

EDITORIAL

A GORED BULL BELLOWING

By DANIEL DE LEON

SENATOR Joseph B. Foraker of Ohio has long and deservedly enjoyed the reputation of being the sheet-anchor of conservatism in the Senate. Other Senators might yield at times, and temporarily bend under some gale of radicalism. Foraker never. Against him such gales—whether they proceeded from the quarter of the White House, or whether they blew from the opposite quarter of the “turbulent masses”—dashed themselves impotent. Foraker ever remained erect, uncompromising—capitalism meant capitalism: it was the best of all possible social orders: its possible evils were such in seeming only, or, if actual, were unavoidable: “capitalism makes men by trying them,” was ever Foraker’s motto. Of course, Foraker never had any sympathy with the claim that capitalism, by rendering the living of the workingmen precarious, makes cowards of them, and thereby turns them into serfs of the class upon whom they are made dependent. All such principles Foraker rejected—“capitalism makes men by trying them,” Foraker would say, striking his chest, as a specimen proof of his motto. Pitiless events have hastened to illumine the specimen, and to prove by it the falseness of the motto.

The Steubenville, O., Decoration speech pronounced by Foraker is but one prolonged series of bellowings from the gored bull Foraker, flatly contradicting the Senator’s favorite motto against Socialism. For several months Foraker has been in a hand-to-hand conflict with the Federal Administration for supremacy in Ohio. Foraker, once the boss, found one by one his lieutenants drop away from him until he now stands, or lies flat, alone, overthrown by the Administration. What influences caused the defection from his ranks?—Argument?—Force of principle?—Not at all! The influences were subtle. They are summed up in the words: “The fear of want.” They may be summed up in a still shorter term: “Patronage.” Listen to the climax of Foraker’s Steubenville bellowings:

“Knowledge of the fact that government holds their living MAKES COWARDS OF PUBLIC MEN. Unless they are in favor with the appointing power they fear they may be out of favor with their constituents.”

The hour of danger has wrung from the callous breast of Foraker a chunk of Socialist truth that he had hitherto denied. Independence, bravery, honor, character—these are all virtues that depend upon material safety. The man on a banana peel wobbles and may fall. Men facing want display neither bravery, honor, independence, nor character. Capitalism does not make men by trying them: it destroys manhood by tempting instead of promoting it.

The aim of the intelligent man must be to promote the establishment of that social system under which man’s material existence is safe. Capitalism renders such existence precarious. It is capitalism that gored Foraker. The gored bull got a dose of his own medicine.

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Uploaded October 2009

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