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EDITORIAL

MARK, LABEL AND REMEMBER 'EM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE initial speech of Woodrow Wilson, Gov.-elect of New Jersey, in his campaign to thwart the machinations of James Smith, Jr., for the United States senatorship, contains this passage:

“We are not in this fight to find the easy way; we want the right way. And any man who turns from the right way will be marked, labelled and remembered. There are some weak hearts, and I feel sorry for them. I'd be a knave than a coward.”

Pity that, although the Cause in which these words were used is a good one, it hardly calls for such virile language. Being in the nature of a sledgehammer swung to drive in a tack, the language runs the risk of discrediting itself, and of discrediting whatever Cause really calls for it.

The spirit of Woodrow Wilson's words is, however, so true that it deserves attention; it is so rare that it deserves applause.

One of the banes of the day is the Spirit of Compromise. It is a Spirit born of lack of conviction; it breeds the coward, and creates the atmosphere for the knave.

The man who “turns from the right way” should be “marked, labelled and remembered” by any Cause that is serious. And he will be, too. The condemnation of “such marking, labelling, and remembering” is a common cry to-day. It is a cry that knaves invent and fools or cowards repeat.

A Cause knows not the “easy way.” The “easy way” is the route of reform; the route of the tinkerer; the route of slow pulsation—and of knaves, ever ready to turn the Temple of a Cause into a house of merchandise.

Woodrow Wilson, having been taken from the presidency of a University, is carrying into the political field the shop habits of his trade. He lectures on abstractions. Such lectures are useful in their way. Possibly the mission of this truly

“gentleman and scholar” is generally to wipe away the cobwebs of “gentlemanliness” and “scholarship” that a tribe of neither gentlemen nor scholars, but who lay claim to both, are in this generation seeking to spread abroad, like so many spiders hungry to entrap silly flies.

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