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EDITORIAL

THE MESSAGE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

FOR the first time since Marx criticised the messages of American Presidents as “unmeaningly discursive,” an American President has performed a message that is the exact opposite. The feat was done by the present incumbent.

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Leaving aside that portion of the Message in which the President speaks, not as President of a nation 90,000,000 and odd strong and covering an acreage almost as large as all Europe, but as Mayor of Washington, D.C., and despite the name that the President will be best known by in history is “Taffy,” the message sent to Congress this year is peppery, terse in its pepperiness, to the point.

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The substance of the Message is as follows:—

“You Insurgents have howled about my friend Aldrich’s banking schemes—well, you may howl louder still—

“You Insurgents have stuck pins into me on the subject of the land claims—well, get up more pins, and stick ’em in: it affords you fun and does not disconcert me—

“You Insurgents have been yelling for anti-corporation laws—well, nary a law of that sort shall ye get—

“You Insurgents have been screaming yourselves red in the face and blue on the lips and white with froth about my Cannon-Aldrich tariff—well, scream some more red, white and blue—

“You Insurgents have let hell loose upon me anent the railroads—well, I’m hell-proof—

“You Insurgents have tried your levellest to direct my course on how to operate the postal savings banks—well, try all you like, for all the good it will do ye—

“You Insurgents have thrown fits against the naval and military appropriations—well, throw all the fits you please, I insist upon more battleships—

“You Insurgents have thought you would catch me napping on the matter of fortifying the Canal—ha! ha! ha! Out with \$19,000,000 for that very purpose—

“You Insurgents have been endeavoring to scare me with ‘the large middle class’—well, I don’t scare worth a cent—

“There!—

“Now, having paid my respects to the rioters within my own party organizations, and my own class, a word with you, you mass-rioting workingmen,—

“Ye have stuck your tongues out to me, demanding an 8-hour day—well, I consider such a law an ‘intolerable burden’ and such a law’s ‘application extremely oppressive’—if I ye have any tongues left to stick out, stick ’em—

“Ye have shaken your horny fists at me for a ‘workmen’s compensation’ law—well, I’ll demand from Congress a \$10,000 appropriation to pay the junketing expenses of the pets of the employers to ‘investigate the matter’—if ye have fists left to shake, shake ’em—

“Ye have been thundering against the Courts—well, thunder away. I love a roaring noise.”

* * *

True, the yards of velvet language in this excessively long Message conceal the steel within. Those closest to the President have ever said that his bland smile covers a will compounded of iron an granite.

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The Message sent to Congress by President Taft—right upon the November elections that repudiated him and his favorites’ policy, and the dark clouds of which repudiation were lighted by the forked lightning of an unprecedented Socialist vote—is a Message sent to the whole people. It is the flinging of the gauntlet, by Top-Capitalism at the feet of its many shaded adversaries, with a self-satisfied “Dare!” accompanying the flinging.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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slpns@slp.org