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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {329}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM (with a cynical look)—What is biting you now?

B.J. (looking reproachfully at U.S.)—That is not right. You know what I mean, and you are mocking me.

U.S.—That I am mocking you is true; that I know what you mean is not true. I mock you because I know you are going to get up some more of your tomfoolery.

B.J.—Call it as you please, I know I am right. I say “whoopla” to Bryan because—

U.S.—Yes, because—

B.J.—Because he is such a noble, tried and true friend of the people. “Whoopla!” I say again, despite your sneers.

U.S.—“Noble friend of the people,” did you say?

B.J.—Yes.

U.S.—And a “tried friend of the people,” you said?

B.J.—So I did.

U.S.—And a “true friend of the people,” you said that too?

B.J. (testily, and bracing himself up with an I-know-you-are-going-to-cross-question-me look)—Yes, sir.

U.S.—How long have you heard of this Bryan?

B.J.—It is now over four years.

U.S.—When did you first hear of him?

B.J.—In the campaign of '96.



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—What did he have to say then?

B.J.—He said the people were in misery, and he had come to save us.

U.S.—Correct! And he stated what he thought was the matter with us, and how to cure us, didn't he?

B.J.—Yes, indeed, he did.

U.S.—Four years ago he showed in what a bad way the country was, and he said that the paramount issue was to keep the country alive. The country was bound to die unless the free silver cure was applied. That was the all-essential thing.

B.J. (looking very happy)—Yes, indeed, he showed that to perfection.

U.S.—Stick a pin there. Now, suppose that you have a child sick; you send for two physicians, and hear what they got to say. Both declare that the child is in a bad way, but one says that what the child needs is the whiskey cure, and the other says that what it needs is the brandy cure, without which the child would be sure to die. After they have both expressed their views, you and your wife, and your brothers and sisters take a vote, and decide that the whiskey doctor is the right man at the right place.

B.J. looks very much interested.

U.S.—The brandy doctor is dismissed; your child is passed over to the whiskey doctor, and he goes to work upon your child. He gives him whiskey the first day; he gives him whiskey the second day; he gives him whiskey the third day; he gives him whiskey the fourth day. The child keeps on getting worse and worse. You decide at the end of the fourth day to have another election for a doctor, and again hear the two physicians.

B.J. listens with increased interest.

U.S.—The brandy doctor turns up again. Now what language would you expect to hear from him?

B.J.—I'd expect to hear him say that the child was worse because we turned him down and did not give the child the brandy cure which he had recommended as the only thing to save its life.

U.S.—Now, suppose this four-days-ago brandy doctor, this time, only mumbles something about brandy, and declares that what your child stands in vital need of is

vaseline; what would you s—

B.J. (jumping up)—I would say to him that he was a quack; I'd kick him out of the house for an imposter; I'd tell him he was simply trying to pick my pocket; I'd—

U.S.—That'll do.

B.J.—Wouldn't I be right?

U.S.—Of course, you would. If you did anything else you would be a confounded fool.

B.J. (very much gratified at U.S.'s approval)—That's the way I'd act every time!

U.S. (turning sharp upon him)—That's the way you SHOULD act every time; but you don't.

B.J.—I don't?

U.S.—NO, YOU DON'T! Here is your precious Doctor Bryan of the silver cure. Four years ago he prescribed silver to this sick nation as the paramount remedy, without which the nation was to go to damnation bow wows. He was turned down. The gold cure physician was chosen. During these four years of gold cure treatment the nation, as he says himself, has grown worse. And now what does he say?

B.J.'s head sinks.

U.S.—Does he say: "I told you so; you disregarded my silver cure, and now see where you are at. Elect me and I shall administer silver to you and save you;" does he say that?

B.J.—No; I must admit he doesn't.

U.S.—That is what he would say if he were honest,—

B.J.—Yes; that's so.

U.S.—But he don't. Like that quack brandy doctor, Bryan now drops his panacea of four years ago. To-day, if you want to hear about silver, you must go to the Republicans. They are the only ones who are keeping the stuff alive. Your quack silver cure Bryan now bobs up with a new cure; a new issue. This time the paramount cure is anti-imperialism and anti-trust. The old silver cure without which the country was to die, never was applied, and yet it is now shoved aside for a new "Cure!"

B.J. groans aloud in distress.

U.S.—Well may you groan! You are ready to be taken in by a quack.

B.J. looks unutterably cheap.

U.S.—The only consolation for you is that the workingmen who are shouting for McKinley are hardly less gulled than yourself.

B.J. raises his head hopefully.

U.S.—If you are willing to give a trial to a political quack, who evidently has himself no faith in his own nostrums, the workingmen who would vote for McKinley are no less dupes. They are willing to stick to the horse-doctor whose stupid treatment has weakened them during the last four years. It is six of one, half a dozen of the other with the two.

B.J.—But if they are quacks, both of them—

U.S.—Quit! This sort of talk is becoming tiresome. You know there is a workingman's party in the field with a class-conscious ticket from head to foot—

B.J.—The Socialist Labor Party?

U.S.—Yes; with Malloney and Remmel at the head. To end the era of quackery, the quacks must be jointly smashed. The Socialist Labor Party, with Malloney and Remmel as its standard bearers, is the only party that the workingman and all other decent people can join at the ballot box next November 6. Its platform is the same. It demands the abolition of the system of private ownership in the means of production as the only thing that concerns the working class, as the only thing that can bring both redress and improvement. That Party or none!

B.J.—I WAS a fool. And the worst of it is that I am not the only one. Yes; down with the quacks! Up with the Socialist Labor Party.

U.S.—Let the Arm and Hammer come down with a vim!

B.J.—It will! It will!

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

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