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EDITORIAL

POETIC STRUMPETRY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE *Nebraska Independent* is the best of the unconscious, but effective, humorists. Its serious assertions that there is such a thing as a Populist party, and that there are persons who give even a mild little cuss about “the crime of ’73,” may be looked upon as its best work.

Some persons, and they are justified in their opinion, think that a crime was committed during that momentous period, because the act of Congress released a lot of pin-wheel oratory of uncertain sanity, but of no uncertain noise. But it is not in the usual way that *The Independent* is funny this time. It has corralled a poet, a rhymster who can do triolets, sonnets, and blankety-blank verse, either by the yard or by the pound. *The Independent* calls attention to the verse thus:

“It was the poets like Lowell and Whittier who made the renaissance of liberty possible that ended chattel slavery. They sang their songs of freedom and that fired the people’s hearts. The poets of to-day may have as great a part in the abolition of industrial slavery that in some of its forms is far worse than African slavery ever was. The poets of populism will make their mark in history as did the poets of freedom in the days that are passed.”

The Independent then proceeds to give an example. It picks out a “poet” who learned that some plutocrat had blown the light out of the torch in the hand of Liberty, and who thereupon trills thus:

“Put out the torch! Why should it blaze,
When Liberty herself has fled?
Why should the glory of its rays
O’er subject lands be shed.
To light the deaths of those who fall,
While on her sacred name they call?”

Instead of the “fleecing plutocrat,” the Populist wishes the “honest,” “hard-working” farmer, such as was guilty of kidnapping men last year, and forcing them to work for a dollar a week in the fields.

The middle class Populist has a lot of indignation to fire at the big fellow, but he keeps back the fact that the worst thief of all is the very little fellow for whom his pity flows forth so abundantly.

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