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EDITORIAL

## IS BRYAN “GOING GUY”?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**MONG the picturesque Scotch superstitions mentioned by Walter Scott is that of “going guy.” The term is applied to him who suddenly does something wholly contrary to his usual habits and tastes. The act is considered, not a sign of change or reform, but a sure sign of approaching death. If there be anything in this, then the Hon. William Jennings Bryan is on the verge of dissolution.

The *Commoner*, William J. Bryan, Editor and Proprietor,” with date of August 30, has this editorial paragraph conspicuously on the editorial column:

“When organized labor goes on a political strike and refuses to work for the political supremacy of politicians who cater to trusts and monopolies there will be more hope of success.”

What is this but “going guy”?

A man is judged by the company he keeps. In the measure that he holds a conspicuous place among his company, he symbolizes them. He throws light upon them as a composite picture, and they throw light upon him as single rays focused on one spot. Now, what does the Bryan composite picture represent? The question is answered by examining the separate rays that go to make up the picture.

In '96, Bryan was the nominee of a convention in which Senators Daniel of Virginia and White of California were the temporary and permanent chairmen, respectively. And who may those two gentlemen be? The latter was instrumental in getting a telegram sent to the former by western railroad magnates during the Pullman strike, urging him to secure Federal aid to put down that “labor riot,” on the ground that “now WE have to suffer, to-morrow it may be YOUR turn in the East”; and the former obeyed the summons, “saw” Cleveland, and managed to get him to send Federal troops to Chicago, with Miles at their head to “break the backbone of the strike.” Bryan ran for President twice. Around him were grouped

not Daniel and White alone, but the silver mine monopolists who shot and were shooting down their men; the copper and lead Montana monopolist Clark; the Cotton Bale Trust director Jones, who incidentally officiated as chairman of Bryan's national committee; Ben Tillman, the rising textile monopolist of South Carolina; Gov. Steunenberg, of Idaho Bull Pen fame; the Belmont Tennessee Iron and Coal monopoly, of convict-labor fame; Tammany of Ice Trust fame,—and so forth and so on all along the line. All along the line the material props to the pedestal on which Bryan was posing were "politicians who cater to Trusts and monopolies," together with Trusts and monopolists themselves. Take these props off, and the pedestal would tumble, along with the poser; remove these single rays from the canvas, and the Bryan picture becomes vacancy; center them on the canvas, and Bryan stands out in full, life-size length and breadth. Bryan, like all other capitalist politicians, is a "caterer to Trusts and monopolies."

What, then, does it mean when this politician of capitalism, hitherto breathing capitalism at every pore, now warns against such politicians as himself? Can he be "coming our way"? Scotch common sense takes no stock in such eleventh hour and sudden conversions: it pronounces the thing "going guy."

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