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What! No Cause For Discontent?

"The present ills of society are more imaginary than real, and are not the result of any actual cause." It was not said thoughtlessly; it was the keynote of a carefully studied address delivered before what is probably the most influential plutocratic body in the world; for I have quoted from John Kirby Jr., President of the National Association of Manufacturers. He spoke at a moment when, as he knew full well, his words would carry weight and be carried to the four corners of the world. He had such an educational opportunity as falls to the lot of few, and he prostituted himself to the utterance of a monstrous lie.

"The present ills of society are more imaginary than real, and are not the result of any actual cause." John Kirby has not passed his life on a desert island. He frequents the haunts of men; knows cities; is familiar with industrial and public life. He has a brain that can record and reason on the evidence presented by his senses. A thousand times his contact with the world must have shown him that a privileged class is born into the purple and immune from want, however idle and worthless its career may be. He knows that men, of whom Astor is the type, can expatriate themselves and draw princely incomes from the toll of thousands, not one of whom they even know by sight. He knows, on the other hand, that millions who drudge out their lives in the mines, the factories and the workshops owned by the men he was addressing, will find success from anxiety and labor only when death summons them to rest. He knows that to the masters, as whose representative he speaks, those masses are merely food for powder on the industrial as on the military battlefield. As a practical man of affairs he knows that this appalling division in the lot of our common humanity is due, solely and exclusively, to the fact that the few are in possession and the many are not. He knows that Astor—to refer him once more—can revel on the fruits of others' labors only because of unnatural laws that give him most unnatural privilege. He knows that such men as Weyerhaeuser are permitted by those laws to call "their's" 32,000,000 acres of this great nation's timber lands. He knows—and actually boasts of it in his address—that members of his class, having shorn their own fellow-countrymen to the skin, have sought new pastures in Mexico, where they have annexed principalities. He knows that in so doing they have expatriated tens of thousands, and that such expatriation was possible only by inhuman bargains between the money power and its invariable ally, the government. All this John Kirby knows.

"The present ills of society are more imaginary than real, and are not the result of any actual cause." John Kirby knows—his whole address was one confession of the fact—that the world is troubled today as it seldom has been troubled; that it is seething with revolt against the rack on which it writhes in anguish. He knows that rack is not imaginary. He knows that the members of the very association he was addressing have been perpetually at war with the men dependent on them for every meal they eat; that the war has been absolutely without quarter on the masters' side; that when it has promised advantage to their pockets they have closed the factory doors and thrown swarms of would-be workers on the streets. He knows that to these masters the men who make their wealth are not men but numbers; that no considerations of human life or happiness are permitted to disturb their cold financial calculations; that the thermometer may fall below zero and the cruel winter wind search the very vitals of the unemployed sleeping in our city parks, shivering in the long bread lines or clamoring for standing room in the overcrowded police stations, while Dives feasts and snores in undisturbed tranquility. All this, which drives the thoughtful and the sensitive well-nigh insane, John Kirby knows.

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Kirby knows—as I myself know, having made a special study of this, society's darkest side—that crimes of violence multiply on every hand, although our police force was never so large or well equipped for the detection, pursuit and punishment of criminals. As a pillar of society he doubtless counts prostitutes as criminals, and many a time he himself must have been solicited by women of the street, eager to throw themselves into his arms for the price of another day's existence. He cannot have passed through life without numbering among his friends those who have gone insane through business troubles, nor can he have read the daily papers without noting that lack of money and employment is the most common cause of suicide.

"The present ills of society are more imaginary than real, and are not the result of any actual cause." Does John Kirby seriously impute to nature such conditions as those on which I barely touch? Does he, the representative of a class that spends millions on the erection of gorgeous temples to the God of Love, mean to tell us that his omnipotent deity has woven inextricably into his scheme of life contrasts so hideous. If so he is the arch-athiest of our age; saturated with the appalling delusion which is the basis of all real atheism, viz. that this world is a mistake and life itself a curse to be shaken off only by universal suicide. Or is it that he, and the class he represents, are like King Lear who had "taken too little thought of this;" and had to be tripped to the bone and whipped by poverty to "feel what wretches feel" and "show the heavens more just." Beware! John Kirby! Imperial Rome's nobility flaunted it as you do, and the Huns and Goths, the despised of all despisers, brought them prostrate with a crash that shook the world. King Louis XIV shouted, "The State, I am the State," and the "sans-culottes," the breechless paupers, shoved the head of his grandson beneath the guillotine's sharp knife. Beware! John Kirby! History repeats itself.

