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DIALOGUE

UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {37-38}

By DANIEL DE LEON

BROTHER JONATHAN—I had an idea that the free traders and tariff reformers generally claimed for their plan that it would smash all Trusts.

UNCLE SAM—Oh, yes; they have claimed that, and I should not wonder if some of them even claimed that free trade would abolish the whooping cough.

B.J.—But already they seem to have forgotten all about that.

U.S.—Have they?

B.J.—Yes, here is one of them who says that “the Pottery Trust will doubtlessly lower the wages of its employes, so as to down a competing concern, and doubtlessly when the Trust has ruined its insubordinate rival and put up prices again, the ‘deadly’ Wilson bill will prevent wages from going up too.” I call this the biggest piece of shamelessness yet out.

U.S.—But why?

B.J.—Don’t you see he admits that the Pottery Trust will go live on unsmashed after the Wilson bill has been enacted in to law.

U.S.—I do.

B.J.—And don’t you see that that is in contradiction with their promise to smash the Trust through tariff reform?

U.S.—I do.

B.J.—And don’t you call that shamelessness?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

U.S.—What? Their saying that the Trust will live on unsmashed, or their not saying still that they are going to smash it?

B.J.—Either or both; I don't care which.

U.S.—No, I can't agree with you.

B.J.—Well, that takes the cake!

U.S.—The Trust, good boy, and you might as well keep cool about it and know the fact, can not be smashed. In its early stages it melts away and reforms, seems to break down again and re-reforms, always growing stronger until it has reached the point when it breaks down no more. A good many, if not most of our Trusts, have reached that point to-day.

B.J.—Why, that is incredible!

U.S.—And yet 'tis true; and 'tis natural it should be so. The small capital a man could start a factory with 30 years ago would not begin to do the job now. The Trust is concentrated capital that has risen on the ruins of a whole lot of smaller concerns. What is there to smash it?

B.J.—Free trade, I thought.

U.S.—Let us see. What business drives another concern out of the market?

B.J.—A competitor who can offer the public greater advantages.

U.S.—One who sells cheaper.

B.J.—Well, yes!

U.S.—If a concern can not afford to sell as cheap as another, which of the two would go down?

B.J.—The one that can't sell as cheap.

U.S.—Stick a pin there. Now another question: Which of two concerns can sell cheaper, one with large or one with small capital?

B.J.—Of course the one with large capital.

U.S.—Now we are ready to return to the main question. To smash a concern, Trust or otherwise, do you not need some other concern to sell cheaper?

B.J.—Of course.

U.S.—In other words, you would need a concern with larger capital than the one to be smashed.

B.J.—Exactly.

U.S.—If, then, one Trust is to be smashed, it must be done by another Trust, only a bigger one.

B.J.—Guess so.

U.S.—All “Trust Smashing” then amounts to this: The smashing of the smaller by bigger Trusts—i.e., the solidifying of the Trust. Can you escape this reasoning?

B.J.—No, I don’t see how.

U.S.—Wherein then lies the shamelessness of the free traders in admitting that the Trust is bound to flourish unsmashed?

B.J.—I see your point; but I now amend my charge. It is not shameless to admit such a fact; but is it not shameless to have deceived us with the false hope that they would knock all Trusts into a cocked hat?

U.S.—I shall not deny the soundness of that charge, but you place yourself in a bad light when you admit he cheated you. Who but boobies are taken in by what any capitalist party promises?

B.J.—I was a booby. An open confession is good for the soul.

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BROTHER JONATHAN—What became {happened?} last Tuesday at the mass meeting of Jim Daly, the great Daly?

UNCLE SAM—He got into a hole, and wisely pulled the hole {in} after him.

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