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EDITORIAL

LIKE A DUCK IN THUNDER.

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FATHER Edward J. Philips of St. Gabriel's Church, Hazleton, Pa., is announced in town, on a mission to J. Pierpont Morgan, to induce the magnate to grant an interview to President Mitchell of the United Mine Workers, looking to a conference between operators and the miners. The attitude of the Reverend gentleman at this season is that of a duck in thunder.

Readers of the DAILY PEOPLE are by this time posted on that interesting manifestation of the country's social economic evolution now presented by the situation in the mines. The capitalist can, if he wants, brow-beat, if necessary, physically knock down his employees into accepting his own terms. But this direct method is accompanied with serious inconveniences. At a time when, due to the backwardness of machinery and technique, the supply of Labor is not yet ample enough to overstock the Labor-market, and furnish the capitalist with a huge Army of Unemployed with which to tangle the feet of the employed, the inconveniences of direct and brow-beating methods rise to the magnitude of dangers. So long as that lasts, the workingman must be humored. The capitalist himself can not do that: blandishments from him would be suspected. The humoring must be done by a workingman. Out of this necessity arose the Labor Lieutenant of the capitalist class. A workingman sufficiently ignorant and sufficiently dishonorable to fill the bill, was chosen from the rank and file. From him the unsuspecting workingmen accepted as current coin the counterfeits furnished by the employer, and that, handed out direct by him, would have been scrutinized with suspicion. These Labor Lieutenants took charge of humoring the rank and file; the running of conventions fell to them; and theirs was the traitor mission of clapping on the workers' eyes the blinkers of darkness on their situation, allaying any revolutionary aspiration or outburst among them, and, when that was not possible, leading it into the ground. The service was inestimable. With capitalist niggardliness, only bones were thrown at the Labor Lieutenants to gnaw at. Presently, in pursuit of their own purpose, the

employers found it necessary to return service for service. They became the financial secretaries of the fakir-led Unions. In this way they compelled the rank and file to stay in line under their vicarious thumb, the thumb of their Labor Lieutenant, and they squared accounts with their Labor Lieutenant, by furnishing him dues, i.e., a revenue. Thus originated the celebrated “check-off” system. The dues of the Union man were checked off his wages by the employer, and handed to the union officer, the Fakir.

No doubt a perfect system. Its only trouble was that it was not to be forever necessary to the employer. It was a transitional device. So soon as the unemployed among the miners had reached the desired height, and the simultaneous consolidation of large operators had reached sufficient perfection, the “Labor Lieutenant’s” job would be gone, and with it the “check-off” system. And that is the point now reached. Accordingly, the mine operators’ Labor Lieutenants, with Mitchell at their head, are running about like chickens without a head. They have steered conventions, etc., by the old chart. They have declared the lie of advances in wages; they have sung the praises of the operators; and yet these refuse to do the handsome thing; they refuse to any longer act as collecting agents for their quondam Lieutenants; they turn a deaf ear to the “check-off” system.

Thus rebuffed, the fakirs now spread rumors of intended strikes. But the ghost has lost its powers to frighten. The J. Pierpont Morgan stage of consolidation can cope without difficulty with any strike of class un-conscious workingmen; neither is it at all alarmed about picayune Boards of Trade and other puny middle class interests, naively referred to as “the third parties to the conflict” by Father Philips.

While the above development was going on, the Father Philips stood on the banks, and looked upon the seething stream with the eyes of an Apache Indian, gazing at that grand geologic formation, the cascade of the Niagara. And now, when the long prepared crash is on, they act like ducks in thunder.

The Class Struggle is ever drawing clearer the issue, and the lines of its solution. Neither in the Apocalypse, nor yet in Leviticus can information thereon be found.