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EDITORIAL

MARK THE SIGHT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ABOUT a fortnight ago the street in front of J. Pierpont Morgan's office in London was the scene of almost a riot. The actors were not the "rioters" one reads of in the papers with so much frequency. They were not workers. On the contrary, the actors wore every mark of the idle class. They were capitalists, money men, holders of gold. These "gentlemen" frequently belabored one another's heads with their canes, fists were clinched and insults were frequent. Whence the excitement? The men were anxious to get ahead of each other to secure a hold upon the United States, to get bonds, and thus to draw into their hands big chunks of the wealth produced by the toilers of America.

The scramble for unearned wealth on the part of capitalists is nothing new or significant. Yet their scramble for United States bonds was of a significance of the first rank.

Bonds of other, of European, countries are not infrequently issued. Yet during the last ten years no one has seen European capitalists of all degrees tumbling over one another to secure them. Why this apathy when it concerns bonds of their own country, and this intense interest when it concerns bonds of the United States? The capitalist press has tried to explain the phenomena by attributing it to the superior "credit" our own country enjoys in the money markets of the world. The explanation is insufficient. It suggests the question, Why and whence this superior credit? That is the rub and that is the point to keep in view. The answer is:

The working class of Europe is not behaving in a way to inspire extensive "confidence" to the idle class. Their conduct threatens to put an end to capitalism. The backs of European workers have latterly become uncomfortable seats for the

idle class. The long-ridden and patiently jogging proletariat of Europe has begun to rear. The 800,000 Socialist votes in France, the nearly 2,000,000 Socialist votes in Germany, the telling blows delivered at the root of capitalism by the representatives of the workers in the French, German, Belgian, Italian legislatures and by Keir Hardie in the British Parliament—all these things are signs ominous to the wealth spongers. It is not gold alone that is a coward. Money, whether of gold, silver or paper, crawls into holes when its chances to play the vampire at ease are endangered. These chances are no longer what they were, they are decidedly bad in Europe. European capital feels no confidence in European industry, the European wage slaves are striking off the chains too fast to suit the convenience of their slaveholders.

But while things look so unpromising in Europe, the European capitalist casts his looks across the Atlantic, and his bloodshot eyes feel refreshed as he glances over the broad acres of the land in which the “free” are said to live and the “brave” are said to live. The contrast between here and there settles his thoughts, restores confidence to his aching heart, and fixes the direction of his “investments.” Here the masses of the workers still regularly jump from the frying pan into the fire, from the fire back into the frying pan, and so forth. One election they choose their Democratic bosses, the next their Republican skimmers, and so back and forward. Here, differently from there, the labor faker still flourishes. Here national superstitions still sway the minds of many, and enable the capitalist vampire to suck the workers’ blood while he, vampire like, cools the wound by means of “patriotic” wind. Here, where the pure and simple economic movement has become impotent, dividends, interest, rent flow in a steady stream into the lap of the idler.

America has become the promised land of the capitalist. She is his plantation, and our people are his “niggers,” who work it to keep him and his spawn in luxury abroad, and his satraps and overseers—his Clevelands, Mortons, Hills, Harrisons, etc.—in security.

But all is not gold that glitters. The attractiveness of American investments will soon receive a cruel shock. The day is at hand when the American toiler will also rear and throw the idler off his back.

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