

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 217.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“RECIPROCAL INTERESTS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

BEFORE us lies an application blank for a bond of the United States Guarantee Company of New York. It is a blank that an employe must fill to obtain a bond before he can obtain work. Here are some of the questions:

“Are your habits sober and temperate, and have they ALWAYS been so?”—The theory being that the relations of employer and employe are reciprocal, has not the employe also a deep interest in knowing what the habits of his prospective employer are and ever have been? Imagine an applicant for employment putting the question to a Hazen Hyde, a Seeley, a Harper, fresh from a “French Dinner{,}” a “Free-nuptial” or a “Little Egypt” debauch, or to Schwab, the Monte Carlo gambler!

“What property or income have you, if any, besides the compensation last referred to?”—The theory being that the relations of employer and employe are reciprocal, has not the employe also a deep interest in knowing what the employer’s sources of income are? Imagine a Judge Deuel, or any of the other Judges who “direct banking interests from the bench”, or the Western Union Telegraph Co. with its “pool room” annex, or the manufacturers who place all their property in their wives’ names, or Rockefeller, with his innumerable alias concerns, or Railroad Co.’s with their secret mergers, or the tax-dodging perjurers—imagine any of these asked by an applicant for employment what property or income he has!

“State amount and nature of your debts, or other liabilities?”—The theory being that the relations of employer and employe are reciprocal, deep is the interest of the employe to know that the employer is solvent. Imagine one of these employers whose business is to fail, imagine the now ex-Governor of New York and ex-Vice President of the United States Morton, when he was in the clothing business, in which he failed, immediately whereupon he started a bank—imagine any of these gentlemen asked by a prospective employe what his debts and liabilities are!

“Single, married or a widower?”—The theory being that the relations of employer and employe are reciprocal, could the employe fail to reciprocate by entertaining a lively interest in the purity or impurity of the employer’s private life? Imagine an applicant for employment to ask the Belmont husband of the ex-Sloan woman; or Corey, the President of the Steel Trust and adulterous paramour of an actress; or the Seligmann Cupid of Anita Sutherland; etc.; etc.;—imagine an applicant for employment asking any of these the delicate question: “Single, married or a widower?”

One could go down the list of questions, and treat them in the same way. It needs no powerful imagination to picture to oneself the looks of outraged indignation of the “reciprocator” employer, were such questions put to him by his “reciprocalee” employe. It needs no powerful ear to catch the thunderous anathemas of “Socialist!” “Anarchist!” “Disrupter of Society!” that would be hurled at the “impertinent fellow”. Nor yet does it need any extraordinary imagination to see and hear these employers—after the employe was duly kicked out into the street—meet in their clubs, tell the story to one another, laugh uproaringly over it as a huge joke, and, winking the left eye, say: “The ass actually believed what our Mitchells and Gomperses stuff them with!”

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Uploaded February 2009

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