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EDITORIAL

## COMPANION PIECES.

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**T**WO negroes, one of them a “Prophet” and “King,” the other a “Prince,” were lynched at Shreveport, La., on the 20th. They were members of a mystic organization founded by themselves. From the meager facts so far known, it would seem that the men, driven by want and crazed with long protracted starvation, “saw visions;” they schemed a millennium—the “Church of the Living God;” and the methods to obtain the same were, fully in keeping with their mental condition, substantially those of the Hindoo Thug sects. Torn out of the jail where they were imprisoned under charges of murder, and just before being swung from the tree branch where they were lynched, “Prophet” Smith exclaimed: “Oh, Lord, you promised to stand by me at this hour!” A second later his limp body dangled from the tree.

On the same day, and about the same hour two Union-men, white men, Boyd Martin and Riley Johnson, members of “President” Mitchell’s U.M.W. Union, fell fatally wounded at the mouth of the Maratime mines, near Matewan, W.Va. Together with several hundred others they had marched to oust the non-Union men, who had taken their places. The non-Union men were armed; their aggressors bore no firearms. The mystic word “The Union” seemed all sufficient to them; they rushed to the assault and were met with a volley of shot, that stretched out two dead, and wounded several others. The rest then retreated.

Do not these two simultaneous incidents throw light upon the other?

The ever increasing volume of starving humanity—a natural sediment of capitalism—has been kept in utter darkness upon the nature of the ill that afflicts them. It means death to capitalism to have that darkness dispelled. It is in the interest of capitalism to have the ill taken for a heavenly visitation, a natural phenomenon. But human nature, compressed in one direction, will ever burst forth in another. Mysticism is the natural result of the human tendency to grapple with evils taken for supernal. “Prophet” Smith “Churches of the Living God,” “President” Mitchell “Pure and Simple Unions” are the baleful fruits of that tree. The fruits are

essentially alike in their structure of inadequacy. They differ in this respect, however: while the “Kings” and “Princes” of the former ever share the delusion of the rank and file, and fall its first victims, the “Kings” and “Princes” (called “Presidents” and “Vice-Presidents”) of the latter are dupers; ever at goodly distances from the spot of danger; ever leaving the rank and file to furnish the corpses.

The struggle between Socialism and Capitalism implies a struggle against Mysticism. The imaginative power of man, that potent weapon, is now turned against the race by Capitalism. To every obstacle, nature raises the requisite potent power that is to overcome it. In sight of the monumental Mysticism that blocks the path of Civilization, the reason becomes clear why Socialism rises, not only equipped with all the weapons of Science, but also thrilled with that infinitely more potent manifestation of the imagination, the conception of a great Truth.

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