

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 347.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

EDWARD EVERETT HALE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE death of the Rev. Dr. Edward Everett Hale—recently chaplain of the United States Senate, a prominent Unitarian divine, and for full two generations a popular writer and speaker—could not choose but be quickly followed with biographies of this conspicuous figure in the intellectual life of the country. Strange to say, not one of the biographies even remotely refers to Edward Everett Hale's connection with the movement named Nationalist, and which, as the immediate predecessor of the Socialist Movement in the land, sprang up as a consequence of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*.

Looking Backward is the cleverest forecast or sketch of the Socialist Republic at work. As time advances, and the industrial feature of Socialist Government casts its outlines ever more clearly upon the canvas, ever more clearly repudiating and exposing pure and simple political Socialism, on the one hand, and pure and simple bombism, or any sort of Anarchy, on the other, the genius of Bellamy, a marvel of evolutionary power manifested in *Looking Backward*, is bound to grow in public estimation. No wonder the work struck a chord that was quickly responsive. The Nationalist Movement was the almost immediate result.

Edward Everett Hale, then already sixty-seven years old, was one of the first members of the mother organization started in 1888 in Boston. The parent body speedily produced a large crop of affiliated clubs that extended from New York to San Francisco. The Movement increased so fast that the very next year it held a great celebration in Boston with two meetings in Tremont Hall, one in the afternoon, another in the evening.

Edward Everett Hale was the chairman of the evening meeting. Clever as was the speech of Bellamy on that occasion, not to mention the speeches of other speakers, the chairman's opening address lurches all others o' the garland. Every

sentence roused the large and thoughtful audience to prolonged manifestations of approval. It was a shower of burning coals dropped in deliberate succession upon the head of the much vaunted beauties of Individualism. It was not the rant familiar from the lips of phrase-monging declaimers. It was a coherent argument. The talented chairman took for his starting point, and preserved throughout as his “Leit Motif,” the great fire that had devastated a portion of Boston only a few weeks before. He showed that the fire originated in Individualism; that Individualism interfered at every step with its extinction; and he climaxed the burning indictment—all the more burning because calmly and logically presented—with the sentence “Boston would be in ashes to-day, had not Collectivism, in the shape of the Fire Department, finally stepped in, seized Individualism by the throat, flung it aside—AND SAVED THE CITY.” The facts were known to all; the conclusions were but the formulated expression of the unformulated thought that was general in Boston. The one and the other was presented in the diction and the coherence of earnestness. The speech was never reported in full. It is one of the great speeches lost—but indelible was its effect upon every thoughtful mind present.

If the venerable Edward Everett Hale did nothing more than deliver that speech, his life was useful. The message he delivered was of the kind that tells. It is a message that calls upon Collectivism in the land to hasten to seize by the throat and fling aside the Individualism that is threatening to reduce the land to the dead ashes of Imperialistic Slavery.

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

Uploaded September 2010

slpns@slp.org