

Can You Sneer At Such Struggle?

Mr. Viereck, editor of "The International," having informed the world that Zapata is a brutal barbarian, who smothers his body with jewelry and cares only for lust and loot, we think it timely to translate the following article from his organ, "Emiliano Zapata," published at Dallas, Texas, under date of Jan. 31. We ourselves have never been so fortunate as to meet Zapata, and Mr. Viereck doubtless shares that misfortune; but Rangel, who made a special journey to visit him, more than a year ago, gave a very different description. No one who knows Rangel—now on trial for his life at San Antonio—dreams of doubting his sincerity, and he is a man of decided intelligence. His assurance to the editor of this section was that Zapata yearned ardently for the equality of all men, and insisted, above all, that the use of land must be free to all. Correspondents of reputation have returned from his camps astonished at the agrarian fervor that animates his followers, and the article that follows will explain to the reader why this is so.

To him who studies the civilization of the various races it is a positive pleasure to run through the pages written by the Spanish historians on the subject of the life, government, customs and advanced condition of art and science, as they existed in what they christened "New Spain."

When Herman Cortez and his following of adventurers first trod the shores of the great Aztec Empire, that empire consisted of a vast territory which extended from Aztlan, the seat of the seven Nahuatl tribes who had settled in the Valley of Mexico, to the present location of the Central American Republics. There were then two great nations in the New World; and they, with their civilizations and their conquering tendencies, were on the point of merging; the Aztecs moving Southward from the North, and the Incas advancing Northward from the South.

Christopher Columbus' discovery of the New World prevented the fusion of these two great American races, and in conquering these new realms he added territory so large, in comparison with those of Europe, that Charles the Fifth's vassals were in the habit of declaring that on their monarch's dominions the sun never set.

And those two great American peoples, despite their backwardness in navigation and the science of war, and amid their frequent struggles to impose the rule of one people and one civilization on the others, lived happily; for they were strangers to the misery and evil passion which, owing to that misery, were developing among the European nations.

The happiness of the Aztecs was based on their system of land possession and cultivation.

In the Aztec Empire real estate was divided into four parts. One part belonged to the State, and its products served exclusively for the sustenance of the Emperor, the twelve electoral princes and other public functionaries. The second part was set aside for the maintenance of religion and public instruction. The third was for the allotment of gardens and homes for families. The remainder was for the common use of all inhabitants of towns, that they might have pasture, wood and water.

See the simple manner in which the first inhabitants of Mexico—who had

acquired the right of owning, possessing and profiting by virgin lands—far from monopolizing those lands for the gain of a single individual, understood from the first how to establish small properties, creating the home for the family and devoting the fields in their entirety for the benefit of all the people.

It is true that there were privileged castes, princes and priests; but how different were such relations from those of the Spanish and French kings with their vassals! Here, in America, the princes mingled with the humble, they knew no pride and the differences between the social classes were due solely to privileges obtained as the reward of valor, talent or knowledge, and never by divine inheritance.

To destroy the agrarian system of the Aztecs was to do away with the happiness of the people and cast it into slavery and misfortune.

Let us establish once again an agrarian system such as that, wherein each family may have its house and lot; wherein the towns may have their fields for common pasture, wood and water; wherein public instruction may have its support secured by the Grange schools, and the State in its turn may have its budget covered by the utilizing of the waters, the sale to newcomers of surplus lands and the exploitation of forests and mines. Then we Mexicans, all of us, shall find once more that happiness we lost when we were conquered by the Europeans.

