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DIALOGUE

## UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN. {211}

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**B**ROTHER JONATHAN—I think that D.C. Coates is a great statesman; I admire the depth of his judgment and the broadness of his wisdom.

UNCLE SAM—Who on earth is this paragon?

B.J.—He is the editor of the Pueblo, Colo., *Courier*.

U.S.—I know that paper, and have never yet detected in it any of the great qualities you ascribe to its editor.

B.J.—The paper itself is not much—

U.S.—It is nothing; as stale as spilt beer and as dull and stupid as any other “pure and simple” labor paper.

B.J.—That may be. But at the “Political Labor Convention,” held in Denver last 4th, there D.C. Coates showed his statesmanship.

U.S.—In what way, pray? I know something of that convention. It was all right. But this Coates of yours, as far as I can tell, showed himself a jackass.

B.J. (angrily)—I don’t believe in calling people with whom I don’t agree jackasses, and—

U.S.—I don’t call him an ass because he don’t agree with me; I call him an ass because he is one. (A jackass near by brays.) By the way, whence proceeds the sonorous sound?

B.J.—From a jackass; can’t you tell?

U.S.—O, I can. But why don’t you say it proceeds from the throat of a nightingale?



UNCLE SAM & BROTHER JONATHAN

B.J.—Simply because it don't; it comes from a jackass.

U.S.—For the same reason I don't call your Coates a statesman but a jackass. Now, if you know of any special act of his that entitles him to your title let's hear it.

B.J.—Well, at that convention he insisted that the platform should consist of only one plank—

U.S.—Which?

B.J.—The initiative and referendum—

U.S.—On what ground?

B.J.—Because the Socialist platform was too much to swallow at once, whereas the initiative and referendum was so plain and simple that all could be united on it—

U.S.—And what more?

B.J.—And that, as children are educated in the elementary schools before going to Harvard or Yale, so should the workers be educated in the elements of the initiative and referendum before trying to teach them Socialism.

U.S.—And what did he do then?

B.J.—He bolted when he was beaten.

U.S.—By how many votes was he beaten?

B.J.—By 41 against 17.

U.S.—And how many bolted with him?

B.J.—Five others, besides himself.

U.S.—Now, I repeat, your man is a jackass, and, I add, he is a crook besides.

B.J. tries to fall in.

U.S.—Tut, tut. A child is taught in elementary schools first, is that it?

B.J.—Certainly.

U.S.—Would you consider it the proper elementary teaching to teach a child that 2 plus 2 make 5?

B.J.—Not that.

U.S.—And that is exactly what your “statesman” Coates is trying to teach the workers as elementary. He is trying to teach them that in the form of government and of voting lies the salvation of the workers. He is trying to teach them the nonsense that, even if they do not understand political economy and social science, they will be able to

initiate right laws and pass wisely on the laws referred to them. Now, such a notion can only find lodgement in the head of an ass. If the workers don't know enough to vote down silver bug and gold bug lawmakers, how will the referendum and initiative enable them to vote intelligently on proposed laws? Your man's notion is asinine. You can teach only by teaching right. He would teach the right thing by first teaching the wrong. His ears measure yards in length.

B.J. tries again to put in a word.

U.S.—But I also said that he was a crook, and I'll proceed to prove it. The man who admits, as his words imply, that Socialism is right, but is yet too hard to understand, should be glad when he finds a large majority in a convention do understand it. His conduct in bolting nails him a liar. It showed that he does not wish the workers to come out for Socialism, and that he was mad they did.

B.J. tries again to speak.

U.S.—I'm not yet ready. Your man is as crooked as a ram's horn. Besides the reason I just gave you, there is another to prove his crookedness. If one-half the convention had been with him there might have been a color to his plea for union. But when such an overwhelming majority was for Socialism, and he, the man who talks "union of forces" pulls out with a silly five, he furthermore shows that he is working in the interest, aye, in the pay of some capitalist to keep the workers split up. And this I firmly believe. It now occurs to me that he was paid last fall to stump for the silver mine barons who fleece and shoot down the workers. Now what have you got to say?

B.J.—Nothing. I give in. I'm beaten. That Coates is evidently an ulcer on the face of the earth.

U.S.—And a jackass besides?

B.J.—Yes; a jackass besides.

U.S.—And likewise are all these people who act like him.

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

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