

EDITORIAL

J. PIERPONT MORGAN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WE care not, at this time, to disturb the pleasant reminiscences that the death of the high financier J. Pierpont Morgan is recalling to the mind of all those who moved in his sphere, and that they are rushing to acquaint others with through the columns of the papers. We are willing to allow these friends of the departed to live over again their lives with the late lamented, undisturbed; his prowesses unsifted; his generosities unpried into; his “lofty pulsations for art” unexamined.

Neither are we anxious to join the crowd of those who will utilize Mr. Morgan’s decease in order to illustrate “the other side” of the medal. Leaving this for a later opportunity, we prefer at this moment—Mr. Morgan he is to be buried; or anatomically intact, if he is to be cremated;—we prefer at this moment, to take up that feature of the man upon which both sides are agreed. The feature, which, perhaps, is the leading lesson that the man teaches. It is an object lesson.

It is agreed on all sides, it is even boasted over as a feather in J. Pierpont Morgan’s cap, that stocks have remained unshaken, that not a flurry has been felt on {the} Exchange.

We believe it.

So long as a man has an actual function to perform, his death affects things. The more important the function, all the severer the shock. The death which pro-



JOHN PIERPONT MORGAN
(1837–1913)

duces in a certain place no greater a “flurry” than the death of an excavator reveals the fact of a needless personality at that place. “Exchange” is the most sensitive nerve center of capitalist production. Mr. Morgan was supposed to be, is still written about as having been “the engineer at the throttle.” And yet, tho’ the engineer is stricken, the engine moves on “without a flutter.”

J. Pierpont Morgan typifies the Capitalist Class. As with him so with it.

As he had a function to perform, before the substantial completion of which his death would have produced, not a flutter merely, but a convulsion, so had the Capitalist Class a function to perform, which to perform was their historic mission, and in the course of the performance of which their removal (supposing their premature removal to have been a sociologic possibility) would have had the effect of a social earthquake.

As he, his mission being performed, could die “at the throttle of the engine” without the engine being the worse for it, so with the Capitalist Class. Its mission is performed. It lingers superfluous, as superfluous at the throttle, tho’ it claims for itself great usefulness there,—as superfluous as J. Pierpont Morgan proves to have been.

To deliver this object lesson was J. Pierpont Morgan’s main mission. It took his death to perform the task. Matters not that he did all he could to delay and postpone the hour of delivery. The Socialist Movement gratefully acknowledges its obligation to J.P. Morgan for having died.

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