The crime committed by Mr. Viereck and similar critics is the ignoring of the fact that the Mexicans once had a civilization in which no man was excluded from the land, which was regarded as nature's racial gift. The Mexicans never have forgotten that gigantic, central fact, and it is for a restoration of those conditions, as nearly as possible, that they are struggling. Thereby they are fighting the battle not only of their own race but of all humanity, and especially of our United States and European civilization, with its hideous and unendurable contrasts of appalling wealth and still more appalling poverty. Its basis is the grabbing by the few of those natural resources to which human and all other life must have access, if existence is to continue; and that overwhelming crime against our race is THE crime we must extirpate root and branch, if civilization is to escape the falling into a gulf of unspeakable degeneracy, from which it will take eons of the most painful effort to emerge. Because the Mexicans are, at least, making an earnest effort to slay this modern dragon, it is shameful to belittle that effort and a CRIME of unutterable baseness to calumniate it.

Mr. Viereck is a protegee of William Marion Reedy, who presided at the Single Tax banquet held recently in Washington, D. C. It is hard for me to believe that Viereck can be ignorant of these things, and if he knows them and yet writes as he has written, his guilt is great. But how comes it that Mr. Reedy himself, who wrote me some two years ago, sending me his photograph and wishing more power to my elbow, since I was doing the greatest work of my life—how comes it, I say, that he, making the pretensions he makes and posing as he poses, maintains on this great struggle in Mexico a stubborn silence which no appeals can break?

If we get our "Land and Liberty" weekly started we expect to wage against land monopoly and economic slavery in these United States a warfare fully as bitter and relentless as that conducted by "Regeneracion" in the matter of Mexico. We shall name the sinners and crucify them to their sin. Above all, we shall go for the alleged leaders who, knowing the

truth have wilfully evaded it, that they might win popularity, boom circulation, swell box-office receipts, clamber into petty office and gorge themselves on the cheap offal of notoriety. For such whited sepulchers no punishment is too severe, and of all the lessons to be taught the most needed assuredly is that revolutionary movements, on which hang the lives and happiness of millions, are not playthings with which to while away an idle hour or whet a jaded appetite.

WM. C. OWEN.

Mexican Notes

The killing of William S. Benton, a British subject, by order, as it is claimed, of Villa, has raised a storm that may have important consequences. The first receipt of the news resulted in the calling of a mass meeting in El Paso which denounced the act, declared itself as convinced that the government at Washington was suppressing facts respecting the true conditions in Mexico, and called on both branches of Congress to adopt a resolution to compel the State Department to transmit to Congress its records pertaining to the outrages committed against Americans and foreigners in Mexico, and to take such action as will give our people the protection guaranteed them under their constitutional rights and maintain the honor and prestige of our country in the eyes of the world. The resolutions specially denounced Villa, Salazar and Maximo Castillo. Benton had the reputation of being an irascible and most outspoken man. He had insisted on seeing Villa, with a complaint that the fences to his property had been torn down by rebels, and Villa's story is that words ensued, that Benton made a motion as if to draw a gun, that he was taken into custody and condemned to death for attempted murder. At present the matter is under investigation by the United States government, and the British embassy has announced that its consul at Galveston, Tex., has been ordered to El Paso, to assist in the enquiry. The case was brought up in the British House of Commons and excited much interest.

Washington despatches of Feb. 23 stated that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had decided that the Mexican question, if taken up by the Senate, would be discussed behind closed doors. The committee is reported as having had under discussion the whole subject of protecting foreigners in Mexico.

Japan and France are reported as intending to land marines in Mexico, to act as legion guards in the City of Mexico; as have Great Britain and Germany.

Meanwhile Villa is said to have changed his mind as to awaiting the arrival of Carranza, and it is stated that he is now en route to Torreon, which is still in the possession of the Federals. Villa's unexplained delay in moving to the attack of that city has been the subject of much criticism, and has led to assertions that, despite their declarations, that they will be satisfied with nothing less than the overthrow of Huerta, the real intention of the Constitutionalists is to establish an independent Republic in the Northern States, leaving Mexico City and the South to work out their own salvation. In this connection we remind readers of our often-repeated suggestion that annexation to the United States would begin with the tier of Northern States, aided by Carranza influences.

