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EDITORIAL

CERTAINLY, THEY WORK.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THIS being the season of the year when the Socialist Labor Party speaker proclaiming from the platform the fact that the capitalists do not work is peculiarly liable to be interrupted by the shouted assertion that “they do work,” it may be well to marshal a few recent cases, after which the thinking man may decide for himself.

A scientist wishing to study the aurora borealis does not go to the tropics, where there is no aurora. Neither does he go to temperate climes where the aurora is very slight. He goes to the poles, where the special phenomenon he is in search of is to be found in its most highly developed form. Similarly with him who would study the phenomenon capitalist. He does not take a middle-classer, or a capitalist who has not yet blossomed forth into the full glory of his estate. He takes the fully developed article.

Among the many “fully developed articles” that have recently put themselves on exhibition, just three will do. They are Harry Payne Whitney, William K. Vanderbilt, and F. Jay Gould.

Harry Payne Whitney won the Select Stakes for three-year-olds at Newmarket, England, with his horse Whiskbroom.

William K. Vanderbilt wound up a long season’s career on French tracks by capturing the Prix de la Garenone, coming second in the Prix de Fourres, third in the Criterium des Maisons Lafitte, establishing himself as the leading winner of flat races, and arriving fourth among the breeders of stock.

Hardly behind his distinguished railroad compeer, runs the third “fully developed article,” Frank Jay Gould. This worthy toiler at the wheels of industry within two weeks of each other came second in the Maisons Lafitte and carried off first ribbon in the Prix de Fourres, thereby securing rank as thirty-third on the list

of French winners for the year.

No one will deny that the excitement and nervous strain consequent on the breeding, rearing, training and racing of prize stock may be very wearing upon the constitution of its owner; especially if all these functions be performed by groomed attendants specially hired for that purpose. But what any man in his senses will deny is that such nervous strain and excitement in any way add to the economic wealth of the world. They add not a matchstick to the product of the race, they lighten not by a straw's weight the burden of toil under which the workers labor. They are, indeed indulged in and luxurized over purely by virtue of the fact that the enjoyer of them lives secure from work, and upon the towering opulence created by those who do nothing else but work.

Certainly, the capitalists work—if by “work” you mean “play.”

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