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EDITORIAL

SORE-HARASSED MISS FREE TRADE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

MISS Free Trade—a coy damsel frequently introduced to readers of *The People*—had her loving heart cruelly lacerated on the 27th of November. The scene was the Ways and Means Committee, the place Washington. There and then, appearing as the representative of the New York Reform Club, the old girl lectured the Committee on the iniquities of “indirect taxation,” that “peculiarly insidious way of dumping the burden of taxes on the ultimate consumer.” No sooner was this pearl of disinterestedness uttered than Committeeman Boutell rudely stated that “it can not be shown that the ultimate consumer would be benefited by free trade.”

—A cruel thrust; a poisoned thrust. It was an insinuation against the sincerity of Miss Free Trade, who claims her theory is exclusively for the benefit, not of the wholesale consumer, as purchaser, who retails to the ultimate consumer, but in the interest of the latter only. It was a vicious thrust, meant to indicate that Mamselle means to monopolize the benefit for her pets only, and leave the ultimate consumer just where he is now.

Barely recovered from this shock, Miss Free Trade had to undergo another. Committeeman Hill intimated that the representative of free trade dealt in “theories applicable a hundred years hence.” How ungallant! Mademoiselle Free Trade is the personification of practical science. Science in its practical application is one of her fortes, so much her forte that she has sneers only for Socialism, which she withers with her scorn on the ground of “unscientific”; and on the further ground that, even if Socialism were scientific, it deals with theories “applicable” only {“}a hundred years hence.” The most ungallant thing imaginable is to wound the sensibilities of a kind lady with an arrow filched from her own quiver.

Nor yet was this all. Mamsel Free Trade simply dotes on Labor. 'Tis for “Labor

dear” that she really does all the work she does, night and day, rain and sunshine, and overtime. The deary had hardly recovered from the vicious dig administered to her by the heartless Boutell, and the wound was still bleeding from the ungallant conduct of Hill, when a third and still more painful gash was in store for her breast. John Williams, a workingman, “representing the American Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers,” took the stand with the request that the duty on tin be raised in the interest of Labor!

And the old girl collapsed. She uttered a gurgling sound. Those who picked up the unconscious body are not certain whether the sound quoted Caesar, as he fell stabbed by Brutus; or whether the sound quoted Bill Nye, when he found himself out-humbugged by the Heathen Chineese Ah Sin.

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

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