Maximo Castillo, charged with responsibility for the blowing up of the Cumbre tunnel, in which ten Americans and forty-one others lost their lives, was captured, Feb. 17, by American troops, thirty-eight miles south of Hachita, N. M. In his anxiety to avoid a range of mountains he ventured on United States soil, and information had been conveyed to the army authorities by the American manager of the Las Palomas ranch, situate across the line. Whether he can be exported to Mexico seems to be an open question, and it is said that he has committed no offense for which he can be punished by the United States authorities. The "Los Angeles Times" printed a large and attractive picture of Castillo, and described him as "the Attila of the Mexican Revolution."

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Do we sleep, do we dream,
Do we wonder and doubt?
Are things what they seem,

Or are visions about?

Is our federal soldier a failure,
And are the militia played out?

With apologies to the memory of Bret Hart, awakened by the fact that the martial "Los Angeles Daily Times" can editorialize as follows:

"What shall we do? If the United States should decide upon armed intervention alone, it would be equivalent to a declaration of war against Mexico. It would probably consolidate the warring factions and bring them together in one eager army, ready to bury past differences and unite in a bloody defense against the hated Gringo. If we should enter Mexico with an armed force we would have to stay there, in all probability, eight or ten years, with an appalling sacrifice of life and treasure. This nation is not called upon to do it. The temper of our people does not incline to it. 'The Times' is unalterably opposed to the intervention of the United States, single-handed and unsupported, in the affairs of Mexico."

That was Feb. 27. Next day it editorialized thus:—"There is small choice between the blunder that would cause the heads of our administration to further ignore the frightful destruction and butchery in Mexico, and that blunder which would cause us to intervene, single-handed, by force. In the latter event the factions of Mexico would, in all probability, unite against us as a common enemy, and we would face an indeterminate guerrilla warfare, attended by uncalled for loss of life and money."

Since then the "Times" has pursued the subject daily, urging joint intervention by Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and even Japan. Why has this swashbuckling Boanerges, who for years past has been roaring about this country's duty as trustee of the sacred Monroe Doctrine—why does he now coo as gently as a turtle dove? Is this the heroic spirit? Is it thus the great Otis answers the summons to the field? To what base uses do we come at last! The man falls to counting cents like a peddler and haggling like a fishwife as to who shall pay the bill.

The answer to the riddle is to be found in the "Times" own despatches of February 26, which is heads with the lines:—"Wilson is afraid! Verdict of Germany. Military inferiority keeps us out of Mexico, army experts declare." The head appears over the statement that, despite all his reverses; Huerta today has a more effective force of artillery than that "at the disposal of the entire War Department of the United States, and probably a much larger force of armed troops than America could put in the field."

The same causes which, in Mexico, keep Huerta's forces busy are giving our own Tommy Atkins' all they can attend to. Righteous discontent is rendering it impossible for Huerta to keep down the lid. Still more righteous discontent, which may break at any moment into a conflagration, ties the hands of United States plutocracy and forces it to postpone indefinitely the single-handed invasion on which it would embark as joyously as swoops the vulture when he sights the wounded lamb. Intervention has proved too dangerous.

Revolutions, where we pass from words to deeds, have as their chief function the exposure of the sham. They strip off remorselessly the mask which skilled language-twisters weave so cunningly, and show us men and things not as they pretend to be but as they are. Thereby humanity advances in a day farther than is possible in a century of vapid talk, being brought down from the clouds of tenuous theory to the substantial ground of facts. Already the Mexican Revolution has shown us how hollow were the claims of many who posed before the American public as eager to throw plutocracy into the gutter at the earliest chance. It is now exposing another sham, viz., that the United States is, or can ever hope to be, a military power; inasmuch as its own soldiers are in constant revolt and its own domestic discontent is reaching rapidly the point at which repression by force will be no longer possible.

The day in which the United States could afford to start a war has passed, and passed forever. The forces of social revolution are gathering within its borders, and their name is Legion.

