

EDITORIAL

## KEIR HARDIE'S ECONOMIC DETERMINANT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**F**OR some time careful followers of men and things in the Movement have wondered why was Keir Hardie so gratuitously and slanderously vituperative of the Socialist Labor Party, and its officers. About sixteen years ago he toured the country under the auspices of the S.L.P., and his reports from home were praiseful of the Party. More recently all that changed. His report of his recent tour in the land under the auspices of the Socialist party, as published in the December 21, 1912, issue of the Milwaukee *Social Democratic Herald*, has gone beyond any of his previous excesses. It is not only gratuitously and slanderously vituperative of the present S.L.P., but the gratuitously vituperative slanders are made to extend back, and now cover the period when he thought, at least wrote, otherwise. The change seemed too revolutionary to be accounted for by a mere change of friends, from the S.L.P. to the S.P. Such animus seemed unaccountable on the mere ground of changed "associations," with one who derived his Socialism from such religious sources as the Bible, and from such endearing memories as his grandmother's nursery tales. What could the reason be?

The Movement owes to the last December issue of the London *Socialist Standard* the light that was necessary to answer the question. The *Socialist Standard* says:

"Keir Hardie, 'the famous British Socialist' (according to the Americans), has recently returned from a lecturing tour in that land 'flowing with milk and honey.' Asked by an interviewer how he became a Socialist, Hardie (it is reported) answered: 'I can't just say how my own life turned me to Socialism. I think I got my first ideas from reading Robert Burns and Thomas Carlyle. Then came the New Testament.' Good heavens! I have several times wondered where he got it from!

"It seems that Hardie's services had been requisitioned to give a fillip to the S.P. of America (an organization similar to the I.L.P.) , since Roose-

velt had stolen all their platform, and left with them no distinguishing principles upon which to fight. It had been suggested to the party that Hyndman be asked to perform, but the offer was declined on the score of expense. Instead, Hardie was booked **at £10 a lecture!**—at least so grumbles *Justice*. It would be very interesting to know what Hyndman's figure would have been, seeing that Hardie was considered to be a cheap substitute at £10 a time.

“Considering he addressed 43 meetings it cannot be said that he did badly, and yet it certainly was indiscreet of him to tell the interviewer that ‘the common-sense of humanity is bound to manifest itself sometime.’

“Whilst agreeing that this is probable, yet, it seems to me, if its manifestation depends upon the dissemination of Carlyle and the New Testament at £10 a dose, then it is a very long way off indeed. Happily, however, there are teachers of Socialism in the field.”

The secret is out. Material interests have once more registered their controlling force. Forty-three times £10, or \$2,050 are more powerful than Biblical injunctions against “bearing false testimony against thy neighbor,” or the sweetest flavors or nursery tales.

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