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EDITORIAL

ALADIN'S "PUBLIC OPINION."

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IT is not surprising that the Republican and Democratic press of the land has pounced upon just one certain passage in the interview given by the Russian revolutionist Aladin on the eve of his departure from his lecturing tour in this country, and has since been singing the praises of that one passage. When a foreigner arrives in a strange country, whatever that country may be, on a mission such as brought Aladin to America, it is but natural he should be praiseful of the land in which he comes for help, nor should it be surprising if he be not critical. That Aladin's praises of America were uncritical is pardonable. It is hardly possible to censure aught in the country that one contrasts with that which the Czar now keeps steeped in the blood of its people. Nevertheless, there was one observation made by Aladin in praise of America so fundamentally wrong that it redounds not against the Czar, it redounds against the people of Russia themselves—it redounds against that revolution-leavened mass of the Russian people, now struggling to overthrow autocracy. That observation was that "America has, and Russia is deprived of a public opinion."

Aladin's estimate is false. It is false as to Russia; it is false as to America. Fact is, there is in Russia, to-day, a more strongly developed and conscious public opinion than the present America enjoys, or is animated by. Aladin has been deceived by appearances.

As to Russia, what is it that has drawn upon her the eyes of the civilized world? It is the force of the PUBLIC OPINION that is asserting itself. Not all the forceful measures of Tsaristic repression can down that public opinion. Public opinion in Russia condemns the Tsar's regimen. The condemnation is so emphatic that the Tsar leads the apprehensive life of a pursued criminal in hiding. What if not public opinion can be the fire that raises the heavy thunder-laden clouds now heavily gathering over the Winter Palace, the symbol of Russian old style rule. That that

public opinion is being cruelly lacerated; that the mailed fist of autocracy is smiting it;—none of that is an argument against its existence. On the contrary. The need of the continuous Cossacks' knout; the need of the continuous application of the mailed fist—these are so many evidences of a powerful, a virile, a wide-spread, a deep-seated PUBLIC OPINION that is too powerful, too virile, too wide-spread, too deep-seated to be beaten down.

How, now in America? The average life of the average workingman is here lower than it is in Russia. In larger numbers than in even Russia are workingmen here sacrificed in the shambles of our rulers, the establishments of capitalist exploitation. And when intelligent organization is set up to oppose the Wrong, the temerarious act is visited, as now seen in Boise, by kidnapping and by all manner of other roughshod violations of civilization, culminating, as exhibited in Boise, with the compelling of a man to defend himself against charges on which he is not indicted. And yet there is quiet in the land. The absence of protest, in the only emphatic manner that Tyranny understands, has been misconstrued by Aladin as a sign of public opinion—a public opinion of approval. Aladin erred. America, not yet having been scourged as Russia has been, has not yet reached the point of being animated by a true public opinion. A prostituted capitalist press vocalizes the sentiments of the tyrant class. Their's is not public opinion. It is the opinion of the Tsar-class. Public opinion in America is still a-forming. It is a-forming fast. For sociologic reasons identical with those that have caused public opinion to take shape in Russia, despite all hangings and banishments, and that causes public opinion in Russia, now that it has taken shape, to be indomitable, self-assertant, public opinion in America is crystallizing to the hardening point. When a public opinion shall have taken shape here, then, to the rustle of the myriad votes shaken from the Proletarian forest, and backed by the thunderbolt of the Industrial Organization, the Aladin visitors to America will no longer be deceived by appearances. They will recognize their kin.

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