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EDITORIAL

## GOING BACK ON HIS LIEUTENANTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**XPRESSING himself on the late Expressmen's strike, Mr. Marcus M. Marks, the Clothing Prince of the Civic Federation's "Conciliatory Committee" is reported to have said:

"As a result of this strike, I will urge the passage of a law that will compel the presentation of a petition by the Unions before a strike is called. If such a law was on the statute books nine out of ten strikes would never occur."

The language is somewhat vague. To whom is the petition to be presented.

To the Governor of the State? To the Legislature? Perchance to the Employer himself? If to any of these, then Mr. Marks's estimate of one strike out of ten occurring is wondrously conservative. One should think that not a single strike out of ten will occur.—The Governor, the Legislature, or the Employer may be relied upon to pronounce the petition "utterly unpatriotic, reversive of morals, and destructive of the family sanctity," and to veto the thing, ten times out of ten.

Is, on the other had, the petition to be presented to the rank and file of the Union? If so, then Mr. Marks's estimate of nine strikes out of ten not occurring is decidedly wild.—Left to themselves, unmuddled by promises of proscenium seats in Heaven as the reward for torture on earth, unintimidated by the Labor-Lieutenants whom the capitalists keep in pay in the Unions, the rank and file are certain to be rule by their class-instinct; they will prefer the outlook of several weeks starvation—AND REST to their present state of slow starvation—AND TOIL, and they will sustain the petition with acclamation.

The vagueness of Mr. Marks's language is no accident. We doubt it is intentional. It is the reflex of the gentleman's state of mind—at-seaness.

No workingman organizes for the fun of the thing—leastwise does he pay dues

“for his health.” He joins the Union to improve his condition. He finds himself, in the shop, up against a certain force. He, naturally, is put in the frame of mind to resist force with force. According to his lights, according to the maturity of the times, the force that he answers force with shapes itself. If his lights are clear, and the times mature, the force that he will apply will be a force that squares with his historic mission—the overthrow of the Capitalist and the establishment of the Industrial or Socialist Republic: having voted himself free, he will lockout the capitalist class, retain possession of the plants of industry, and assume the reins of Government by assuming the reins of production. In short, he will do what the Revolutionary Fathers did. They did not go on strike, leaving the Colonies in the hands of King George’s Superintendents: after they had voted the country free, they took hold of the Colonies, locked-out Crown and Parliament, and drove the Superintendents of these back to their ships, and, thence, away from these shores. If, on the contrary, the workingman’s lights are still dim, and the times immature, the force that he will apply will be dim and immature to match—he will go out on strike, leaving the Colonies, so to speak, in the hands of Crown and Parliament, so to speak; and, as the inevitable consequence of an immature act, he will be in the end defeated, not, however, it is a fact, without causing much trouble, anxiety, and loss to the modern Crown and Parliament, the Capitalist Class.

Caught in this cleft stick is Mr. Marks’s class. In the language of Marx—Karl, not Marcus—the Marcus M. Markses have everything to fear from the Working Class in its enlightenment, and all manner of troubles to dread from the same Class in its ignorance—in the former case, the deep blue sea of being Locked out, in the latter case the positive Devil of the Strike. But the Marcus Markses do not realize their dilemma. That Providence which, it is said, tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb, ever strikes the Usurper with blindness of one eye. The Marcus M. Markses can see only the Devil of the Strike that prods them in front. Against him all their efforts are centered. One of the schemes to squelch the Devil of the Strike was the keeping of the Labor-Lieutenant in good pay. Mr. Marcus M. Marks’s language, however vague otherwise, discloses quite clearly that the Capitalist Class is losing faith in the effectiveness of the Labor-Lieutenants, and that it is now beating about for some other method to suppress strikes.

Suppress strikes?!—That’s kicking against pricks, with the only ultimate beneficent consequence of ripening the proletariat from the Strike stage of immaturity to the Lockout stage of full maturity.

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