

No. 186.

Saturday, April 25, 1914.

Their Mouth Drops Honey, But Their Guns Spit Fire

When saluting women we uncover our heads, signifying thereby that we place the noblest part of us, our intelligence, at their command. When governments do obeisance to one another they explode gunpowder, signifying thereby that they place their all, brute force, at the command of the saluted. This they do with a world of solemn ceremony, as if it were the most important thing in life, and our civilian press reports the proceedings with fulsome reverence, furnishing its readers with cuts of the big chief in charge, cuts of the bedizened underlings who surround him, cuts of the "Jackies" who insert the cartridges and pull the ropes, cuts of the frowning guns themselves, and so on, down to the minutest detail. On occasion Mr. Hearst will sacrifice his precious front page to the reproduction of hideous tubes which possess the interesting faculty of dealing wholesale death and destruction to the detested foreign foe. Perhaps, however, these papers are not so foolish as they seem to be. Perhaps we need, above all else, the lesson that our adored government rests on brute force and on brute force alone.

I have been reading some of Prof. Ross' articles in the "Century" and other high-class magazines. Apparently they are eager for his contributions, though one of our leading universities—Stanford if I remember right—branded him as a dangerous social heretic and cast him out with contumely. One of his teachings is that crimes of the State are "mountainous," and he writes that "calling the State's lies 'diplomacy,' its violence 'war,' its murders 'punishment' and its robberies 'annexation' or 'indemnity' cannot change the moral complexion of such actions." Now and again some I. W. W. or Anarchist mounts a soap-box and gets off similar sentiments. He needs all the courage he can muster, for he runs imminent risk of being seized by an armed vigilance committee, and forced to kiss the Stars and Stripes. That is the committee's method of honoring our national emblem, which they worship as the representative of that brute force which protects them in the advantages they have obtained over their fellow-men, and to which they naturally bring their own brute force as the most suitable of offerings.

Our government is now putting Huerta through the third degree; shoving its threatening guns into his stomach and ordering him to his knees, to kiss the flag. That flag needs purifying more than anything I know of, for today it protects, by brute force, the most colossal and cunningly-organized system of robbing Labor this world has known; shelters beneath its folds the most heartless and successful industrial thieves on record, and flies, as an inevitable consequence, over jails and lunatic asylums thronged to overflowing; over morgues from whose cold slabs the remains of those who have stepped deliberately out of an unbearable life are never absent; over city slums in which no self-respecting dog would voluntarily kennel, and huge armies of the unemployed who would gladly loot this republic if they dared. A slavery far more extensive and deaf to human sympathies than that against which Garrison and Phillips thundered. A monstrous hypocrisy, rendered infinitely more hideous by the humanitarian cloak with which it drapes itself. In the name of justice it slays coldly on the gallows or in the electric chair. In the name of race-perfection it sterilizes those whom its unspeakably corrupt officials adjudge immoral. In the name of law it sets at defiance every fundamental law of life. In the name of industry it clothes the few with special privilege and digs between them and their multitudinous victims a gulf which bloody revolution eventually may have to bridge. This is the society which is hurrying battleships to Veracruz, that it may wipe away, to

the roar of cannon, the stain inflicted on its hitherto untarnished honor! So may you see a drunken prostitute asserting before a jeering crowd her right to be treated as a lady.

We are made the laughing stock of all the world, and that evil reputation for bluff with which our time-serving politicians have saddled us presents itself to millions of thinking men and women as more deserved than ever. Against a struggling nation that has, if I remember right, three petty gunboats, we send almost the whole of that monstrous fleet with which plutocracy has burdened us. We appear as Jack Johnson would appear if he were to assault me for some fancied insult. And all this we do with an air of lofty disinterestedness which deceives no one. With all the world assured that we intend to establish our lordship to the Panama Canal, and open up to American speculation the untold riches for which plutocracy's mouth is watering, we make our quarrel on a trumpety side-issue, and sneak in by the back-window of a petty officer's stupid error. Our foreign policy is criticised universally as hypocritical, and we affirm the criticism's truth by allowing a handful of men, burning for war, to commit us to the very course we have been protesting our anxiety to avoid. Why don't we come out flat-footed, as honest bandits do? Why don't we say frankly that we are out for the stuff and mean to get it? Why does Wilson pretend an eagerness to establish constitutional government in Mexico and equip the dearly-beloved peon with a vote, when the fact is that he means to save the billion we have invested in Mexico and give American monopolists a new field for the investment of their surplus loot? Great Britain would have taken, from the first, the brutally-blunt attitude; and it would have commanded the respect that brute force, as exemplified by our latest naval display, of necessity commands. We, on the other hand, creep in on gum shoes; and all the world, including especially the Latin-speaking countries, shouts in chorus "We told you so."

