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EDITORIAL

## SAFE THROUGH THE COMET'S TAIL!

By DANIEL DE LEON

'T IS not gladness, simply upon the score of our earth's having safely passed through the 24,000,000 miles long and 1,000,000 miles thick tail of Halley's comet without our vital organs being paralyzed by cyanogen gas, or our real estate suffering damage, that should cause our people to shout with joyous relief: "Safe through the comet's tail!" The occasion is cause for an intenser feeling of relief, for deeper and more thoughtful joy, for a mightier shout of "Safe, for all time, through the tail of the comet of superstition!"

Time was in the annals of man when such a visitor on high, as a comet, instantly gave birth, on earth, to another comet of body and tail surcharged with a gas infinitely more poisonous than cyanogen; a gas, begotten of ignorance, and fanned to flame by interested superstition, that paralyzed the intellect and asphyxiated thought.

What the effect of this particular, man-made comet, together with its tail, was at one time, and what its effect would still be to-day, had mankind not long since safely crossed it, and crossed it for all time, as our immunity in this instance proves, may be judged by some of the incidents that accompanied the present apparition of Halley's comet—incidents that are straggling vestiges of days gone by.

Abdul Hamid has been fasting, expecting the end of the world; in California, a man poisoned himself, wife and five children to escape the "wrath to come"; in Italy, a wealthy peasant jumped off a cliff "running away from everlasting fire"; in San Remo, a man killed his wife and hanged himself "in dread of the day of judgment"; in this city soothsayers made sundry nickels out of nervous callers. Nor should from this list the fact be omitted that Cardinal Gibbons explained the recent freshets on the Marne and the Seine, in inundating large portions of Paris, as evidences of the wrath of God against the French Government for secularizing the religious orders.

These few and faint echoes of a dismal past may give an inkling of the effect of those man-made comets of old upon the masses; these few faint echoes of that dismal past conjure up vividly before the imagination what we have escaped during the last few months—not the exceptional sight of a few superstition-crazed folks leaping out of life and parting with their money to sharpers, but mass superstition-craziness, stripping itself of its earthly havings, and leaving these, with due notarial signatures, seals and other terrestrial attestations of the transfer of property, to the very inciters of their dementia. This have we escaped; and that we have escaped it is proof that the escape is for good and all.

Well may we shout for joy: “Safe through the comet’s tail!”

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