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EDITORIAL

A SOWER WENT FORTH.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A CORRESPONDENT illustrates with the names of several men and one woman a point he makes, and which puzzles him. The point is:

“These persons are only a few of several whom I could name. Their minds started utter blanks on the social question. They came in touch with the Socialist Labor Party, the *Daily and Weekly People*, and the rest of S.L.P. brilliant literature. Forthwith they became ‘speakers’ and even ‘writers.’ I watched them closely. They were parrots. I hoped that, from parroting, they would begin to digest the vast amount of sound principles they were taking in. I saw no evidence of any such digestive process. On the contrary. I saw evidence of increased and increasing superficialness, accompanied with vanity and vainglory. And presently I saw them, one after another, fly off the handle, acting as though they knew it all, and making asses of themselves. What can be the cause of this? Can it be, I have often asked myself, that there is some defect in the method of S.L.P. literature, and that, instead of its rendering these people solid thinkers, with a respect for knowledge, and the difficulty of acquiring the same, it causes so many of them to become top-heavy, and to grow impudent, insolent, and swaggers? Of course, these are not the rule. But there are so many of them, and they make so much noise that they have attracted my attention. I have asked myself the question, Can it be that this evil is the result of the distinctive virtue of S.L.P. literature, inasmuch as S.L.P. literature presents the toughest knots of science in a style so easy that it can be unraveled by all? Did the figure cut by these people ever strike you?”

Our correspondent can best be answered with one of the most poetic parables, and withal true to nature, of the Carpenter of Nazareth:

“A sower went forth to sow:

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up.

“Some fell upon stony places, *where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:*

“And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away.

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them.

“But others fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

That sower is the S.L.P.; and the seeds it sows meet with all the accidents in the parable. Some of the seeds “fall by the wayside” and the cormorant foes of Socialism destroy them; some of the seeds “fall among thorns” and the thorns of interested slummery and “intellectualism” choke them; and some of the seeds, *falling on shallow minds, forthwith spring up fast because they find no deepness of earth into which to cast their roots.* These are the elements our correspondent has in mind.

There is nothing the matter with the literature of the S.L.P. Our correspondent will admit that to avoid its shooting up where there is no deepness of earth would be to render it so sterile as to be unable, when falling upon good ground, to bring forth the many a hundredfold fruit that it is bound to bring forth in due season.

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