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EDITORIAL

THE FLOWERS OF FAILURES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE announcement is made of the betrothal of Miss Helen Morton, a daughter of ex-Governor of New York, ex-Minister to France, and ex-Vice-President of the United States Levi P. Morton, to Paul Louis Marie Archambaud Boson de Talleyrand-Perigord, Count de Perigord. The announcement is accompanied with flaming descriptions of the bride's "vigorous stroke at golf," capacity to "serve a tennis ball," skill as a "cross-country follower of the hounds," and, last not least, immense dower.

As landed holdings are not the said Morton's "forte," what is the "forte" that, in his instance, produced the flowers of white parasols and elephants mad with pride?

In the firmament of American capitalism the Levi P. Morton, above named, is a bright particular star of no small magnitude and corresponding brilliancy. To take its parallax is to take the parallax of all its bright fellow twinklers. He was not born to wealth. He acquired it. Jehovah-like he knew how to make something out of nothing. Nevertheless, not being quite a Jehovah, he needed, like Archimedes, a fulcrum on which to operate. That fulcrum was "Original Accumulation," that mystic thing, that capitalism draws a sacred veil over, and which Socialism profanely tears the veil from.

How Levi P. acquired his fulcrum may be gathered from the unblushing tale that his admiring biographers tell of him. The tale is thrilling enough for yellow covers; it is long; but without loss to its thrillingness it can be told in few words: Raised among the stone farms and thistles of New England, this "pushing" Yankee, a veritable perambulating "genius of famine," pushed in a southwesterly direction, and, like a tired and hungry locust, let himself down on the fat land of Gotham. New York pleased him. He looked around; and liked it. He spread his "capital"—"push," "cleverness," "thrift," "industry"—and set up a clothing store. He then put all the steam his genius furnished him with into his said "capital"—"push," "cleverness," "thrift," "industry"—, and "failed," and lo, the "Original Accumulation"!

Forthwith the chrysalis evolved into the butterfly; Levi P. set up a bank; the capitalist was under full sail; and in the folds of time Duke sons-in-law and Count grand-brats began to take shape. Swindle, not land, is the answer to the question, whence the white parasols and elephants mad with pride sprout up to the capitalist class.

Another American Prince-wedded heiress, a daughter of the Lorillards, the original accumulation of whose family was made in the “snuff business” (no explanations needed), in a fit of that curious hypochondria that at times overcomes the wealth-surfeited spirit of the idle, is said to have exclaimed, as she stepped into her crest-emblazoned landau:

Who would have thought it
Noses had brought it!

Will the prospective Countess Paul Louis Marie Archambaud Roson de Talleyrand-Perigord, when she hears the soft rustling of her silk and satin wedding gown, be also overtaken by a hypochondriac fit, bringing home to her the fact that what she hears is the transmuted moans of the American working class, squeezed of their essence to furnish her a coronet and befitting apparel withal? Will her hypochondria break her lips with the exclamation:

Who would have thought it
Failures had brought it!—?

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

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