EDITORIAL

THAT BROTHERHOOD, OR MUTUALITY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

L EAVING aside the not uninteresting exposure of the fraudulent practices indulged in by the civic and political pillars of capitalist society, made by the Sugar Trust 'Scandal, the Scandal is of prime interest through the fresh stray light it throws upon the myth concerning the Brotherhood of Capital and Labor, or the "mutuality" of the two, according to the latest phrase coined by the labor lieutenant of the capitalist class, John Mitchell.

During our early slavery days, the Negro's condition was paradisaical compared with what his condition became later. What caused the difference? The invention of the cotton gin. Before the invention the Negro slave was a source of comfort, or luxury, often expensive luxury. After the invention he became a source of wealth, fabulous wealth. So soon as this change in the essence of our chattel slaves took place he was worked with a vengeance. As a direct producer of cotton the slave was forthwith whipped to merciless exploitation, and even a new industry arose, thereupon, the industry of breeding slaves, an infamous industry to which our "first families of Virginia" bent their efforts with a vim most profitable. The long and short of that dark page of American history, but luminous as a page in economics, was that the wretchedness of the Negro slave increased in direct ratio with his productivity, and *by reason of his productivity*. No mutuality, no brotherhood there.

It happened exactly so on the sugar plantations of Cuba. The discovery of the wealth the Cuban soil contained in sugar was the signal for the wretchedness of the Cuban Negro. From that moment on his life became that of a soul in hell. No mutuality there, no brotherhood.

But, it will be said, that was a consequence of slavery; "free labor" fares differently.

It has been shown more than once in connection with the mines (coal and

metalliferous), the iron industry, the textile industries, the leather industries, etc., etc., that the process is identical. In the measure that mines, wool and cotton, leather, etc., etc., rose in value as sources of wealth the condition of the labor employed sank deeper and deeper. The Sugar Scandal furnishes fresh illustration of that real Scandal—the intensified exploitation of the worker in the measure that the industry grows lucrative.

What the profits of the sugar industry have become, how that industry has waxed in lucrativeness may be read from the stock quotations. Originally yielding a "modest return," the dividends now run into the 100 per cents. The Sugar Scandal, furthermore, reveals how the profits were increased by theft, and how that item alone runs up into $30,000,000. Surely an industry, that yielded increasingly such huge profits, right and left, to the capitalist, must illustrate the mutuality and brotherhood between capitalist and employer, if any such brotherhood and mutuality exist. What are the facts? The wages in the sugar refineries have declined, until now, according to the Census figures, the wages average only $1.50 a day, while simultaneous with the decline, the treatment of the men has become downright inhuman—just as with the chattel slave on the cotton and sugar plantations.

Accordingly, while the profitableness of sugar rose, the profitableness of labor dropped, and it dropped just because of the industry's rising in profitableness.

In the revelations of the Sugar Scandal it is declared that the carriers were blackmailed into silence because the carriers (capitalists though they are) "feared they would be driven out of business," if they kicked. If capitalists stand in such fear, to what abject state of helplessness must not the workers have sunk simultaneously with the soaring opulence of the brother with whom their interests are mutual!