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He Walks Safe Who Walks Well-Armed

"It is a haunting thought," wrote John B. Harris, in his recent book, "Dawn in Darkest Africa," "that since the '35 scramble for Africa, the civilized powers who arranged the map of the African continent, ostensibly in the interests and for the well-being of the natives, have passively allowed the premature destruction of not less than ten millions of people." The reference is to the French and Belgian Congos, which are but a very small portion of this profit-desolated world, and the thought would be one of blank despair were it not accompanied by the sister reflection that news spreads fast and that in all countries the disinherited, tutored thoroughly at last by bitter experience, are arming for self-preservation. The Mexican has led the way. The Mexican has been the first to grasp the bitter truth that exploitation, however smiling its mien and honeyed its promises, has always black murder in its heart. He, first, of all the proletarians, has stepped boldly into the open with the declaration that force must be met with force; that rifle must be faced with rifle; that human equality can only be maintained when blow can be returned for blow, on equal terms. As one of my correspondents puts it: "When the Mexican peon got his hands on a modern rifle he cared nothing for the police and sheriffs who stuck as thick as flies around a sugar barrel. The more there were of them, the better mark they made."

Shift the scene to Peru, a country in many respects akin to Mexico. The story of the atrocities attendant on the development of the rubber industry there has leaked out gradually of late, thanks mainly to the most heroic efforts of a Peruvian Socialist named Benjamin Saldana Rocca—a name we Anarchists may well afford to honor, since he has set us an example of most lofty courage. I quote from his first exposure, dated 1907, in which he wrote: "The force the pacific Indians of the Putumayo to work day and night at the extraction of rubber, without the slightest remuneration. The rob them of their crops, their women and their children, to satisfy the voracity, lasciviousness and avarice of themselves and their employes. They flog them inhumanly until their bones are laid bare; they give them no medical treatment, but let them die, eaten up by maggots or to serve as food for their dogs; they castrate them, cut off their ears, fingers, arms, legs; they torture them by fire, water, and by tying them up, crucified, head downwards. They cut them to pieces with machetes, they grasp children by the feet and dash their heads against walls and trees, until their brains fly out; they have the old people killed when they can work no longer, and, finally, to amuse themselves, practice shooting or, to celebrate the *sabado de gloria* (Easter Saturday), they discharge their weapons at men, women and children, or, in preference to this, they source them with kerosene and set fire to them to enjoy their desperate agony." Without a touch of sentiment or hysteria I ask coldly if you do not KNOW that these horrors were rendered possible solely by the fact that the armed commercial pirates had the weaponless natives entirely at their mercy. Am I, a friend of human freedom and equality, called on to wish a similar fate for Mexico?

Angola, which is the vast Portuguese district lying along the West coast of Africa, tells a like story. The adjacent islands of S. Thome and Principe are ruled by some two thousand whites, who use the native population for the production of cocoa, coffee and cotton. Slavery of the most revolting character prevails, and the best-informed travellers agree that within the last twenty-five years no less than 200,000 men and women have been kidnapped from the mainland to swell the island slave-gangs. Do you approve of it, and do you not know that it has been rendered possible only because the armed minority has the weaponless natives at its mercy?

Pass to India, where my own coun-

trymen, a pitifully small but armed minority, wield despotic sway over a population four times as large as that of the United States. Putting aside the awful tragedies of ever-recurring famines, though India is a never-failing exporter of food supplies, let us remember that under the British bourgeois rule, and despite its everlasting cant of freedom, thousands and thousands of natives are sold annually into plantation-slavery under what is known as the "indenture" system,—a system denounced with unsparring severity nearly a century ago by Lord Brougham, Buxton and other noted radicals of that age, who were pioneers in the struggle to abolish chattel slavery. That system still exists, despite continuous attack; and in "The New Review," a Socialist magazine which I am using freely in this article, I have found an English magistrate of Mauritius quoted as saying: "The position of indentured coolies when charged in the courts is hopeless. Justice they get only by accident. They are deterred from giving evidence themselves, and unable to procure evidence. I was a machine for sending men to prison for the convenience of the employers." Do you suppose that England could maintain her rule in India twenty-four hours if it were not that she herself is armed to the teeth while the natives are weaponless?

