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EDITORIAL

## MITCHELL'S RABBIT'S WHEEL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HINGS ripen fast in America. Not quite two years ago John Mitchell strutted like a peacock at that year's national convention of the United Mine Workers' Union. In his body there stuck the stolen feathers of a glory that he was claimed to have earned as "the leading champion of Labor," and upon



John Mitchell  
President, UMWA  
1870-1919

which alleged glory his organization had grown immensely. And now? At this year's national convention of his body the jackdaw stands stripped of the stolen peacock feathers, and its tune has changed. Mitchell now denounces the Federal Judges that two years ago he had praised and upon whose support his "glory" was founded; and, as evidences of the fact that his "glory" of two years ago was founded on a snare and delusion to his organization, we find things to have changed to the point that he admits that "the anthracite section of his organization is on the verge of disruption," and that "local unions have become disloyal." The fraud of the "glory" of two years ago quickly ripened into general recognition of the actual facts—Mitchell had led his Union to defeat: the defeat was glossed over for a while: the truth soon forced itself upon the membership. Well for the membership!

The anthracite strike of 1902, had it been led by a MAN instead of by a labor-lieutenant of the capitalist class, could have placed the Working Class of America a long step forward towards their emancipation. The revolutionary pulse beat high in the ranks of Labor, and, indignant at the overbearing attitude of the anthracite capitalists, public opinion sided with the strikers. Mitchell annulled the advantages of the occasion: he caused one wing of his organization (the bituminous men), to

remain at work and thus scab it on the other wing: while the strikers were undergoing privations and the ranks of Labor at large were emptying their pockets to help the men on the firing line, Mitchell's manoeuvre of keeping the bituminous miners at work poured millions into the pockets of the bituminous mine-owners: and finally he submitted to an "arbitration" where the "arbiters" were representatives and upholders of the capitalist class. Once more the electric spark of Labor's class conscious aspirations was led into the ground—and the capitalist breathed freely.

"A lie is like a check drawn on Nature's bank to be returned with the endorsement, 'No effects.'" The lie of the "miners' victory" has proved such a check. It could not be otherwise. The result is now perceived. The deceived have fallen away. At this critical moment does John Mitchell give evidence that he has learned (if he erred honestly) or that he turned a new leaf? Not in the slightest. True to his office as a labor-lieutenant of the capitalist class, he forthwith begins to re-fix the wheel in which he expects to cage the rabbit Labor, so that it may entertain itself and others with "fast running and not an inch of progress." Mitchell is getting the wires ready for that rabbit's wheel—a lobby of miners to get legislation from Congress; another "Arbitration Board."

A happy omen is the fact that Mitchell's organization is "on the verge of disruption." He, as all other betrayers of Labor, will denounce as "Union Smasher" whoever expresses joy thereat. It matters not. Mitchell's Unionism means a "rabbit's wheel" system for Labor; the thing cannot be smashed too soon, and room made for that system of Trades Unionism in which Labor's motion will move the Working Class forward and not in a circle.

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

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