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EDITORIAL

## A HOBBY WISELY TIMID.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**M**R. Albert Britt maintains in his article on “Education for Workingmen” in the current issue of *Public Opinion*, the reputation he has gained as a hobbyist who tries to keep dark the particular hobby he really rides. The ostensible subject of Mr. Britt’s lucubrations is “Education.” In the course of the article in question the gentleman develops the idea that the bane of the nation is too much and too general education. He is of the opinion that the evil of what he considers an evil comes out strongest with regard to workingmen. According to him the working class should be educated as a working class; they should be cut off from studies that savor of college curriculum and should be equipped with the manual training that would enable them to earn a living. It is of only secondary importance to expose the falsity of Mr. Britt’s economics. Suffice it here to say upon that head that improved machinery eliminates skill; that the skill acquired to-day becomes useless to-morrow; and that the same process disables from earning a living, not the manually trained workingman only, but also members of the upper class, whom improved machinery and concentration throw out of business into the ranks of proletariat. This circumstance imperatively leads to the conclusion that, if “Education” is the bane of society, it is not the workingman only who should be excluded from “Education,” but also the bulk of the non-workingman’s class. No doubt Mr. Britt’s concealed hobby or plan will admit this. Accordingly, although Mr. Britt keeps his hobby dark, it also is knocked out.

“Education” alone will not save society. On the contrary. The crimes that an educated and sober man can perpetrate, are crimes that the intellect of the uneducated cannot scheme. “Education” is only a potentiality for good—it gives a chance to a higher standard of life. The chance, however, depends upon the SECURITY OF PHYSICAL EXISTENCE. Where physical existence is insecure, “Education” breeds higher criminals. “Education” can realize its potentiality for good only when it goes accompanied with the security of physical existence. Capitalism renders the physical existence of the masses precarious, it also renders

the capitalist's position insecure. Under such circumstances the good that is latent in "Education" is lost to a great degree. Hence the increase of crime hand in hand with "Education."

Exactly so with "Religion." The morality that "Religion" inculcates is only a potentiality for good—it gives a chance, or lift towards a purer life. The chance, however, depends, just as with "Education," upon the SECURITY OF PHYSICAL EXISTENCE. Where physical existence is insecure, "Religion" breeds criminals of its own. The religious criminal is no unknown quantity. The world has gone through that experience. The ages when it was under theocratic rule are justly known to history as the DARK AGES. No wonder. Life was insecure. Wealth was not sufficient. Want prevailed. "Religion" became a mask, just as "Education" to-day is a weapon, for mischief.

The "Education" Utopian found out his error. The good that he expected failed to materialize; but he was intelligent and honest enough to realize the fact. Being, however, too much of a Utopian to look below the surface, he was unable to utilize his failure as a stepping-stone to reach the Truth. He gave up the fight. This was an act of weakness on his part; nevertheless, it was an act of partial intelligence, the intelligence that will recognize a fact, and of complete honesty, the honesty that will recognize failure and its train of evils. The Britts, however, stand below the one-time "Education" hobbyists. Despite the mountain high cumulation of evidence and experience, they still ride the hobby of "Religion," and would re-saddle the human race with the incubus of theocratic rule.

All that Mr. Britt says concerning the incapacity of "Education" alone to insure a moral life is stale truth—as stale a truth, and for identical reasons, that Theocratic rules as a panacea is the veriest quackery. The facts, that shatter the one-time hobby of the "Educationalists," grind to dust the hobby of the Britts. No wonder the Britts do not come out into the open with their wind-cracked and one-legged doctrinairism.

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