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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {82}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I was under the impression that you said the Populist vote in Oregon last June fell off.

UNCLE SAM—Your impression is correct. It fell off relatively and it fell off absolutely. The total poll last June was 82,355, or 6,145 more than in 1892; of this number the Populists polled 25,451 to their 26,965 in 1892. They lost absolutely 1,514, and relatively their loss was heavier.

B.J.—There must be a mistake in this.

U.S.—No mistake.

B.J.—But how can some of the Populist papers claim they increased 110 per cent.?

U.S.—Because drowning people always go into the “claiming” business. Do you remember Blaine? When he was licked he sent word to his heelers, “Claim everything.”

B.J.—But look at these figures. They agree with yours upon the vote this year—25,451—but the Populists claim that their vote in 1892 was 12,229, while you claim that their vote in 1892 was 26,965.

U.S.—Never mind what they “claim.” You and I are not in the molasses-watering and sugar-sanding business of the middle class; we can settle this thing easily.

B.J.—Certainly we have no interest in deceiving each other or anybody else—

U.S.—Nor are we parrots to repeat what others say without inquiry, eh?

B.J.—Certainly not. Now, what is there in their claim?

U.S.—Upon the vote this year there is no dispute, is there?

B.J.—None; it was 25,451.



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U.S.—The only question is what was the Populist vote at the nearest Oregon State election before that.

B.J.—Exactly.

U.S.—If that vote was smaller—

B.J.—Then the Populists grew, and their claims are just.

U.S.—But if that vote was larger—

B.J.—Then they fell off, and are off.

U.S.—There is another question.

B.J.—Which?

U.S.—When were the last Oregon State elections held before this year's?

B.J.—In November, 1892, at the election for Presidential electors.

U.S.—Then you agree that we must compare this year's vote of 25,451 with the vote polled by the Weaver electors.

B.J.—Yes, by the straight Populist electors.

U.S.—Suppose some one were to propose to compare it with a vote cast before November, 1892?

B.J.—I would call that idiocy if done unintentionally, and swindle if done intentionally.

U.S.—Very well; now we are ready to talk. Here are the official figures given in the *Tribune* and the *World* almanacs for the straight Weaver electors; they are the same in both; can you read them?

B.J.—Yes, 26,956.

U.S.—Is that more or less than this year.

B.J.—Less, decidedly. It is less by 1,544, just as you stated.

U.S.—Does that settle it?

B.J.—It does as far as I am concerned. But—

U.S.—Have you still a “but?”

B.J.—Yes; but this “but” is all right, and in its place.

U.S.—What is it?

B.J.—How on earth do these Populists come to the figure 12,229 as their vote in '92? That is 14,736 votes less than their actual poll. Did they imagine those figures?

U.S.—No, they didn't. If the Populist who got up these "claims" had imagined them it would not be quite so bad. But a lie that has the semblance of truth is swindle of the worst sort.

B.J.—Did this fellow do that?

U.S.—I'll show you. The 12,220 votes WERE polled by the Populists in Oregon in 1892—

B.J.—Oh—

U.S.—Keep your shirt on. But they were polled for Walker, the Populist candidate for Judge of the Supreme Court, in June, 1892—six months before the Presidential elections—

B.J. (wholly out of patience)—That is the darndest swindle—

U.S.—You catch on, do you?

B.J.—Of course I do; that theirs is a vile attempt at hoodwinking—

U.S.—Thus you see that, after having blown their heads off in November, '92, that their vote had increased since the previous June over 100 per cent., now these would-be manufacturers of public opinion suddenly ignore their November vote and look back for consolation to their June poll.

B.J.—But how far can that sort of thing go?

U.S.—That's it! It can't go far. The swindle bubble must burst. Just wait till November.

B.J.—I don't need to wait until then. I see it all as in a map now. Such deception must lead to a speedy crash. I can hear the crash now.

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

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