One could multiply examples indefinitely, and indeed no American need go abroad for illustration, since they spring up daily beneath his very nose. The policeman is as careful of his life as any other man, and never will swing his club on one known as going invariably well-heeled and having a reputation for being quick on the trigger. Such a man, as Roosevelt remarked, may go far untouched, and I think he need not be at the trouble of speaking softly. Let him be obviously without means of offense and he will be bludgeoned without mercy, as the unemployed are bludgeoned. It is a hard old world, and Darwin and the apostles of the doctrine of individual struggle—offensive as well as defensive—lay it all over those who prate about turning the other cheek, while themselves going heavily-armed and yelling eternally for more police and soldiers. They are like that, famous peace-advocate, Carnegie, who made scores of millions out of armor plate; and I doubt not that Winston Churchill, First Lord of the British Admiralty, is in the odor of sanctity with his church. He wants the British workingman to put up the modest sum of \$257,750,000 for this year's navy, and has emphasized his request with the reflection: "The world is arming as it never armed before. All attempts at arresting it have been ineffectual."

It is even so. Commercialism, capitalism, plutocracy, whatever you choose to call it, is essentially the most Christianlike of all recorded systems, for it has peace ever on its lips, and blows out unhesitatingly the brains of every foe that dares to cross its path. It is not amenable to prayers, for it is an earthly God, and earthly Gods are walking arsenals, with hearts as hard as the metal of their cannon, and aims as precise as the sights with which they fit their rifles. They propose to maintain slavery, and to maintain it by force; for slavery is an institution that suits them very well. As for those who wish to abolish it, one would be glad of information as to what they do propose. After years of earnest searching I confess that I still find myself most uncomfortably in the dark.

WM. C. OWEN.

We are requested to state that, owing to certain unforeseen difficulties, mainly in connection with the purchase of a press, the first number of "Land and Liberty" will not be out before May 1. This was decided at a meeting of the Bakunin group, held in San Francisco, March 21. The editor of this section, who will be also the editor of the new paper, earnestly requests readers to send in the names and addresses of those to whom the sending of sample copies will be worth the while. It is the intention to send out a large number of such sample copies, that the revolutionary world may have the opportunity of making up its mind at once as to whether it will or will not support the new venture.

Address to Har Dayal, R. F. D. No. 1, Hayward, Cal.

Mexican Notes

Governor West, of Oregon, has returned from a visit to the Mexican border and given his view of the situation in an interview dated March 18. He is reported as saying: "I am confident that war with Mexico is coming, and I am going to advise the National Guard of this State to be prepared, for I am sure it can count upon being called out before long. The day is not far distant when the United States will be compelled to declare war. I cannot conceive of anything happening in the near future which will restore Mexico to a settled condition. With this condition prevailing, and the United States upholding the Monroe Doctrine, it is only a matter of time until pressure brought to bear by other nations and by American citizens will become so great that the United States will become forced to act." Governor West, of course, is an orthodox politician, and the possibility of restoring settled conditions by giving the Mexican back once more the land for which he hungers is an idea that cannot penetrate his brain.

With the high-grade politicians go, of course, the military men, and one finds the "Review of Reviews" for this month expressing itself thus, in connection with the lifting of the embargo on the importation of arms into Mexico: "It has all along been the view of the army officers that we were soon to invade Mexico, and that fighting material shipped into that country would be used eventually against our own soldiers and would make our efforts at pacification more bloody and more protracted."

In this connection the declarations of the European press, collected with its invariable care by "Current Opinion," are significant. The London "Post," regarded always as in close touch with government circles in England and abroad, thinks that "a situation may quickly be reached in which the use of force will be inevitable. When such a state of things is approached it usually happens that what is called an 'unforeseen event' or an 'accident' precipitates the collision." It instances the Boer declaration of war and the sinking of the Maine, and reflects that such accidents are the natural results of the tension of the situation and the difficulty each side has in putting itself exactly in the other's place. Unfortunately there has not been the slightest evidence hitherto that either our government or that of any European Power is making even the feeblest attempt to put itself in the disinherited peon's place.

