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EDITORIAL

ANOTHER DEATH BED CONFESSION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A MICHIGANDER, John H. Baker—ex-car manufacturer, ex-stockholder in banks, and ex-director of Trust Companies—recently died in Michigan City leaving a large fortune, more than \$10,000,000, and a single child.

The biographies of the deceased make him out, what he probably was, a self-made man, who sprang up from poverty and small beginnings landing finally in Asiatic luxury. The biographic sketches make no statements concerning the economic or political theories entertained by the late lamented; leastwise do they quote any sentiments given vent to by him in relation to social questions. Nor are these necessary. Sufficient is said about the dead multimillionaire to supply the deficiency. No doubt he has many a time and oft held the language of his tribe, and, pointing out himself, illustrated the principle that “nothing makes the man like hardships in youth; nothing weakens the body and the mind of the youth like affluence.”

The will that John H. Baker made should test the principle:—The \$10,000,000, left over after paying several small bequests, were left—to whom? To the children of the testator’s worst enemy? Surely to them the treasury should go so as to insure the weakness of their mind and body: so as to make sure they will not enjoy the body-and-mind-promoting blessings of hardship. Well, the treasury was not disposed of in any such manner. Then, perhaps, Mr. Baker, being too good a Christian to inflict ills upon anyone, ordered his wealth to be burnt up and the ashes scattered to the four winds? No; wrong again. How, then, was the colossal fortune of \$10,000,000 disposed of in the will? It was left to the testator’s dearest being, to his own child, and, not satisfied with leaving his millions to his own child, he left the amount so tied up that **THE CHILD CAN NOT TOUCH THE PRINCIPLE DURING LIFE**. The huge income the child can use: the colossal capital

that yields the affluence-insuring income is to be left unimpaired, ever ready to yield as much, at least, every year.

Hardships do not improve the man or woman. None know that better than the opulent. Their declamation in favor of hardships is but one of the many falsehoods that their opposition to Socialism forces them into, and which their wills, death-bed confessions, deny.

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