

EDITORIAL

A SHIP IN DISTRESS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE December 28 issue of the San Francisco *Advance*, organ of the California Social Democracy, there styled "Socialist Party," cannot be read by a Socialist Labor Party man without that deep interest with which a mariner, sailing safely by the laws of navigation, may be supposed to watch the flapping of the sails and the manoeuvres of the ship, that, having made light of such laws, gets caught in the tangle of opposing currents of wind and water.

On page 9 of that issue, appear the "special instructions" to the delegates of the San Francisco local to the approaching State Convention. The 3d instruction reads:

"Whereas, The Socialist Movement being purely political must represent not merely a part of labor but the whole working class, therefore, be it

"Resolved, That the Socialist Party is distinct from and entirely independent of the trades union movement."

In other words:

"Whereas, Our Party has hitherto dabbled in the pure and simple trades union movement, and patted it on the back by officially declaring the pure and simple unions to be 'nobly waging the class struggle'; and whereas that policy has proved productive of all the ills implied in the classical and technical term 'entangling alliances'; therefore, be it

"Resolved, That we quit."

All of which would be very neat, if only the hunter ceased to see the ostrich because the ostrich resolved to bury its head in the sand, and quitted seeing him. The Boers may resolve to be independent of England; they may even succeed in establishing their independence. But, for reasons too numerous and obvious to mention, they will have to do something more than "resolve." They have to "face the

music,” and fight. The same as England will not let the Boers alone by virtue of any “resolution” these may pass, but will seek to keep them dependent, neither will fakir-led unionism allow independence to any political party, that claims to be Socialist. In a thousand and one ways such unionism will seek to assert its dominion. Nor can such dominion be thrown off by running away. It can be thrown off only by facing, and fighting, and downing the would-be usurper. It is but another illustration of the Marxian maxim that society cannot be revolutionized behind its back.

But the ship of the San Francisco “Socialist Party” is caught in another, even more serious whirlpool than that in which its above “non sequitur” is tossing it. It is positively keeled in that other, to wit:

Facing the above quoted “special instruction,” there is on the very opposite, the 8th page, an editorial article entitled “An Unholy Alliance.” It is there argued, with relentless logic drawn from indisputable facts, that the recent “Peace Conferences,” held here in New York between the Hanna Trust magnates and the Gompers crew of pure and simple trades union leaders, have established between these two bodies—trusts and pure and simple trades unions—“an offensive and defensive alliance AGAINST ALL THE WORKINGMEN NOT IN THE UNIONS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE LABOR LEADERS MENTIONED,” that is to say, not in control of the Organized Scabbery. And the article shows these “uncontrolled” workingmen to be the large majority. Now, construing this article together with “special instruction” No. 3, what do we get? The following conclusion is inevitable:

“The Labor Movement has many parts: the Gompers Trades Union is one of these parts: our ‘Socialist Party’ represents all parts: therefore it represents also the Gompers part, that has entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Trust magnates against all the workingmen not under its control.”

And there is the San Francisco “Socialist Party” ship keel up!

The S.L.P. ship has its life-boats ready to save from drowning all those of the ship-wrecked crew who have learned from experience. The rats, of course, are not included. Let them go down.