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EDITORIAL

## INGERSOLL REDIVIVUS.

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**T**HE Memphis, Tenn., *Commercial-Appeal* of the 15th instant has a one-column article on the “Mistakes of Reformers.” By “reformers” the paper does not mean the tinkers with social ills. If it did, it would be condemning itself. It means by “reformers” the revolutionist Socialist. The “mistakes” it charges these {with} are numerous. Here are a few samples:

It is a mistake, says the *Commercial-Appeal*, to expect equality among men.—The fact is that Socialism is the last to expect “equality among men.” What the Socialist expects is “equality of opportunity among men.” To-day there is no such equality. The race for happiness is not free and without favor. The working class is weighted down by being stripped of capital, while the capitalist class has wings to its feet by the possession of capital. As a result of this inequality of opportunity, there is a mass of human suffering that is wholly remediable.

It is a mistake, says the *Commercial-Appeal*, to see a panacea in Socialism.—The fact is that Socialism is the last to see a panacea in itself. It leaves to the *Commercial-Appeal* reformers the occupation of peddling nostrums that will simultaneously cure social corns, social lumbago and social consumption—all of which are disconnected ailments. It is the “reformer” who deals in salves to be rubbed on the nose as medicaments that will cure the corn whose shooting pangs proceed from the toe, etc., etc. Socialism is a scalpel that touches directly the social ulcer: private ownership of the natural and social opportunities without which involuntary poverty is inevitable.

It is a mistake, says the *Commercial-Appeal*, to assume that “all that is wrong.”—The fact is Socialism does not consider that, for instance, the *Commercial-Appeal* is ALL that there is. If it condemns *Commercial-Appeals*, it condemns a very small though very pestiferous part of “all that is.” And so in other respects.

Socialism condemns the private ownership of the machinery of production, but the private system under which such machinery is held is not “all that is” about the machine. Socialism highly praises the machine. Socialism condemns the potato-bug that fastens on the potato. But the bug is not ALL. The potato is more. Socialism approves of the potato. In condemning the existence of an economic class such as the capitalist class, Socialism condemns, not “all that is,” but only the nuisance of the potato-bug that fastens like a parasite on the potato social.

Ingersoll, the professional atheist, delivered an address on the “Mistakes of Moses,” wherein he proved to the thinking part of the population that he could make more mistakes in one hour and thirty minutes than Moses did in a life-time. Ingersoll is dead, but the *Commercial-Appeal* is his re-incarnation. It can commit more mistakes in one column than all the Socialists rolled in one could commit in their whole lives.

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

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