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EDITORIAL

“NEW NATIONALISM.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHEN a young poet thinks he has performed enough poems to fill up a booklet, he picks out that one which he thinks most charming—“To Lesbia,” or, “Thoughts at the Ocean’s Feet,” or “The Radiations of the Heart”—tacks his other poems to the chosen one, and issues his booklet under the title “To Lesbia [or the title of whatever other rhyme strikes his fancy strongest] and Other Poems.” Upon this principle Col. Theodore has just proceeded. He has issued a 268-page book entitled *New Nationalism* which contains his Osawatomie speech of that name, and to which are tacked some twelve minor speeches delivered in various parts of the country. The correct title for the book is “New Nationalism and Other Speeches.”

What is “New Nationalism” all about? The inquisitive reader who would like to know soon finds himself bogged. Platitudes are interlaced with wild and demagogic denunciations; the signal is rung of a new dispensation which is presented in lines so misty that it escapes seizure by the eyes; bombast and bathos jibe each other’s heels; pedantic warnings jostle against meek self-effacements. As one proceeds the feeling comes over him that *New Nationalism* is trash, gotten up “to sell,” and he is much inclined to throw the thing away. If fate is good to him, it will cause him, before he does so, to cast a look at the last pages and the first, he will then learn a thing or two that will induce him to read the book through. He will then be a wiser man—without being a sadder—a decidedly wiser man,

New Nationalism and Other Speeches is sandwiched in between a “Historical Summary” by “one of the Abbotts”—Lyman, and an “Introduction” by “another of the Abbotts”—Ernest Hamlin. Particularly the “Introduction” is instructive. It tells how, before the Colonel started on the tour that gave birth to *New Nationalism and Other Speeches* public opinion was “hard, rather sordid, decidedly materialistic”;

and it details the evidences of said sordidness, etc. One of them consisted in political discussions being centered about factories and “dinner pails.” The Colonel’s tour changed all that.

This, indeed, is the key-note to *New Nationalism and Other Speeches*. It is the substitution of rhodomontades ’gainst “The Crook”; of perfervid sentiments regarding “The Good Citizen”; of turgid dissertations on “Nature Resources” and “Conservation”; of acrobatic feats of rhetoric on “Law, Order, and Justice”;—it means, in short, the substitution of sky-rockets for the sordid theme of the “dinner pail.” In other words, *New Nationalism and Other Speeches* is the nurse’s trick with the squealing baby that sordidly cries for what it wants, and is attempted to be silenced by calling his attention away with a rattle.

The compact presentation of *New Nationalism and Other Speeches* makes two things clear—first, why it is that so many capitalist Interests are hailing the Colonel their Savior; second, that the capitalist interests which have been calling the Colonel names do not know what is good for them.

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