As a defender of the indefensible John Kirby is a fool, just as Taft was a fool—although, as I myself think, an honest one—when he gave his enemies a chance to christen him "God knows Taft;" just as Otis is a fool, with his chatter of "industrial freedom" to a society that knows him as a gladiator of special privilege. But from the revolutionary standpoint these men's folly is advancing incalculably the birth of a truer wisdom than that which blind humanity at present brings to bear on its affairs. They are hasteners; they rouse men out of apathy as no revolutionary writer could rouse them; they quicken our passage through an inexpressibly painful period of transition. I myself am proudly grateful to them, and it will be observed that I am doing my best to drive their work home by the monotonous repetition of John Kirby's assinity. I want to make the disinterested understand clearly the master's mental attitude. I want to get them out of their slushy, slipshod way of thinking. I want them to comprehend, once and for all, that this quarrel cannot be smoothed over with diplomatic talk, and that they should out the talk as short as possible for the sake of ending an agony that is becoming unendurable.

John Kirby and his kind will not heed my warning. They will go on as they have always gone on, burying their noses in their ledgers and assuming that the credits shown therein prove this to be the best of all possible worlds. If, roused by the tumult that thunders in their ears, they tear themselves for the moment from money-making and take a hand in public life, they will act as they have always acted. They will not try to solve the problem; they will seek only to quiet things for the time being, that their privileges may be more secure.

With the world for his audience John Kirby pleaded for the "Iron Hand." He fanned the class hatred latent in his audience that he might blind it to the truths no sane man ventures to deny. In his denunciation of the rapidly increasing army of muckrakers he was calling for the suppression of free speech; throughout his address there rang appeal to force. The "Los Angeles Times" instantly appreciated that, and selected for its day's cartoon the American eagle perched on frowning cannon and screaming that it was ready for the resort to arms.

I add that the approval with which his millionaire audience greeted John Kirby's statements seems to me the blackest cloud that has appeared on the darkening horizon. Henceforth there are many who will say: "What they told us is all true. Plutocracy is blind to facts and dead to reason."

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Restore Our Stolen Heritage Is Mexico's Cry

Madero's Government Overwhelmed with Demands for Land Federal Troops Slaughtered by Yucatan Insurrectionists

Perusal of the Mexico City dailies establishes beyond all possibility of contradiction one all-important fact, viz that the land question has become the burning question throughout the Mexican Republic. Well may the Mexican Liberal Party rejoice at the spectacle of a nation rising to its feet and rallying with one accord to its motto, "Land and Liberty." No other country in the world can match the record for clear-sighted, determined and rapid advance toward the one essential goal. The following news items justify the statement.

"El Imparcial" of Dec. 10 reports a commission representing 18,000 of the natives of the State of Durango as visiting Mexico City, and states that the spokesmen of the different groups all demanded that the Indians be given possession of the lands of which they had been deprived. They insist that the plan of San Luis Potosi be carried out to the letter. "El Heraldico Mexicano's" report quotes Sr. Antonio Castellano, who headed the commission, as saying: "If Sr. Madero does not adhere to the law, giving us entire justice, my companions and I will not be responsible for the uprisings that may occur. On the decision we reach will depend the situation in the State. It is at present much disturbed."

"El Pais," the leading Roman Catholic organ, calls loudly for the annihilation of Zapatism in the State of Morelos, declaring that "it is a question of life or death, not only for our heroic and beloved State but also for the entire Republic." It asserts that Zapatism is "latent" among all the unlettered and describes it as "Socialism poorly understood and even worse expounded; a species of Anarchist-Communism." The same number has a big scare head that reads: "The Zapatistas propose to take possession of the State of Morelos," and a report of a visit paid to governmental headquarters by leading hacienda owners who declared that "the situation in their State grew more alarming every day," and that the rumors that Emiliano Zapata and Eufemio had been killed were unfounded.

Seizing the Lands

According to "El Imparcial" of Dec. 10 the Indians have seized a large tract of land in the State of Oaxaca and formed a pueblo. The government has sent troops and will try to oust them.

In "La Nueva Era," a Maderist organ, the report of Dec. 11 from the State of Puebla runs: "The action by certain natives of the State of Puebla is truly alarming, for they have taken forcible possession of great tracts of land."

