

REPORT

GLEANINGS 'LONG THE ROAD. {5}

By DANIEL DE LEON

EN ROUTE TO 'FRISCO, APRIL 1, 1907.—Los Angeles has acquainted me with myself. Public speaking does not tire me. What tires me is travel. During the four to five days, spent in Los Angeles, I recuperated from the previous fatigue of travel; and last night, as I took the train I am now on for San Jose via 'Frisco, I felt positively refreshed, notwithstanding I had spoken every day, and yesterday twice, on both occasions to big meetings—in the afternoon under the auspices of the S.L.P., and in the evening just before taking the train, under auspices of the S.P., upon special invitation of the latter. Among the gratifying reminiscences of the tour is an incident that took place after yesterday's afternoon meeting. Among the people who crowded to the platform to shake hands with me there were several S.P. men who introduced themselves as such. One of them spoke for the rest. This short dialogue took place between him and me:

He—"You have been misrepresented to us."

I—"By whom?"

He looked embarrassed.

I—"By MY Party?"

He—"No!"

I—"Then it must have been by YOUR own Party?"

He—"Yes."

The purpose of this "gleaning" is to take up several items connected with the Goldfield situation, which, in the hurry to mail my last letter from the train at Dagget,¹ I then omitted.

There is in the Goldfield situation a feature that is special and perturbing. That

¹ [Daggett, Utah.—R.B.]

feature is the fraudulency of most of the “mines,” stock of which is being sold on the stock exchanges, the New York stock exchange in particular. I was informed by those who know that, out of the “gallows” [gallows is the name given to the structure erected at the mouth of a shaft and designating the location of a mine]² in the place, there are NOT 10 LEGITIMATE ONES. Almost all these “mines,” accordingly, are unqualified swindles; their owners are nothing but criminals, trying to raise money under false pretences; these “mine owners,” all leading capitalists in the place, have all along been paying wages, not out of the produce of their “mines,” but out of the produce of their sales of stock. This marked criminal nature of the Goldfield capitalist class stamps all their proceedings with a special stamp—for instance:

There are three different Goldfields in existence. The three have in common just two features—all three are gold fields, and in all three the class struggle is virulently on. For the rest the three Goldfields are so distinct in point of fact that he who moves from the one into the other, as I did, can hardly recognize them.

First, there is the real Goldfield. That Goldfield yields gold from a few mines, the other “mines” are “gold bricks.” In that Goldfield the real and the bogus mine owners have tried to terrorize labor, and failed. Labor, especially mining labor, respects its leaders, St. John at the head of them, and although hampered by Mine Owners’ agents in its midst, has kept its heads cool, and a front that is firm. In that Goldfield, labor fraternizes. A.F. of L. scabbery accomplishes next to nothing. The miners are locked-out, but they are not in distress. Their credit is good with the town traders, they receive ample support, and their posture and conduct is the cause of many a drunk on the part of the “elite” of the Montezuma Club, and of their helpless Pinkertons. That is the actual Goldfield, the only Goldfield that really is. The other two Goldfields are newspaper creations.

The second “Goldfield,” and first of these two artificial “Goldfields,” is a sort of “imperium in imperio.” Its realm is within the actual Goldfield. Its boundaries are the *Goldfield Tribune* and one or two other wild-cat capitalist dailies. That “Goldfield” is a place in which “honest American labor has spurned I.W.W. Anarchy”; it is a place in which “St. John is held in contempt,” he being regularly

² [Brackets in the original.—R.B.]

“hooted and hissed down” at the miners’ meetings. The realm of this first imaginary “Goldfield” has its suburbs. The Esmeralda Hotel is such an outpost, and its keeper is Bunco-Steerer-inordinary. The washout that took place south of Hazen two days before I was due there, caused the news to be spread in Goldfield that no trains could come down for a week. My train pushed through, however. Only that instead of arriving in Goldfield at about 8 p. m., of March 21 as I had expected, I reached the place at 5 a.m. on March 22nd. Of course there was no one to meet me. I took a ’bus for the best hotel—the Esmeralda, deciding to take no chances. As I was registering my names, the hotel keeper{,} a man with a face that was a general offence, looked me over; satisfied himself that, if I was not yet a mine owner, I ought to be, and surely would become one, rattled away in the approved old barbers’ style that Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, and George Eliot’s *Romola* have preserved in cold type. The voluble outpost of capitalist Bunco-Steerdom, leaving no space for punctuation, informed me and asked me: “Going to stay with us long? Plenty of money made here. From now on more than ever. New mines located every day. All is quiet. The I.W.W. is down and out. We got them on the run. Will rush them from the camp. The A.F. of L. is pouring in. No more trouble anticipated. Investors can now feel safe,” etc., etc., etc. Such is the language of the *Goldfield Tribune*, and the “Goldfield” of myth No. 1.

The “Goldfield” of myth No. 2 one does not strike until he is out of both the actual Goldfield and the “Goldfield” of myth No. 1. That second imaginary “Goldfield” is the creation of the capitalist press of Los Angeles—and the rest of the country, I reckon. Whether the wizard who conjured up this second creation has his necromancer’s laboratory outside or inside the precincts of the “Goldfield” of Myth No. 1 I do not know. The “Goldfield” of myth No. 2 is a place “on the verge of Anarchy”; “honest labor is prevented from earning an honest living”; “the I.W.W. Anarchists are terrorizing the town”; “the locked-out miners are roving around hungry, no trader will sell them anything”; “capital, seeking investment, is kept out.” Having reached this point, the wizard feels he may be going just a bit too far. ’Tis all right enough to create a false public sentiment that may prepare the outside world to hear of, and applaud, some crowning act of capitalist brigandage. But the thing may be overdone. Cowardly capital may get such a chill as to render it for long

deaf to subsequent siren songs from Goldfield. Accordingly, arrived at that point of romance, the wizard suddenly turns around and takes another tack. The next flight of the imagination is a masterstroke of its kind. The Los Angeles *Times* of yesterday announces that the trouble with the miners is that “the companies will not allow the miners any longer to steal ore.” This is a neat suggestion that the bogus mines are so rich that ore can be stolen. Fact is it would be the making of the bulk of those mines if such a thing were possible as the stealing of ore.

These, in short, are the three Goldfields.

Of the imaginative powers of the wizards who have created the two bogus Goldfields, and at once of the bunco-steering nature of Goldfield capitalism, I carry with me a priceless documentary proof. Had difficulty to get one—got it. For Haywood the Mine Owners have as little use as for St. John. Haywood’s incarceration was intended to scuttle the I.W.W., Sherman was to finish up the job against the “fanatics” at the I.W.W. convention. Well, a mammoth Haywood, Moyer and Pettibone demonstration took place in Goldfield. It was the greatest thing of the sort the “camp” had ever seen. The sight was photographed. The Mine Owners shivered—and then? It would seem incredible, but I have the proof with me—a picture postal. And then—intent to pluck the flower safely from the nettle danger—the dyed-in-the-wool bunco-steering Mine Owners had their picture of that Haywood-Moyer-Pettibone demonstration, of that anti-Mine Owners’ demonstration, transferred to postal cards over the inscription: “A Big Stock Excitement in Goldfield, Nevada”!!! St. John can be distinctly seen on the foreground of the picture!

DANIEL DE LEON.

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

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slpns@slp.org