According to "Current Opinion" the London dailies all declare emphatically that the British foreign office is in perfect accord with Washington in the matter of Mexico.

The London "Telegraph" and the Berlin "Vossische" agree in considering the military force at Huerta's disposal as "much more powerful than many Americans suspect," saying that his machine guns are of the best and latest pattern, that he is paying his trusted troops regularly, and that his treasury is far from empty. We ourselves have always maintained that delay works strongly in favor of the government, since it possesses arms foundries, has always some credit abroad and can force loans and impose taxation. That power indeed gives it such credit as it enjoys, and puts it at an enormous advantage as compared with those seeking to overthrow it.

Other leading German papers discuss the repeated attempts to federate the Northern States of Mexico, and treat this as a program which American vested interests have done their utmost to carry out. They speak of President Wilson as having been approached on the subject, but as being unwilling to become a party to the scheme. Their judgment is that neither Huerta nor the rebels would consent to it, and that any such attempt would rally all Mexicans against the United States.

Patterns After Boefs.

The correspondent of the London "Times," always certain to be a picked man, has a high opinion of Villa's military capacity, and reports his followers as being better fed, clothed and armed than are the Federals. He explains that Villa does not handle his men in masses; that they are permitted to operate in bodies of from twenty to thirty, without any set attempt at co-operation, and that his military organization is patterned after that of the Boers. In other words, individual, guerrilla warfare is

the rule, and this we believe to be in line with up-to-date military science. Students of such works as Bloch's "Future of War" will be familiar with the argument that mass fighting has been rendered for ever impossible by the destructive capacity of modern artillery, before which no mob, however determined, can begin to stand. Kitchener demonstrated this years ago in Africa, but our revolutionists still talk, and presumably think, as if the history of the barricades could repeat itself. Military men are better informed and recognize universally that, if war with Mexico comes, it will be a guerrilla war, waged against an enemy who will shoot from shelter and, thanks to knowledge of the country, can pick his shelter judiciously.

James Creelman's article in "The Chicago Evening Post" have led to prolonged controversy. Naturally they favor United States intervention, for Creelman has been known, from the days of the Spanish War, as one of Hearst's most valuable tools. They commence with the remark that "within forty-eight hours I have travelled 100 miles about the great valley of Mexico, surrounding the capital," and that "in the villages I talked with the gentle, stupid, thin-legged, monstrous-hatted, blanketed, barefoot Indians." Following which come for long articles, written apparently for the purpose of proving that the Mexican is an Indian who cares only for slaughter. Indeed there follows immediately the statement that "the rebel forces are inspired to fight by their fierce love of looting, burning and violating women. The federal forces serve through fear of their remorseless master."

Huerta the Sensualist.

The first of this series of articles is devoted almost entirely to a character sketch of Huerta, who is described as "a sensual man, of low association, devoted to brandy, bull-fights and degraded women. He is a short, squat, muscular Jalisco Indian of about 60 years, with broad shoulders and thin, slightly bowed legs." We are told that "it is a brutal, sensual countenance, with no sign of intellectuality," but that, nevertheless, "Huerta is no ordinary person, and he impresses you instantly as a man of power and a born leader." He is painted further as one who "plays the part of a simple, jovial, unpretending man of the people;" as one who flirts with waitresses "and winds up his carousal at the Cafe Colon, a resort of bullfighters, harlots and gamblers, owned by one of his close friends." He actually has, we are told, a presidential office in this malodorous building, and has compelled his cabinet to hold several meetings there. It is charged also that official corruption is rampant. "Important business men have told me that almost every day government concessions of all sorts are offered privately for sale at any price."

The article concludes with a paragraph intended to ridicule Wilson and Bryan for their dream that such a country can be coerced into the path of constitutional government; but the trouble is that the article does not hang together, and cannot, as we submit, stand the test of even a superficial criticism. First, the Indian is either gentle and stupid, or he is fired with a fierce love of looting, burning and violating women. It is difficult to imagine him as both. Secondly, it is self-evident that Huerta has been occupying, and still occupies, against furious attack, a post of the utmost difficulty. Men who pass their time in continual carousing and are devotees of such sexual perversities as Creelman depicts, never can hold down a job of that kind. Moreover, many photographs of Huerta have been published, and all convey an impression entirely different from that communicated by Creelman's portraiture. The camera does not lie, but writers often do, and Creelman has a long-established reputation as an advocate of imperialist expansion.

