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EDITORIAL

PATRIOTISM AND ABNEGATION.

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THE Naval Department having called for bids for a 7,328 tons of armor contract for the battleships *Michigan* and *South Carolina*, the bid with which the Midvale Company answered was found to be \$50 a ton lower than that of the Armor Trust. Alarmed at the discovery, and fearing that the whole fat contract would go to its rival, the Trust delegated two of its leading men to present their case before Admiral Mason, chief of the Bureau of Ordnance. The presentation was pathetic, it was thrilling, it was convincing in more ways than one. In a nutshell it ran this wise:

“If the entire contract is given to the Midvale Company the existence of the Bethlehem and Carnegie plants (the Trust plants) would be placed in danger. Having no work, the plants would have to be dismantled. That would mean the placing of the Nation itself in danger. The dismantling of the Trust plants would cause their large force of highly skilled workmen to be scattered, so it would be impossible to reassemble the men again in case the Government needed, upon short notice, a large supply of armor, such as the Government would surely need in case some powerful foreign foe were to assail it. The Trust looks upon itself only as secondary to the Nation. Only in order that the Nation may live does the Trust hate to die. In proof of its patriotism and abnegation the Trust, while protesting that it would be ruined by selling armor at the Midvale price, declares itself glad to be ruined; ready, lamb-like, to immolate itself upon the altar of the Nation’s safety, rather than die by being put out of business.” In conclusion, with many more protestations of pure patriotism, the Trust declared its readiness to take one half of the contract at the price, the ruinous price, the at-a-dead-loss price, offered by its rival.

If a monkey looks into a mirror, a monkey and not a thing of beauty will be

reflected. Hideous, grotesque, even ridiculous is the reflex of sentiment cast by the material needs of the capitalist. No wonder even the Ordnance Bureau is reported to have smiled at the patriotic pose of the Armor Trust.

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