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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {70}

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNCLE SAM—Croil, croil, William R. Grace!

BROTHER JONATHAN—Has he been wicked again?

U.S.—I would not blame him this time, and yet I would say with our friend Artemus Ward: “Croil, croil, man!”

B.J.—What did he do?

U.S.—Did you ever hear of a would-be labor bunco steerer called James P. Archibald?

B.J.—I know him better by the name of Jerry Poppy.

U.S.—Yes, he is generally know by that name, or as Popped Jerry. Well, Grace took up this Poppy as an anti-snapper and used him for all he was worth. But Grace, with all his faults, is no fool; he pretty soon found out that the fellow was not worth his salt; that the bona fide workingmen were “on to him,” and that he could not lead by the nose men enough to man a one-horse funeral hearse.

B.J.—And what did Grace do then?

U.S.—Dumped him!

B.J.—Dumped Poppy?

U.S.—Yes, turned him down, kicked him away, spat him out—all in one.

B.J.—But what will now become of Poppy?

U.S.—I don’t know what he will do, but I know what I would advise him.

B.J.—What?



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U.S.—You see, this bunco steering, “Pure and Simpler,” cannot very well earn his living at anything else. He has now got so that it is part of his system. But he has played out with most of the boodle capitalists. Most all the doors are now shut to him, but here {there?} is one left open and he might, if he were not so clumsy and lumpish, crawl through that.

B.J.—Which?

U.S.—The Milholland gate to labor fakirdom.

B.J.—Do you think the Milholland-Republican fakirs would let him in?

U.S.—I admit it is doubtful; they are all hungry and thirsty, and would not like too many competitors for the bones they expect; but still it is a feature of the Republican party managers in New York that they have not a correct scent. Tammany, for instance, could never be taken in by Poppy; it can tell humbug and windbag too well; but the Republicans are more innocent; they can be more readily deceived; the “labor representatives” one sees on a New York Republican platform are such a discredited and uninfluential lot that no politician of average intelligence would care to wipe his feet on them.

B.J.—Why, that would be Poppy’s chance!

U.S.—Exactly. And if he could only get there he would certainly enjoy it. He would see many a well-known face, scarred in the battles with fakirdom, and he would shake hands with many an itchy palm that would respond to his.

B.J.—I know some of them.

U.S.—Do you know one flabby, weak-kneed, white-headed, hypocritical numskull, who is periodically used to blackmail the letter carriers?

B.J.—Phui! I should think I did, and so do the letter carriers, and don’t you forget it.

U.S.—Well, he is one of Milholland’s fakirs; then there is another—a lean, lank, cadaverous fellow, a very genius of famine; like a toad in a rock, he has undergone suspended animation for some time, drinking little and eating less.

B.J.—I know him; he now attends to the A.P.A. counter in the Milholland circus.

U.S.—Exactly. Then there is a pot-bellied, flannel-mouthed “citizen” who is everything to everybody, and behind everybody’s back he is everything else.

B.J.—I know him, too.

U.S.—Well, these and many more such toughs Poppy could meet again at the Milholland headquarters. Many of them have been in jail; others should go there, and all will eventually land there in their patriotic endeavor to live at the expense of their beloved country.

B.J.—But still I doubt that they will welcome Poppy.

U.S.—So do I; fakirs don't like to be crowded any more than anybody else. But when fakirs are few and foolish they imagine they gather strength by diminishing their "fewness," though they thereby increase the quantity of their "foolishness."

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

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