Lind Caricatured.

The second article in the series is headed "Intervention of Powers Mexico's Hope," and the head fits the article as the glove fits the hand. The argument is that "Huerta has no plan but to hold on to power while he and his friends are getting rich;" that "Villa has no plan but to murder, violate, plunder and burn;" and that "the United States' policy is limited to the words: 'Huerta must resign.'" Then follows a sketch of Lind, who is represented as "a hale, dignified, old-farmer type of lawyer-politician, who loves to talk of the smell of burning brush, the cheeping of squirrels, the spring call of birds and the plow-song of the soft brown furrows in dis-

tant Minnesota, and who adores Mr. Bryan, with whom he served in Congress." It is eloquent, but of facts for the sweeping denunciations in which it indulges the article is singularly naked, the one instance given being the levy of \$50,000 on a copper and smelting company, whose American manager appealed vainly to Lind for protection. It closes with the words: "Then the unhappy American manager went out and looked wistfully at the squadron of American battle-ships lying idly in sight of Mr. Lind's office."

The third article begins with "what a change since I walked and talked, less than four years ago, among the flowers and trees of Chapultepec Castle with Porfirio Diaz, the white-haired hero of modern Latin-American!" and the statement, following almost immediately, that "the dignity, power, order and security of the thirty-year-long Diaz government are gone forever, and the great city spread out before the terraces of the now vacant castle is merely the stately sepulchre of a dead nation." So, you can tell where Creelman's sympathies lie. Nevertheless one cannot help reminding the reader that Diaz himself was an Indian, as was Benito Juarez before him. Creelman's entire argument is that the Mexican Indian is incapable of progress, yet he finds himself compelled to go into raptures over the constructive capacity of Diaz. One remembers that John Kenneth Turner, writing recently in "Collier's," was at some pains to show that the recent intellectual development in Mexico—one that has permeated literature and science alike—has sprung always exclusively from those who have in their veins at least a preponderance of Indian blood.

Creelman expresses the opinion that there is not the slightest probability that Huerta will resign; although once, at the instance of Garcia Aldape and Senator Castellot, he agreed to do so, to avoid American intervention. He is represented, however, as having changed his mind immediately. Carranza is described as having financed his movement with funds originally contributed by Madero, for which Carranza refused, and most insultingly, to account, when he was governor of Coahuila. A similar accusation has been made in great detail by Zapata's special organ, which asserts that the man who now poses as the defender of Madero was in personal revolt against him. This third letter closes with the statement that "American armed intervention seems unavoidable, and the argument that we have intervened already, since we have worked actively to prevent Huerta from raising money. The situation in Mexico is described as 'an international calamity,' and we are reminded that 'we have 100,000 national guardsmen available in the States to guard the Mexican frontier and nearly 50,000 troops of the regular army ready to begin the work of occupying the country and restoring peace.'"

—To be concluded next week—

THEIR TRUE COLORS.

"The New Review" for this month calls attention to the publication by the New York "Call" of an article by John R. Hobbie, Jr., "which shows the real grounds why certain Socialists oppose the Industrial Workers of the World." It invites special attention to an extract from the article in question, which runs, in part: "In its indifference to the welfare of the State, the I. W. W. is truly anti-patriotic, and on this account is an actual menace to the nation. This is a feature of the I. W. W. that seems to have escaped the attention of the general public, and yet it is the point where they are most vulnerable. It is here that they differ fundamentally from the Socialists, and that the source of greatest contention between the two organizations arises.—This organization, in tactics and methods, is the direct opposite of everything that the Socialist Party is supposed to stand for."

Commenting on this, "The New Review," which is also Socialist but has been boycotted by the party's official ring in New York State, remarks: "Apparently the Socialist Party is patriotic, religious, and opposes class-strife."

Why not? It is a party of lawyers and preachers. The former have to take the oath of patriotism before they can practice. As to the latter, they can neither attack religion nor advocate the class-struggle without being false to every one of the professions by making which they earn their livelihood.