EDITORIAL

IN AID OF "TOILING MILLIONS."

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN the interest of the "toiling millions of the Southern States," Senator Culberson made a desperate effort, just before the final passage of the tariff bill on the 5th of this month, to place cotton bagging on the free list. The Senator proved that the raw material was free of duty; he proved that only six companies manufactured the bagging, and the six were combined; from this he concluded that the duty on the bagging enabled the combine to raise the price upon "the toiling millions" engaged in cotton raising, and that thus the combine levied a tax of $625,000 upon these "toiling millions." In the interest of these the Senator pleaded and demanded that cotton bagging be admitted free.

It would have been money in the pockets of the Senator's reputation, or intellect, had he left that speech unmade.

No one supposes that, if the $625,000 tax levied by the cotton-bagging Trust were wiped out, as much as a copper thereof would be found in the pockets of the "toiling millions" on the cotton plantations. 'Tis not the "toiling millions" of the South who buy cotton-bagging. The bagging is bought by the cotton plantation owners, who spend their time in Northern clubs, or European pleasure resorts, or in Southern "dolce far niente"—sweet do-nothing.

Of the numerous instances in which the tariff debate revealed the effort of free traders to be the effort of one set of capitalists to get the better of another set, and that the free trade fight is a fight carried on over the head of the proletariat and does not concern the proletariat at all,—of the numerous instances in which the tariff debate brought out this fact, there is none in which the fact is brought out more clearly than in the matter of cotton-bagging.