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EDITORIAL

A FIT SPECIMEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The shot that disposed of King Humbert was far from being an unwelcome event to “journalism” as “she is practised” just now. Besides offering opportunities for hysterics in the quality and the quantity of headlines, it has offered renewed opportunities for a sort of toadyism that has become of late characteristic with the stock-holders of the papers. They have been furnished opportunity to sing the praises of royal personages, thereby to pursue the policy of “inspiring respect” for “powers that be,”—a very natural tendency with a ruling class whose rights begin to be questioned. If, however, these praises have always been vulgar, they are this time ludicrous, besides.

The “young King,” the “handsome King,” the “bright King,” the “intrepid King,” the “learned young monarch,” whose pictures, idealized beyond recognition, have appeared in these papers, and over whom they have been slobbering in virtual accord, as “the powerful intellect that will now steer the troubled ship of state in Italy,” is in point of fact a ridiculous manikin, puny in body, puny in intellect, and despicably petty generally.

The now King of Italy is just on the safe side of idiocy. He is not an idiot, but as near to it as anyone could care to be. But for the social corks that keep him afloat, as they keep afloat many a similar member of our own ruling class, he would be a peanut vender or chestnut roaster on the street corners; doubtful whether he would be fit even for that.

A few years ago he toured the courts of Europe in search of a wife, but despite the fact of his having a throne to bestow, the cold shoulder was turned upon him everywhere: there was no princess wretched enough to care for him. Even the court of Brussels, that furnished Empresses to Mexico, Kings to Congo, dowagers to Portugal, and has the reputation of not being particular, provided a throne is to be had, refused an alliance with the physical and mental shrimp that is now being

boomed here. Finally, rejected by royalty, he came down to a Montenegrinian “Princess,” who, though strong of body, has not yet presented the anxiously hopeful throne with an heir.

It is in the fitness of things that such a specimen should be the subject of laudations by our American princes of pork, shoddy, etc., etc.

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

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