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## Caught With Bird-Lime

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**ugene V. Debs has come out for Bryan. Confused though Mr. Debs probably is upon the money question, it is not likely that the 16 to 1 dogma is the link that binds him to the Democratic nominee. He must have more than once put himself the question: "In what way can the working poor be benefited thereby?" And the utter inability of anyone to answer that simple question satisfactorily must have caused him at least to entertain some misgivings as to the curative powers of more silver for the silver mine barons. What then fascinates Mr. Debs with the Democratic nominee?

The Democratic platform has a plank that indirectly condemns the Cleveland administration for its conduct at the Chicago strike. This is the clause that "fetches" Mr. Debs. And in being so "fetched" he is caught by bird-lime.

The Democratic convention that nominated Mr. Bryan had Senator Daniel for its temporary chairman, Senator White for its permanent chairman, and Senator Teller for its tutelary saint. Each of these had expressed himself outspokenly on the conduct of the Cleveland administration in Chicago, Daniel and Teller on the floor of the Senate, White outside. And what were their views: Unqualified approval of the Cleveland ruffianism!

It was a feature of those days to see Republicans and Democrats vying with each other in adulation of the "master stroke" of Cleveland to "nip Anarchy in the bud." Senators Palmer and Davis, who are now most active in setting up a "Sound Money" Democratic ticket, were not a whit more virulent than Daniel and Gordon, or even Teller. All party lines were wiped out, all animosities were stilled, gold bugs and silver bugs fraternized in the "putting down of Debs and hoboos" and in singing praises to Cleveland.

In falling a victim to the Democrat-Capitalist bird-lime, Mr. Debs illustrates the weakness of the proletariat that is not class-conscious. It is not likely that Bryan will

be elected; ten to one he will be overwhelmingly defeated, as all contradictory political movements are; yet he may be elected. If elected, it is not the 16 to 1 idiocy but the bird-lime that will carry him through. The indignation of the people at Cleveland's malfeasance certainly is wide-spread. If elected, the workingmen will find out that they have again been trepanned. The official utterances of the Bryan leaders will be found more lasting than their campaign effusions. Bryan or no Bryan, the capitalist State only has bayonets for the workers.

The workingman who is not conscious of his class distinction, has no respect for the dignity of his class, and knows not that only the abolition of the wages system can benefit him and that nothing short of a pledge to that effect entitles one to his confidence; such a workingman is but a football on the ground, kicked backward and forward, a sport to the kickers.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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