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EDITORIAL

THE CENTIPEDE MATES.

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A RATHER flitting news despatch tells of a strike in Atlanta, Ga., where bricklayers laid down their tools, “in flagrant violation of their contract”. The despatch is so fractional that it stops right there. But though the news further sayeth not, one can readily imagine the rest. Where there is one centipede, look and you will find its mate. Where there is one capitalist labor-skinner, who is indignant at his skinned workingmen “breaking their contract”, look and you will find an A.F. of L. and Social Democratic Morris Brown who will declare that the “men on strike have done wrong”. A Morris Brown there surely was—even though there were no local Social Democratic papers like the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* and *Worker* to back him up.

“Contracts” is the name given by the Capitalist Class to the one-sided contrivances by which they are held free to do as they please in the skinning of their workingmen, while these are held bound to swallow all wrong. It is with the aid of these contrivances that the employer and his aide, the labor fakir, manage to shackle the giant Labor. Every time one limb of Labor rises, the others are kept down “contracted”; and the consequent dislocation of the giant’s limbs is found reflected in the dislocated political activity of the Working Class. With his joints dislocated on the political field, the vulture Capitalist and the carrion crow Labor-Fakir “pick the wish-bone” of the workingman with more or less ease, more or less safety. The “contract” contrivance is, accordingly, among the “sacred” things in the employer’s armory. Not he alone, but especially his lackey, the labor fakir, must be on guard to safeguard the superstition. The slightest lesion suffered by the “contract” contrivance draws employer and fakir together: the former, with horrified mien, then invokes the thunders of Sinai upon the outrage attempted upon the “Holy of Holies”; the latter with sanctimonious mien plays the intercessor, seeks to

bring the erring sinners back to the paths of “contract” and to invoke the master’s pardon for the sinful. It is so everywhere; it was so during the Interborough strike in this city when the now Social Democratic candidate for President of the Board of Aldermen, Mr. Morris Brown, voted to condemn the strikers, and, as a member of the committee appointed to see Belmont, begged the master’s pardon for his sinning wage slaves on strike.

The Morris Brown mate of the centipede can not have been absent from the Atlanta occurrence.

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