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EDITORIAL

ON PILGRIMAGE IN RUSSIA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WR. VAN LIEU, until recently of Montana, is now in Dranzoul, in the Transcaucasian district of Russia. Mr. Van Lieu did not go to the Transcaucasus either for the sake of a trip across the Ocean, nor for the sake of a change of scenery, not yet for amusement. The gentleman went to Dranzoul on the same principle that pilgrims travel to a shrine from which to gather inspiration.

Mr. Van Lieu was a department superintendent at the Washoe smelters. In his capacity of superintendent Mr. Van Lieu had occasion to come in contact with that wicked and impertinent rabble, called workingmen, that will not reconcile itself to the lot of being plundered of four-fifths of its product and, on top of that, being treated as a dog. Obedient to its vicious and un-American instinct of “kicking,” the branch of that rabble, with which Mr. Van Lieu had to deal, not only “kicked” but had the temerity of organizing, so as to impart greater vigor to its “kicks”. Obviously something was wrong; obviously also something had to be done or the Van Lieu social structure would come crashing down over the ears of the Van Lieu “Pillars of Society”. Alert of mind, quick to form a plan and as quick to put it into execution, Mr. W.R. Van Lieu concluded that Russia was the fountain in whose limpid waters he should bathe his manly breast, invigorate his teeming mind and refresh his patriotic spirit, and thither he decided to make a pilgrimage. Thus the gentleman landed in Dranzoul of the Transcaucasus. That he is making good use of his time and opportunities the *Anaconda, Mont., Standard* hastens to inform his numerous admirers and fellow members of the Mine Owners’ Association.

Writing from Dranzoul, Mr. Van Lieu grows enthusiastic over General Alikhanoff’s ways of handling impertinent workingmen. He can not wait till he comes home to tell the tale and unload what he learned. He must unload in

advance. He says:

“It does one’s heart good to know of the way Gen. Alikhanoff is suppressing the strikes here. Gen. Alikhanoff is the man, who, a few years ago, suppressed the uprising in Central Asia, and when he got through, like the boy and the apple, ‘there wasn’t any core left’.

“He started out a few weeks ago, hearing that a branch line of the railroad running from Tiflis to Kars was going out on strike; he went to the end of the line and ordered the chief of the station to have an engine put on his train.

“‘I can’t. We’re going on strike.’

“‘Ah, is that so?’

“Turning to his petty officer, he said, ‘Take him out and string him up.’ A few minutes after he was dangling an engine came steaming in to pick up his train. Attaching three carriages to the train, barred and grated and used as prison vans, he came to the first station, jumped out and said to the first man he met: ‘Who are you?’

“‘I am the station master.’

“‘Ah, a Georgian, I see.’

Then turning to his officer, ‘Put him in,’ and into one of the three prison vans he was tumbled.

“To another man: ‘And who are you?’

“‘I am the porter.’

“‘Ah, an American, you look like.’

Then to his officer: ‘Put him in,’ and in he was tumbled.

“Up the whole line he went, and when a quarter of the railroad line’s staff was gathered up he hitched an engine to the three cars and they have not been heard of since. Needless to say, no strike occurred.

“At Kutais, three hours’ distance from here, when Alikhanoff arrived 160 of the ringleaders were tried by courtmartial and shot.”

Thus the pilgrim Van Lieu proceeds column after column, and he closes with the jubilant whoop:

“Strike law exists all over Russia to-day and under it any man who incites men to strike can be taken out without any formality to be strung up to a tree.”

W.R. Van Lieu must have communicated in advance with Govs. Gooding and McDonald of Idaho and Colorado. When the gentleman returns to America we may

expect to have him declare the whole land under “strike law”—if nothing happens to render the homing pilgrim harmless.

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