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EDITORIAL

“ROOSEVELTIAN FACT AND FABLE.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

VICTOR HUGO wrote a little book entitled *Napoleon le Petit* (Napoleon the Little). It was a political pasquinade against the third Napoleon as a contrast to Napoleon the Great. Marx wrote upon the same historic character a monograph entitled *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. However different the mold in which the two works are cast—the former being essentially a political pamphlet, the latter a treatise on the philosophy of history with the rise of Napoleon III for its objective,—both coincide, and, in one respect supplement each other, in drawing the picture of their “hero” as a sham and charlatan. The two works, Hugo’s and Marx’s, teach the lesson that the Caesars are of two types—one a doer of deeds, the other a pretender; one an aspirer, however selfish accompanying motives may be, after gigantic world-plans, the other a schemer of petty schemes; one a conjurer of lofty sentiments, the other a panderer to vile instincts; one an eagle that soars in the empyrean, the other a hyena that grubs in pollution. Mrs. Annie Riley Hale’s work—a little book of less than 200 pages, entitled *Rooseveltian Fact and Fable*, dedicated “To the Galleries, to whom my hero has played so long and so successfully”—takes its place beside Hugo’s and Marx’s as an enforcer of the same lesson.

As parallels are numerous between the original Caesar and Napoleon the Great, so must they also be, presumably, between Napoleon the Little and his historic successors. How numerous these latter are between Napoleon the Little, when still a-making, and Roosevelt at the same period of his career, one is startled to find at every page of Mrs. Hale’s book. The author never once mentions Napoleon III; probably he never occurred to her while writing; yet there they are, the glaring parallels, leaping forth one after another.

The fustian literary productions of Roosevelt recall to mind the “translation of

Caesar’s *De Bello Gallico*” by the Little Napoleon; the Big Stick revives the recollections of the military intervention in Rome and the escapade in Mexico performed by the caricature of the great Napoleon; the “White House cuckoos” are the exact Rooseveltian imitation of the sham Napoleon’s gutter-snipe press agents; the “Gen.” Leonard Woods of the Roosevelt regime are reminders of the ominous military chiefs whom Louis Bonaparte, when still President, raised and called to his side the Paul-Mortons, Bishops, Barneses, Addickses, etc., are the exact Rooseveltian counterparts of the stock-jobbing ministry of the “Nephew of Napoleon”; the rowdy Rough Riders bear the strongest resemblance to the “Society of December 10,” the organized slummery of high and low degree raked together by Napoleon the Little, and that did such signal service in the *coup* that transformed the Little Napoleon into an Emperor and a Caesar.

But it is not as an intentional or unintentional suggestor of a biographic parallel that Mrs. Hale’s work ranks high. Mrs. Hale’s work has an historic value that not all the brilliancy of Victor Hugo’s work, nor all the profundity of Karl Marx’s can claim for themselves.

Victor Hugo’s *Napoleon le Petit*, Karl Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, were written AFTER the Louis Bonapartian conspiracy was successfully carried out: Mrs. Hale’s work appears BEFORE a similar calamity has overtaken the United States—and thereby contributes a mighty share to prevent it. Brick upon brick—calmly and soberly piled up along the strictest of masons’ plumb-line, and held together by the solidest cement of authentication—Mrs. Hale has raised a wall so high that our American would-be Napoleon le Petit will find greater difficulty to vault over it than did the French Big Stick to promenade into a Caesar’s throne.

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Mrs. Hale’s Work deserves wide reading. It is all analytic study of Roosevelt since the man’s first beginnings down to his African trip. It takes him up from each of his many-sided aspect, strips him of mask and cloak, and leaves him tied to the stake of fact. *Rooseveltian Fact and Fable* is a liberal education upon a broad field of contemporaneous American events that none can afford to do without, least of all the sons and daughters of the land whom America is calling upon to solve the social

and political problems of the hour. The book can be obtained at the Labor News Co., 28 City Hall Place, this city, price \$1. Its only serious defect is the "Index," which is worse than useless as "a guide," which it announces itself to be, "to all important topics furnished by the Table of Contents."

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