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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM AND BROTHER JONATHAN. {367}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN (approaching Uncle Sam with a confidential air)—I want to make a suggestion to you.

UNCLE SAM—Let her fly!

B.J.—The Socialist Labor Party is an excellent party—

U.S.—That's a chestnut to me. What's your suggestion?

B.J.—There is no party like it—

U.S.—Is your budget of news made up of more such stale items?

B.J.—Its principles are brilliant—

U.S.—If you have no more thrilling news than you have so far imparted to me, I'll have to leave you; this is my busy day.

B.J.—Just wait. It will be a glorious day for the nation the day the S.L.P. comes into power—

U.S.—Come, man; come, what have you on your heart?

B.J.—This: The thing for the S.L.P. to do is to—

U.S. puts a hand to each ear so as to catch every sound.

B.J.—To get a big and ever bigger vote.

U.S. (looks tired at B.J.)—Is that the sum total of all your wisdom?

B.J.—Well, that's what it should do.

U.S.—Why, man alive, that's the very thing it is doing all along!

B.J.—Ah! That's what it claims to be doing—

U.S.—And don't it?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—And that's what it means to do—

U.S.—And don't it do it?

B.J.—No: it goes about it wrong. The way it goes about it is dead wrong. It never can get votes that way.

U.S.—And what's the way you would suggest? I suppose we are now getting at your "suggestion."

B.J.—The way to go about it is to be broader. Don't be so fastidious about whom you take in; let them all come in; don't keep out anybody.

U.S.—Go on; go on.

B.J.—By taking in everybody, friends of all these will come over to you on election day—

U.S.—I hope not!

B.J.—There you have it! Just as I said! You S.L.P. men don't want to increase your vote.

U.S.—Weren't you telling me only yesterday that you were living on reduced rations; that since you lost your job you were so hard pushed for something to bite that you had lost fully ten pounds?

B.J.—That's what I said. Do you know of a job for me?

U.S. (talking very confidentially)—I want to make a suggestion to you.

B.J. (eagerly)—What is it?

U.S.—The thing for you to do is to eat more, to stow more food into you.

B.J. (impatiently)—I don't need you to tell me that! I am trying hard to do that very thing.

U.S.—Ah! That's what you claim that you are doing—

B.J.—And don't I?

U.S.—And that's what you mean to do—

B.J.—And don't I do it?

U.S.—No; you go about it wrong. The way you go about it is dead wrong. You never can gain flesh that way.

B.J.—And what's the way you would suggest?

U.S.—The way to go about it is to be broader. You are too fastidious about what you put into your stomach; throw in everything, anything; stale cabbages, egg-

shells, potato-peelings, fish bones, chicken feathers. By taking in all these things, just as they come along, or you come along them, you will—

B.J.—No, thank you!

U.S.—There you have it! Just as I said. You don't want to take in food.

B.J.—The devil, you say! I want to take in food all right, but not such stuff!

U.S.—Why not, pray?

B.J.—For the simple reason that I don't propose to commit suicide.

U.S.—And that's just why the S.L.P. refuses to take in "everybody." Such riff-raff as you say the S.L.P. is too fastidious about, and won't take, would sit on the stomach of the Party as hard as stale cabbages, egg-shells, potato-peelings, fish-bones, chicken feathers, etc., would sit on your stomach. The Party's stomach could not digest them. The Party might possibly sooner get a big vote that way. But, in the first place, whatever that vote may be numerically, it never could reach the requisite notch, and its quality would be such that the Party would be queered for ever, and would die out malodorously. The Socialist Labor Party will move on for a while yet on "short rations," and it proposes to keep on that tack till itself has raised the requisite crop, that, admitted into its ranks, will impart to it the necessary strength—mental, physical and moral—to fulfill its task. The S.L.P. is justly "fastidious;" it takes into its system only the very best "food;" tainted food it discards calmly, serenely and firmly.

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