

# The People.

VOL. VIII, NO. 47.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1899.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {284}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—Were you last night at Cyclone Hall?

UNCLE SAM—No; anything going on there?

B.J.—Going on there? I should think so. Well, you missed it. Aurora Borealis held a speech. I tell you, it is the best thing I ever heard.

U.S.—And what did you hear?

B.J.—I'll tell you. He described the sufferings of the people in a way that made even rugged men weep. You could have heard a pin drop. The vast audience was swayed by the magic of Aurora Borealis' voice and words. It was simply grand. And it was so convincing.

U.S.—What was "convincing"?

B.J.—Why, that speech. The workingmen don't know that they are in misery. He convinced them; Aurora Borealis raised the veil before their eyes; now the workingmen know how miserable they are.

U.S.—If I had a lounge near by I would throw myself upon it and roar with laughter; as it is, I have to hold my sides from splitting.

B.J.—(indignant)—What do you want to roar about with laughter?

U.S.—At your queer notion about the workingmen not knowing that they are in misery and need to be told. Do you imagine, if I were to dig a pin into your fat belly, that I would have to notify you—

B.J.—(jumping back, as though fearing U.S. would illustrate his point)—No, by



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

thunder! I would not need your notification; the stitch of the pin would be all the notification I would need.

U.S.—And do you imagine that the thousand and one pin-stitches administered by the capitalist class to the workingmen are not felt by these, and they need to be notified that they are being pricked?—

B.J.—But—you see—

U.S.—Do you imagine that the workingmen need to be notified of the gnawings of hunger inflicted upon them by miserable wages?

B.J.—Not that, but—

U.S.—Do you imagine that they need to be notified that they freeze in their homes in this blizzard weather?

B.J.—N—n—o—

U.S.—Do you imagine that they need to be notified that most of their children die for want of proper food, clothing and attendance?

B.J.—No;—they don't need notification of that.

U.S.—Then, what in thunder was the use of your Aurora Borealis' "great speech"?

B.J.—To make them feel their misery all the more.

U.S. Fudge! You are in error if you imagine that the workingmen can profit by any of such speeches as Aurora Borealis declaims before them.

In the first place, the workingmen are well aware, quite enough of them, that they are in hell's own hole;

In the second place, all such talk can only have for its effect, either to make the workers still more despondent than they now are, or to render them subject to any ranting and scheming politician that may come around with some silly scheme of salvation.

With increasing force our working people have been feeling, during the last 30 years{,} the pangs of misery, and in increasing volumes have the Aurora Borealis during this period been speaking their pieces. To what effect?

B.J.—The workingmen have been too stupid to understand.

U.S. (indignantly)—I call that adding insult to injury. The stupid ones have been the Aurora Borealis, not the working people. It is no use telling a man he is suffering and

will suffer more if you do not tell him the right way to get out of his troubles. The Aurora Borealis have all along neglected to do that very thing: too stupid to realize what was the way out, or too cowardly to state their convictions, they have been simply lashing the sea with their oratory. The working class listened, sighed, and—remained where it was. Not blood-curdling phrases about popular suffering, but calm, scientific demonstration of the reason of our poverty, and of the path of emancipation—that is what the workers need; that is what they are panting for; that's what the Socialists give them. That evening at Cyclone Hall was wasted on the audience. One calm, cool, dispassionate Socialist speech is worth all the cyclones that come pouring out of the mouths of your Aurora Borealis and his ilk. But to deliver such a useful speech takes study and thought; for that your Aurora Borealis are too flighty. They like to hear themselves talk. It is so much easier to reel out poetry and phrases than to speak soberly and instructively.

Go to with your Aurora Borealis!

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

Uploaded April 2008

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)