The day in which the wealth of the United States—inhabited by two bitterly hostile classes, and ruled by traders whose courage lies only in their tongues—will invite irresistibly the attack of really martial nations, is approaching with lightning wings. Japan already scents the prey, and the Orient at large has a grudge of deeply-wounded pride which it will nurse

with all the deathless patience of the Orient. Let the United States look to its own defenses and keep its hands off Mexico.

Villa's murder of Benton—for doubtless it was murder—has been the signal for this joint intervention cry, and once again we are deluged with the Pharisaic cant that human life must be protected, even if we have to turn Mexico into a shambles. The sanctity of human life! Tell that tale to the outcast hugging the shelter of a friendly arch in Chicago, with the temperature below zero, or sleeping in London's parks, soaked to the skin by driving rain. Tell that tale to the men shivering in the bread lines, or to the desperate unemployed whose protest meetings are ridden down by mounted police. Tell that tale to the men who have to pack their blankets all along this coast, and think themselves lucky if they strike a job under such conditions as those exposed so recently at Wheatlands, Cal. Tell that tale to the thousands you straight-jacket and paddle and torture, with all the refinements of the Inquisition up-to-date, in your jails and penitentiaries. Tell that tale to the children whose lives you crush, by the millions, in your factories; and to the man who take their lives into their hands that they may pile your skyscrapers to the sky, for social vampires to inhabit, or that they may dig out the gold which goes to swell fortunes that are the scandal of the ages. Tell that tale—but why waste further space? These things are known to all. It is recognized that those who live in a house built of glass so fragile cannot afford to amuse themselves by throwing stones; that the Belchazzar rioters had best heed the warning blazing out on their own walls, and attend to their own morals.

We should add that the "Times" is now pleading for joint intervention because conditions in Mexico are calculated to "spread legions of troubles throughout the United States of America, so accessible to the brigands, pirates and 'Reds,' now breeding like mosquitoes on Mexican soil." Society in the United States, rotten to the core, has good cause to be alarmed; for the Mexican Revolution is turning on the light.

TORTURED FOULLY.

One sickens more and more at the monotonous, never-ending story of the cruelties inflicted by the rich—through their legal machinery—on the victims they have reduced to helplessness. Colorado and West Virginia; Calumet, Michigan, and Wheatland; California; San Antonio, Texas, Los Angeles and a score of other places which will suggest themselves—it is always the same story. But now and again some case jumps into special prominence by reason of its unspeakable barbarity, and for the moment the so-called Plaza rioters, of Los Angeles, may well be given the center of the stage.

Being entirely within their rights as has been admitted by the judge, who sentenced them, our Mexicans refused to work on the chain gang. For this they have been tortured; tortured terribly; tortured by one of the favorite methods of the Spanish Inquisition's most infamous days. First they were handcuffed, and then—we quote from "The Los Angeles Record's" report: A rope was fastened to the gyves and thrown over a limb, and every time they refused to work the hands were jerked a little higher until, to keep the arms from being broken, the entire weight of the body was borne by the manacled wrists."

That special torture of raising men and letting them down with a jerk is designed specially to produce the pains of dislocation. Our Mexicans are Indians, Stoics, capable of standing punishment to a degree far beyond the power of the ordinary white man. Well; three of them stood it for six hours, one for seven hours, one for an entire day and one for three and one-half days! During the time of this punishment—for standing on their legal rights, since their cases have been appealed—their food was two slices of dry bread and a cup of cold water, three times a day.

What do you think of it? Does it suggest to your mind that the authorities in this country are sowing broadcast a wind from which they will reap one of the worst hurricanes that ever blew? And what do you think of the further fact that, with the exception of the "Los Angeles Record," all the papers of that most profoundly corrupt community maintained the silence of the grave? Not because the reporters are unsympathetic, or do not know a good story when they see it, but because plutocracy's kept press dare not let in the light.