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EDITORIAL

FOOT-IN-THE-MOUTH DEPEW.

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IT is not enough to have means enough to keep in hire a professional speech-writer; the capitalist who wishes to typify his class in all respects must also have just enough conceit to turn his pate. When the two qualifications meet, you have an all-round type of the bourgeois—a being rich without refinement, bookish without knowledge, speechful without sense; in short, as big a bundle of contradictions as his own social system, in the puddle of which he is a big toad. To be foot-in-the-mouth is characteristic of the capitalist. Chauncey M. Depew may be considered to have reached the acme of perfection in this respect.

It is not two months ago that Depew made a speech (that is to say, read a speech written for him to order), in which he drew the difference between the American and the Englishman. In the description, the American was praised sky-high: he was alert, self-reliant, wide-awake, impossible of being gulled; the Englishman, on the contrary, was described as a buffoon: he was dull, easily duped. Within two months after that performance, this identical Depew again makes a speech (that is to say, again reads a speech written for him to order). This time it was in the Montauk Club. His subject was the existing dangers to the rich and how to throw protection around their accumulations. And what was his advice? It was that the rich ruling class of America should imitate the rich ruling class of England. And in what? In deceiving the masses by an appearance of equality. In other words, the Depew reasoning runs like this: "Social unrest is always latent; the poor will ever be restless and resentful towards the rich; in order to placate the poor, they must be coddled; the British ruling class coddles the British poor;—therefore let the American ruling class betake itself to coddling the American poor." But it so happens that, to all successful coddlers there must be a coddled; none is coddled who is not coddlable; and, seeing that according to this identical Depew, one of the fundamental differences between the American citizen and the British subject is that the latter is easy and the former impossible of being gulled, there is but one

conclusion to draw from all this, to wit, that Depew is caught in his own bourgeois vanity; not having himself thought out, he is caught in the meshes of the speeches that he parrot-like reels off; in short, he presents the foot-in-the-mouth picture that depicts the bourgeois the world over. In this Montauk Club performance, however, the exhibition is completer than even a comparison of the two speeches renders it.

There may be or may not be greater credulity in the Englishman than in the American. Nevertheless, it is quite certain that the Englishman, as little as the American, has a stomach of India rubber, or a back made of rhinoceros hide, or feet furnished with hoofs. The stomachs of both need food and can not be deceived; the backs of both need clothing and can not be humbugged; the feet of both need shoes and can not be imposed upon. The art of coddling or gulling may be successfully practised for a while; but the deception can not last. The one or the other may submit with patience for a longer time than the other or the one; but a point is reached finally, or eventually, if not sooner, when patience is at an end, and no amount of claptrap will stead.

Indeed, claptrap never steads. So long as wrong is submitted to, it is submitted to, not because of the sugar-coating of claptrap, but because of the expectation that the wrong is not permanent. That expectation being destroyed, not all the claptrap of the combined capitalists of all the nations can raise banks high enough to stem the inundation.

That day is approaching. The Depews feel it. Like the headless beings that they are, they know no better than to whistle themselves in countenance, with their feet in their mouths.

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