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EDITORIAL

PHRASES GALORE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A pamphlet containing an address by one Benjamin Fay Mills, of Boston, on *The New Party* has been sent to this office. After reading the address, the question suggested itself, Is it possible that there can be people so intellectually imbecile as to take stock in such a collection of contradictions, and spend money to print it?

The purpose of the address is to show that a new party is needed; to prove this Mr. Mills passes in review all existing parties, and rejects them one after the other, after paying his compliments to them. His caliber is sized up best in the passage in which he deals with the Socialist Labor party. He says:

The Socialist Labor party has an almost ideal programme. It occupies in relation to the social question the position of the more radical of the old Abolitionists in the days before the war. It is possessed of an heroic enthusiasm and it appears to have engendered the power and sacrifice that accompanies the birth of a religion. But, in strange contrast, it seems to be practically without soul!

How anyone can compare the S.L.P. with “the more radical of the old Abolitionists”; the party, that treads and plants itself upon the most practical of fields—the political field, with the visionaries who imagined their ideals could be realized outside of that field; the party, that realizes and insists upon the solidity of the Union as a basis for the enforcement of its programme, with the dreamers who did not realize the need of a solid Union for their programme and were willing to see the Nation split up;—how the two can be compared transcends the intellectual powers of the sober.

But worst of all, how anyone can, in one and the same breath, admit that the S.L.P. “is possessed of an heroic enthusiasm” and has “engendered the power and sacrifice that accompanies the birth of a religion,” and yet claim that such a movement “is practically without a soul,” is explainable only upon the theory that Voltaire advanced of the theological soul.

In the meantime the S.L.P., “soul-less,” according to the Millses; “excessively ideal,” according to others; “un-American,” according to a third set; “impractical,” according to a fourth; etc., etc., pursues its undeterred career—marching on, the only growing body in the land.

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

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