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EDITORIAL

MITCHELL'S LETTERS.

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MR. JOHN MITCHELL—recently of the National Civic Federation and still of the “Militia of Christ”—has undertaken to prove the injustice of the recent miners’ convention which compelled him to choose between the Union and the Civic Federation on the ground that affiliation with the latter was incompatible with the interests of a bona fide Union. To this end Mr. Mitchell is publishing a series of letters in the *United Mine Workers’ Journal*, in which he marshals up “facts” against “incorrect statements.”

The gist of the letters is to this effect:—

“At the convention, Mark Hanna was mentioned as the founder of the National Civic Federation; at the convention the National Civic Federation was said to be intended to ‘fasten the fetters of wage bondage on the limbs of Labor’;—both charges are false.”

As to the first charge, Mr. Mitchell meets it with an excruciating volume of minuteness. The microscopic eye of an insect can see minutiae of that portion of the human body, on which it is feasting, that escape the human eye; but to that same microscopic eye the figure escapes of the whole body, differently from the unmicroscopic human eye which lacks perception of the minutiae and has a grasp and sweep of the whole. Accepting Mr. Mitchell’s minute information, proving that Mark Hanna was not the founder of the National Civic Federation, the correction is purely technical, so technical that it is misleading. The fact remains that, whoever was, chronologically and technically, the founder of the concern, the National Civic Federation was and remained an obscure thing, theoretically only in existence, not known of and doing no mischief until Mark Hanna took hold and became its president. From that moment the N.C.F. burst into notoriety. To all intents and purposes the N.C.F. was the creature of Mark Hanna, the man who referred to the

labor leaders as his “labor lieutenants”; it was as completely his creature and creation as Chicago is the creature and creation of modern civilization, and not of the shivering Indian huts that once stood on the site now occupied by the metropolis of the Middle West, with its record of judicial assassinations of Labor’s spokesmen.

Even less felicitous is Mr. Mitchell in his “refutation” of the second charge. Giving the go-by to the principle that a body which preaches the doctrine of the “Brotherhood of Capital and Labor” is a deceiver of the Working Class, and that the deception is all the more insidious if the body that does the preaching consists in part of labor leaders,—giving the go-by to that principle, the one thing to be disproved, Mr. Mitchell “meets the issue” by enumerating the numerous other National Civic Federation “public activities which have no bearing upon the question of hours of labor, wages, and conditions of employment.” This argument Mr. Mitchell considers a sufficient refutation of the charge that the N.C.F. seeks to “fasten the fetters of wage bondage on the limbs of Labor.”—On the same principle may Tammany Hall deny that it is a political organization for political loot, truthfully alleging that it has other “activities,” social and charitable, indeed, its first and original activities. On the same principle may the “Militia of Christ” cite some motto, of the several that it surely sports, as for instance, “Do unto others as you may wish to be done by,” in denial of its strike-breaking intentions, as exemplified by several of its members and officials, the worthy John A. Golden of the Textile A.F. of L. Union leading.

Mr. Mitchell’s letters are self-condemnatory. That they are glaringly so evidenced by the circumstance that his meetings, though boomed by the Civic Federationized press, are flat failures—as instanced in Canton, O.

The Workers are “catching on” to the capitalist and his claptrap. How else could it be but that they “catch on” to the capitalist’s “labor lieutenant” and his claptrap as well? If Mr. Mitchell is paying any money for these letters to the Madison, Wis., professor who is his oracle, he should demand his money back.

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