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EDITORIAL

A WORD FOR ROOSEVELT

By DANIEL DE LEON

CONGRESS, like the ass in the fable, is kicking the dead—or dying lion. That, in short, is the spectacle presented by the present attitude of the Capitol towards the White House.

That every charge that is being preferred against Theodore Roosevelt in Congress is true, none will deny. That Roosevelt is a lawless personality, the very breath of whose nostrils has been an infection to the land is true. That the man has no regard for the difference between truth and falsehood none can gainsay. That, as was said yesterday of him, he does not labor “under the honorable disabilities of a gentleman” is a masterstroke of pen-photography. For all this, it does not lie with Congress to throw either the first, or the last stone.

Roosevelt’s latest doings that have aroused the righteous indignation of Congress are as nothing to those in the past.

As a Police Commissioner in this city Roosevelt proposed a spiked police-club, and he had to be mandamused to place the “Ship Democracy” in the column to which it was entitled by law. High-handedly Roosevelt had ordered that ticket elsewhere. His conduct in the Cuban war was a piece of craven rowdyism, well characterized by Col. Bacon. Then followed his career as Governor, one of his acts being the signing of the law, needed by Harriman, to place railroad bonds on the list of savings banks securities. Despite the traits of character denoted by such acts, Roosevelt was nominated to the Vice-Presidency, and subsequently to the Presidency itself. During his virtually seven years term misdeed followed misdeed. The Spooner law was deliberately violated by the Executive. As a consequence came the ignominious act of dismembering Colombia under the guise of protecting her territory. The Panama Canal scandal followed. Appointments were made during an “infinitesimal recess.” Citizens of the land, about to stand trial for their lives, were

called “undesirable.” In the vestibule of the White House, women were brutally handled by his Janissaries, who took their cue from their master. His pets, like Bishop, were illegally placed in lucrative berths. A murderer and ex-Rough Rider was appointed to a Federal office in the West—and so forth and so on, and all the while the press boomed Teddy’s unhallowed swagger as scintillations of genius—and Congress looked on and listened admiringly.

Why this sudden change?

Us seems Congress protests its honor too much just now.

Why so?

The body, that, by its silence condoned the long sequence of illegalities and affronts done to the country; the body that never brought up impeachment proceedings against the Disgrace in the White House, and from whose midst more than one man is now doing penal service—surely that body should be the last now to raise its voice.

Why, then, is Congress suddenly so alert to the “country’s honor”? Simply because the Brute in the White House is about to die. His term will expire within two months. There are no more favors to come from that quarter.

Roosevelt needs no condemnation. He stands condemned at the bar of the Nation’s conscience. The attempted condemnation by Congress only condemns Congress itself—as the ass that would play Sir Valor.

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