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EDITORIAL

GOMPERS ON THE WAY TO A MONKERY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT was Marx, we think, who some where said that the utterances of the radical bourgeois alternate between lampoons and whines. The picture snaps off Gompers's "annual message" to perfection. Incidentally, it snaps off Gompers's mental make-up as well.

Gompers's message is half lampoon, half whine. At this season the whine is the more instructive of the two.

Gompers is prayerful. His picture does not accompany the "message." It was superfluous. Such is the power of the written word that it reproduces the picture of the writer. It takes no effort of the imagination to see Gompers on his knees, with hands joined and eyes turned heavenward, absorbed in prayer. He prays that the people may "bear one another's burden."

The Labor Movement is no hallelujah proposition. It is a proposition of struggle, arduous and strenuous. No revolutionary movement, not even so-called religious ones, ever was a Sunday school picnic. They imply a wrestling, whether with Angels or Devils, usually with both, yet still a wrestling—mental and physical. Thought and Force, Force and Thought are inseparable from them and from each other. The Labor Movement is no exception. It is the class struggle in its last concentrated form—the struggle for existence between a class, whose class feature is to live without toil, and a class whose present class feature is to toil without living.

The struggle between two such classes is not to be allayed with prayers. Of all prayers the one least responsive to the exigency is Gompers's prayer—"bear one another's burden." Artemus Ward tells humorously the catastrophe that overtook the Oberlin professor's theory of moral suasion applied to a "ferocious kangaroo" in Artemus's alleged collection of wild animals. The brute "chawed up the gently patting hand" of the professor. He who would expect the wild beast of the capitalist

class to listen to the prayerful suasion of “bearing with the burdens of the working class” will not be in it with the Oberlin professor of Artemus’s story. And as to the working class—the class that has been doing all “bearing of all the others’ burden”—to suggest to that class that it do the very thing that it is groaning under, is to add insult to injury.

What is happening to Gompers has happened to others before him. In the Middle Ages the thing was common. He, to whom the struggle was more than he could stand, withdrew to the seclusion of the living grave called a monastery.

Gompers, praying “bear one another’s” burden,” is steering with a full head of steam towards a monkery.

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