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EDITORIAL

THE CUE TO TAKE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE devil can quote Scripture for his purpose. So can the capitalist. The only trouble is that the latter, not being so skilled in holy lore as his friend and prototype, usually kicks his own text in the shins.

Something on this order is the performance of Orison Swett Marden, who in a cleverly contrived “concealed adv.” magazine article advises the young man to “get a start by life insurance.”

“No one,” declares Swett (ominous name), “can do his best work or express the best thing in him while he has a feeling of uncertainty, while he is worrying or anxious about the future welfare of those he loves.”

Nobly thought and nobly put! Despite the well watered pretense to the contrary, security, not anxiety, certainty for the future, not fevered scrambling to keep one’s head above water, are productive of man’s best work. Only the sense of stability, releasing one from the petty cares of every day, gives free play to the loftier creative faculties of the mind. Epictetus was a slave, Robert Louis Stevenson came of a well-to-do and honored family. But by their economic position both were relieved of care for the next day’s bread and butter; the flowers of their minds are with us for all time. Thomas Davidson and Robinson the painter starved to death in neglect, their best work left undone, and what they did do marred by their struggles for existence.

Such being the case, what course shall a young man take? He sees the clash for life growing ever more keen, the pace ever more intense, skill and education ever more a drug on the labor market. The professions are overcrowded, unemployment dogs the steps of the craftsman. At the root of all the evil he perceives the fact that the people are shut out from the land and the machinery of production; they are eager, they are crying, to be allowed to produce food and raiment for themselves; the

owners of the land and the tools say No.

Shall a young man, perceiving all this, attempt to plant security for the future within his breast by slapping a life-insurance porous plaster on outside, as Marden would have him, and let it go at that?

Or rather, shall he not, whatever he may do about the insurance, take Marden's cue, and, soon as may be, kick down the artificial barriers around the sources of wealth; restoring to himself and his fellow workers the nation's land and machinery, without which true security is impossible?

Ten to one, if he perceives the facts, he will do the latter, through the ballot of the Socialist Labor Party, and the organized power of the true Industrial Union.

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