Last week I wrote that opinion had become divided in this country, and quoted Senator Shepherd and others as admitting frankly that if we went to war in Mexico it would be on behalf of the land speculators and usurers. I forgot that Congress is composed almost entirely of lawyers, and that the lawyer who has risen by politics is always an opportunist. Such men are utterly devoid of principle, and just as a life without principle is doomed eventually to tragic failure so a nation led by the unprincipled is bound for utter smash. No sooner had this ridiculous incident taken place at Veracruz than one found the politicians of both parties and all previously-announced opinions ranged solidly on the side of the administration, and understood immediately that none would have the manhood to stand against popular clamor for the sake of championing the right. It was so when the war-fever struck this country with the sinking of the Maine, and bitterly have we paid for it, since it gave plutocracy a renewed lease of life and plunged us into an era of wild speculation and increase of governmental and military power the sour fruit of which we are now harvesting. It will be so once more in the case of Mexico.

WM. C. OWEN

Who Was Lying?

In "Regeneration" of July 8, 1911, I called attention to the article published by Eugene V. Debs in the "International Socialist Review" of the previous month. In that article Debs quoted the leaders of the Mexican Liberal Party as declaring that "the taking away of the land from the hands of the rich must be accomplished during the present insurrection." On that plain statement he passed the following hostile comment, which I copied verbatim from the "International Socialist Review." "If the land can be taken from the rich in this insurrection, so can also the mills, factories, mines, railroads and the machinery of production, and the question is, what would the masses in their present ignorant and unorganized state do with them after having obtained them? It would simply add calamity to their calamities, granting that this impossible feat were capable of achievement." That was Debs' declared attitude toward the struggling peon, and I ask a careful reading for it once again,

because on it hinges the entire question of whether Debs has been maligned and calumniated, as he asserts in a letter dated Feb. 10, 1914, to the "Herald of Revolt" (London).

Naturally, I, as editor of the English section, protested against that attack, which I regarded as an appeal to Socialists not to support the Mexican Revolution; and I argued that if the disinherited were to wait until they had become completely organized and educated they would have to wait forever. I pointed out that such a position would be absurd in these United States and doubly absurd in Mexico, where the masses would have, under such a doctrine, to abstain for centuries from asserting that claim to equal opportunity which every man should have by the very fact of his existence, however uneducated or unorganized he may be. I said that plutocracy wanted, above everything else, delay; time in which to gather forces and crush the revolution. It seemed to me that Debs, with his plea for a hugely long delay, was playing directly into their hands, and I said so. It seemed to me that his entire argument was a reversal of all he had been urging so many years, since his teaching had been that the workers should take possession of the means of production. That is how I felt about it, and I did my best to express my feelings in the plainest language.

Debs replied at great length in the "Appeal to Reason" of August 19, 1911, and I dissected his reply in "Regeneration" of August 26, 1911. I showed how carefully he side-stepped the one great issue, viz., his position as defined by the passage quoted from the "International Socialist Review," showed further that he had maligned the Magons by accusing them of having concealed their Anarchistic views, than which no greater misrepresentation could have been made; showed still further that he had muddled dates in charging me with having abused the Socialists and alienated their sympathies from the Mexican Revolution at a time when my connection with the movement had not begun and I had never written a line for "Regeneration." That seemed to me very bad, and I set out the facts most carefully, adding that they were "part of the printed record, and Debs should be truthful enough to acknowledge it."

Now we have Debs jumbling dates once more, and writing indignantly to the "Herald of Revolt," his argument being that he supported the Mexican revolutionists in every possible way and thereby risked arrest and imprisonment. Its editor goes straight to the point when he replies: "It is sheer nonsense for Debs to refer to his support of them, (the Magons), therefore, prior to this date (Feb. 25, 1911) when they severed connection with Madero. We challenge him to produce a single letter from the Magons, thanking him for his support subsequent to their exposure of Madero. If he cannot do this his present protest is a lie, and carries its own condemnation. At any rate, let him give dates in his next letter, and not refer to the events of 1910, when he knows that the question at issue turns upon his attitude a year later. Honest men do not deny calumnies in this way."

Debs is nothing to me, and I have no taste for thrashing out old chaff. I consider that I exposed the kernel of this matter three years ago and substantiated the exposure with proofs most positive. I held that the man who found it subsequently convenient to declare that he encouraged and aided the Mexican revolutionists, after their breach with Madero, was lying, and I still hold that view. If there are any who doubt it I can only say that they have not examined the evidence, and that they know nothing of the boycott instituted by the Socialists and prosecuted vigorously under the leadership of Debs.

WM. C. OWEN

AMERICA THE WORST.

Dr. Carlton H. Parker, Professor of Economics in the University of California, whose official report on the Wheatland tragedy set all tongues wagging, has spoken out again, bravely and bluntly, his subject being the unemployed. Lecturing at the First Congregational Church in Oakland, March 15, he described unemployment as being by far the greatest problem now facing us, and said: "Conditions are worse in this country than in any civilized country in the world. I know twenty Russians who want to go back to Russia because conditions are better there, and ten of these are Jews."

