace to the Democratic party as was the case with Populism a few years ago. In many of the Texas counties at one time the Populists were strong enough to elect the county officers, displacing the Democrats and keeping them away from the pie-counter for two and four years. At one time it appeared probable that the State government was about to go into the hands of the Populists, and it was only through the Herculean efforts of the Democratic leaders that the calamity was averted.”

There were no such leaders; there were no such efforts; and, had such efforts been needed, they would have proved futile. The Hercules who did the trick was another; and he was elsewhere; and thereby hangs a pregnant tale—prospective as well as retrospective.

The Marxian law of value dictates the price of wheat, as of other staples, in the world's market. The abundance of the crops in most all the wheat-raising countries, during the years that preceded the rise of Populism, told of climate conditions which, for the nonce, reduced the amount of labor power below the normal usually and socially needed. The abundance of production that, in industry, accompanies a decline in the value of the output through improved methods,—that abundance favorable weather conditions usually afford in agriculture. The economic law remains. Eliminating all perturbing causes,—such, for instance, as the decline of the value of gold,—a decreased amount of socially necessary labor power decreases the value of the goods; and the increased output that accompanies a decrease in socially necessary labor-power, presses prices down. Thus, bumper crops abroad lowered prices in

the world's market—the price of the American crops, of course, included. Wheat dropped to 30 cents a bushel.

The free coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, was a purely upper capitalist silver mine owners injection that queered a property-holding farmers mass movement which responded obedient to the above stated prime economic fact. The response took the shape of Populism.

Like and obverse causes bring about obverse and like results. It so happened.

When, hardly was Populism giddily started on its career “to mop the earth,” weather and climatic conditions turned unfavorable in the wheat fields of Argentina, Asia, Russia, and other foreign lands;—then, by parity of reasoning, the obverse economic phenomenon took place in turn. The value of wheat rose; and, due to the scarcity, the supply went down, and prices soared up. With \$1 a bushel wheat, the bottom dropped from under Populism.

That—the economic facts and law—was the Hercules of the occasion. That Hercules disbanded Populism. With the ground taken from under Populism, the upper silver mine-owning capitalists, who had speculated on the movement, quickly deserted for other pastures green, the silver mine-owning Senator Stewart of Nevada leading;—and there was left naught of Populism but the politicians, who had been attracted by the “pie-counter.” All that was left for the Democratic leaders of Texas to do was the job of chore-women—sweep away the ruins of Populism.

The retrospect is indispensable for a safe prospect.

Is the Socialist party movement in Texas, as was the case with the Populist movement, an exhalation of the material stress of a labor-employing, hence labor-exploiting, class? Is it, in other words, the exhalation of a property-owning class (renting farmers or the like), hence, interested in the cheapness of all things, proletarians included, except that which they have for sale? If such is the genesis of the movement whose growth alarms the El Paso *Morning Times*, then the paper may dismiss its fears. The Democratic political flies at the Texan “pie-counter,” if ever incommoded by their Socialist party kindred, will be incommoded temporarily only. Some agrarian law fixing rents sufficiently low, and accompanied with some railroad-rates provisions to match, will as effectively dismiss the “Socialist” movement,

as the Populist movement was dismissed, and restore the Democratic politicians to their jobs.

Is, however, the Socialist party movement of Texas composed to an appreciable and compelling extent of the element, whose poll of 176 in 1908, rose, according to the El Paso *Morning Times's* figures, to the 442 cast this year for the Socialist Labor Party's presidential ticket;—if, in other words, the S.P. movement in Texas is builded upon the class interests of the proletariat, then, indeed, is the alarm, now entertained by the El Paso *Morning Times*, in behalf of its Democratic “pie-counter” clientele, well founded. In fact, the paper's fears and apprehensions are bound to be verified to the utmost. The stress of the proletariat is not one that can be allayed: it is one that the law of capitalism drives the capitalist class to render ever intenser, ever more wide-spread. The movement founded on THAT distress, the movement that consists of THAT distress organized,—THAT movement is propelled by a force permanent and irresistible. And the propeller is the identical Hercules who disbanded Populism.

No “pie-counter”-hunting politician is gifted with the power Herculean. “Pie-counter”-hunting politicians are but flies on the wheel. The actual Hercules who does things is the economic law of VALUE—the cornerstone of Socialist statics and dynamics.

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