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EDITORIAL

## GOMPERS IN PARIS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**UROPEAN exchanges are bringing in copious reports of Gompers's meetings in Europe. They are all interesting. Hard to make a selection. If, then, not the most interesting, surely as interesting as any is the report of Gompers's utterances at the Egalitaire Hall in Paris. On that occasion Gompers was grilled, mercilessly grilled. Being told from the audience that the object of Unionism should be to abolish wage slavery his retort, in angry notes, was:

“What is the need of your saying so? I am not yet sure that I stand for the abolition of wage slavery. I fight the excesses of capitalism. Should I destroy it? I can't tell! And what is the use in knowing that? Organize yourselves strongly, and never let your enemy know all that you mean to do!”

The grilling that could extract such a retort was, indeed, grilling to a purpose. Here we have Gompers—the real Gompers—without a figleaf to cover his mentality.

According to the exposed mentality of this “President and Editor” the gentleman may be seen in his night shirt, pacing his bedroom, stopping ever and anon to strike, or practice, a Hamlet in perturbation posture, and soliloquize with himself, as follows:

“Sammy, dear, what does this Labor Movement drive at? Some people say it is meant to abolish wage slavery, and they can hardly be said to overdraw the picture of the horrors of capitalism. . . . Don't I know them? . . . Is it for naught I have quit making cigars on the bench, and now only smoke them? No, indeed; and by the navel of Jehoshaphat! Capitalism and its wage slavery are horrible. Abolish them? . . . yes . . . [scratching his back] if I could . . . conveniently. . . . Aye! there's the rub! . . . Conveniently. . . . But can the thing be done? I was told by Professor Green Goods that the thing was utterly impossible . . . the Professor wrote a book . . . he

ought to know. Is the Professor right?... Is he wrong?... If he should be right, what's the sense of my running my precious head against a stone-wall of impossibility?... If he should be wrong... then... why, then... [scratches his left leg right under the knee]... then... No! It will never do to take either chance. What to do?... By the nose of Habakkuk, I got it! Strategy.... Diplomacy.... I shall fight the excesses of capital.... That will keep both ends of the line my friends.... If capitalism can't be abolished, my capitalist winners and diners at the Civic Federation banquets will not dine me and wine me any the less... don't they also object to excesses? What harm can come to capitalism from pruning it of excesses?... If, on the other hand, capitalism can be abolished, why, then, the workers will look upon me as their paladin... but, hold, Sam.... What about those uproaring Socialists? Will paladining stop their mouths... No!... You're stuck, Samuel! No! you ain't! You can get out of the fix... How?... By telling them it is bad strategy to let the enemy know all that you mean to do... See?!... Wink your left eye... Wink your right eye at them... Let them think that Samuel G. is devilishly sly... But suppose those impracticals come up to you with Marx, and open that book at a certain place, and hold it under your nose, and yell into your ears the passage: 'You can't revolutionize society behind its back,' and back up the passage with historic events to prove that people who don't know what they are organized for only scatter at the critical moment... suppose those incorrigible Socialists do that... some may go so far as to call you an ass... [scratches both his shins]... what then?... What then?... Then I'll call them impossibilists!... Sammy, learn your lesson—you're not for capitalism, you're not against it...you're for Samuel Gompers... this thing will last your time anyhow—after you, the deluge!"

And patting himself upon the back S.G. strikes the posture of a Bowery tragedian impersonating Napoleon at Austerlitz.

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