War, Because Wilson Dare Not Speak The Truth

The curtain is about to fall on the first act of a tremendous drama. The second? Ah! Who can tell us what that second act will show? Not in the mere matter of the blood that may be shed, but in the intellectual and moral slaughter imminent; in the tragedy of consciences that wilfully blunt themselves and eyes that turn deliberately from the light; in the veil of deadening hypocrisy which will be thrown over a crime we dare not face; in the silences and compromises that will be made by thousands, and the national degeneracy they must bring. Many a faint tongue will burn to speak the truth and be afraid. Many a man will lock his lips for fear of losing money, social prestige, all those narrow personal interests that chill the soul, rob us of heroism and keep us still crawling in the mud. We are sneaking into war with Mexico, and already we are more than half ashamed of it.

President Wilson, above all others, is the man who, with honeyed words, has lured us into this net. He is ostensibly a scholar, but also an avowed adherent of that creed which regards "same as" predicated to eternal happiness and others to everlasting misery. To me the profession of such views today marks crookedness of mind or character, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is the latter. The views are professed because they insure personal preference, and thus hypocrisy becomes, as is almost universally acknowledged, the age's ruling vice.

Throughout these long negotiations President Wilson, to my thinking, has played the sorriest part. He should have spoken straight out, and he has never dared to do so. He should have informed the public, which looks to him for truth on public questions, as to the real causes of the Mexican Revolution. He has refrained most studiously from doing so, that he might shelter the wealthy brigands who are the cause of all the trouble. To hide their crimes he has represented Mexico's troubles as being purely political.

I deem it my imperative duty, as editor of this English section, to point out that millions of Americans would never dream of sanctioning war with Mexico if they understood, as President Wilson understands, the land monopoly of which the disinherited Mexican peon is the victim. I say, and I am confident my readers will uphold me, that silence on that important phase of the question is at once the most cowardly and injurious of lies. I express my opinion with a proud freedom which President Wilson, for all his official rank and power, has never dared to exercise. Therefore I, for one, do not believe President Wilson when, in his special message to Congress, and speaking for the American people, he declares that "we do not desire to control to any degree the affairs of our sister republic." I, for one, do not believe him when he says that "everything that we have so far done or refrained from doing has proceeded from our desire to help" the Mexicans. On the contrary, I believe the newspaper reporters who wrote that Congress knew, when listening to President Wilson's lip of peace, that he meant war with Mexico.

Men in authority do not send warships by the score, and assemble troops and cannon by the thousands, out of "deep, genuine friendship" for the nation whose seaports those warships are intended to bombard and

whose natives those troops and cannon mean to blow into eternity. I say bluntly that the man who sets in motion such machinery and then announces that he has no thought of plunging us into war with a friendly nation, is either a knavish hypocrite or a fit subject for a lunatic asylum.

The fact that Congress passed instantly a resolution identical with that adopted immediately before the war with Spain shows conclusively that it understood most clearly the real meaning of the message. At this moment the great dailies of this country are assuring their readers, in screaming headlines, that the United States treasury is "bulging with cash" and that there is "plenty for moving soldiers." They are selling millions and millions of extra copies, in which they dilate on the completeness of the war preparations that have been going on for months, and they inform us—note this well, you Americans who hitherto have prided yourselves on your freedom from conscription—that steps will be taken immediately "to make provision for a first draft of not less than 200,000 volunteers," giving us, with about 117,000 men of the national militia, a "total first call of 359,000 troops."

All that means war, planned and prepared with long and zealous care. The country has been lied to. Is it not monstrous to maintain unbroken silence on the robbery that has made millions landless outcasts, while shielding the robbers with the lie that Mexico's ills are all political? How can mankind be betrayed more basely? How can the chains be fastened more deftly on the American masses than by covering up the crimes perpetrated across the Rio Grande by that gigantic money power which already—according to President Wilson's own written publication—holds the industrial life of these United States in the hollow of its hand? Of this assassination of truth I indict Wilson the politician, and I say it is a murder ten thousand times more injurious to mankind than was the killing of Madero. President Wilson professes to be a religious man; and, borrowing a phrase from that great champion of liberty, John Milton, I say that he has hit his God in the very apple of his eye.

I challenge him to lay before the American people a full statement of the real causes of the Mexican Revolution. I say, boldly and confidently, that he dare not. And because he dare not he is dragging a foolishly-confiding nation into war.

WE MOVED Our Offices to 2205 Court St

RANGEL-CLINE DEFENSE FUND.

The money received till the 22nd of April by this committee, still unpublished, is as follows: CALIFORNIA: International Rod Carriers, by B. Santry, \$1.—Cigar Makers Int. Union of A., by Thomas Steigerwald, \$1.—NEW JERSEY: L'Era Nuova, first remittance, \$5, and second remittance, \$16.70. Total, \$22.70. To this sum is added \$7.75, received from the Spanish-speaking comrades, as printed in the Spanish Section of this issue, which gives as GENERAL TOTAL, \$30.45.

VICTOR CRAVELLO, Fin. Sec.

The business manager of "Land and Liberty," the first number of which is to appear May 1, informs us that it has practically been decided that, beginning with June, the paper will appear as a weekly. Economies rendered possible by the purchase of a plant, freedom from rent and voluntary service, are considered sufficient to justify the management in making this decision. The money assistance has been, as yet, comparatively small, but many encouraging letters have been received.

INTERVENTION IS A FACT NOW. What Are You Going To Do, REBELS OF THE WORLD?