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EDITORIAL

DENNIS IN THE PULPIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

DRIVEN by the hand of an unkind fate, Bishop William Stang chose the textile center of Fall River—Fall River, where, under the politico-pontifical benediction of the amalgamated brotherhoods of politicians and pulpiteers, riotous wealth is amassed by the idle capitalist class, while the toiling working class receives, according to both the national and the late Massachusetts census, an average of only \$7.64 per week—to deliver a sermon against Socialism in which the devil played the star role. Many other invectives—indeed, the sermon was but a long string of invectives—were rolled from the pulpit in which the Bishop spoke upon the devoted heads of the Socialists. Besides being called “devils,” the Socialists were called “demagogues,” “turners of society into a state of barbarism,” “exciters to sedition,” “anti-Christ,” etc., etc., but “devils” held the center of the stage. It culminated in the sentence: “He who sows the seed of discord among the rich and the poor does the work of the devil.”

Being “divles” and “anti-Christ” the Socialists can have no exact information upon the subject, nevertheless we have a dim impression that somewhere, in a certain book called the Bible, a certain personality, called Jesus, is reported to have said: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God”; and somewhere else: “Woe unto you that are rich”; and again somewhere else: “Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.” We furthermore are of the impression—under the reservation above mentioned—that the views just quoted sat ill on the stomach of the rich and their ecclesiastical lackeys of that time; that the utterer of those views was denounced for one who “sowed the seed of discord among the rich and the poor,” and that he was made to suffer no end of agonies therefor. Besides all this, we know—now we KNOW, we no longer speak with the diffidence that becomes “divles”

when handling godly matter; we KNOW because we now enter upon the domain of economic and social science—we know that the views above quoted, whether they be poetic, metaphoric, divine, or otherwise, reflect a fact—WHEREVER THERE BE “RICH” AND “POOR” THERE ARE CRIMINALS AND VICTIMS. This ever was a fact; this is, to-day, an ugly fact because it is a fact for which excuse, palliation, or extenuation no longer exists. Wealth is to-day producible in amounts so vast that there is no longer any occasion for the division of society into idlers and toilers, enjoyers and sufferers, in short, “rich” and “poor.”

The personality, who made the utterances above quoted, is the Master that Bishop Stang is supposed to serve. Has the Bishop denied his Master? We doubt it. Not Jesus is the Master of the Stangs. The features of the Stangs, and of those who reason as the Stangs do, have been engraved with matchless burin by Dickens in the character that he draws in *Barnaby Rudge* of Dennis the hangman, who joined the “No Popery!” riots in England under Lord George Gordon. Dennis argued: “If these Papists gets into power, and begins to boil and roast instead of hang, what becomes of my work that is part of so many laws [there were at the time about 50 hanging laws, offences for which hanging was the penalty]; what becomes of the laws in general; what becomes of religion; what becomes of the country? When I heard the Parliament prayed for, and thought how many new hanging laws they made every sessions, I considered that I was prayed for.”—The philosophy of the hangman Dennis is the philosophy of the Stangs; the Master whom Dennis served when he joined the “No Popery!” riots is the Master whom the Stangs serve when they join the plundering capitalists’ cry against Socialism.

Well may Archbishop Ireland, in face of what is happening in Catholic France, utter his note of warning to the Stangs in America.

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

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