"El Diario," of the same date says: "A commission composed of fifty native cultivators of the soil arrived at the metropolis today, having come from various important towns in the State of Guanajuato with a view of approaching the president of the Republic to ascertain if it is possible to obtain a return of the lands which belonged to them in the past and of which they were deprived unjustly during the governorship of Sr. Joaquin Obregon Gonzalez." Its Sonora report of the same date runs: "Up today Sr. Viljoen (Madero's special commissioner) has not succeeded, in spite of the innumerable efforts he has made, in convincing the natives. They have told him they will assume a pacific attitude only when they see that the lands of their ancestors, for whom they naturally feel a deep veneration, are to be really returned to them."

"El Heraldico Mexicano" of Dec. 12 reports the Indians of Michoacan as saying: "Let them return to us our lands, of which they usurped possession during the Diaz epoch, and thus comply with the plan of San Luis Potosi, enabling us to set ourselves to work and quit the attitude we are now obliged to assume."

"El Diario" of Dec. 13 says: "Headed by the well-known jurist of Guadalupe, Antonio Hernandez, seven Indians from Poncitlan and Tepehlan, State of Jalisco, arrived here yesterday to ask the president to intervene for the return to them of

lands of which they were unjustly deprived by prominent landowners who became rich under the protection of the dictatorship. They have assumed an energetic attitude and will fight, if possible, arms in hand, for their rights so arbitrarily trampled under foot." Twenty-four hours later "El Diario" reported an uprising of the Indians on the Hacienda de Guadalupe.

Land and Peace

Under date of Dec. 15 "El Imparcial" reported the inhabitants of Tamazunchale, San Luis Potosi, as "demanding restoration of lands stolen from them during the previous administration." "La Voz de Juarez" of Dec. 14, in an article headed "Land and Peace," says: "Land! It is the agonized people's cry;" and later, "urge the appropriation of the lands needed by the people."

How the heart of Henry George would have leaped as he read such news! I refer to the Henry George who toured Ireland on behalf of the land for the people, and wrote such burning letters to the "Irish World." But that is a long, long time ago.

The Roman Catholic organ, "El Pais," true to its authoritarian principles, views the whole situation with vast alarm and writes editorially, under date of Dec. 12: "Free suffrage by itself, or no re-election by itself, or both combined, however powerful in themselves, could not have produced in the minds of the lower classes that vertigo which carried them so easily to victory, and did more than the armies of Orozco and Figueroa to force the dictator to drop the scepter he had borne so many years." It deplores the promises of "social, political and economic liberty" made to the masses while Madero's revolution was in gestation.

How all absorbing is the agrarian question is testified to farther by the fact that the government now promises to expend \$200,000,000 on agriculture and irrigation. But it is not any Roosevelt conservation policy that the Mexican masses want.

Federal Slaughter

As to Yucatan. One finds in "El Imparcial" of Dec. 10 flaring, front-page heads which read: "Government forces in Yucatan suffer a terrible defeat. In a bloody encounter on the Sacute and Misuehalaan estates only six escape with their lives, the remainder being killed by the insurrectionists. The result of this encounter has caused an immense sensation in Merida. The report that Temax and Dailam have fallen into the hands of the revolutionists is confirmed."

The week has produced plenty of fighting news and many conflicting reports as to the progress made by Reyes and Gomez, but I prefer to devote space to proof of the tenacity with which the Mexican people are clinging to their determination to get back the land. It is this which is bringing them into conflict with the money power of their own country and of the world. It is this, therefore, that may force intervention and raise the Mexican question immediately to the rank of a problem second to none.

The agrarian movement is spreading rapidly. Up to date the proletariat has taken possession of the land in various parts of the States of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Morelos, Oaxaca, Puebla, Veracruz and Yucatan. Probably others should be added to the list. It is becoming easy to lose count.

MONEY WE MUST HAVE.

Our movement advances by leaps and bounds, but with it advance the demands on our purse. We cannot pay printing bills with sympathetic letters. Money is needed to run a great revolutionary movement, and money we must have AT ONCE. Hitherto we have not pressed you but now we do, for we ourselves are pressed most sorely.

Not Madero Nor Reyes, but the Land

The Maderist press is trying to make the public believe that the revolutionary movement is a Reyist movement; thinking that by this stupid lie it will quench their enthusiasm, and that the hands now reaching out for weapons will drop in disgust and prefer taking up the tools of toil to seeing new blood shed for the elevation to power of another tyrant.

A poor sort of a lie! Despite of it the movement grows and grows, and spreads and spreads, with a rapidity that makes the head swim. Uprisings multiply. Even the bourgeois papers of the City of Mexico confess it, notwithstanding the brutal press censorship prevailing. "El Paladin" of Nov. 30, says: "The present administration has not been thirty days in power and already it finds itself encompassed by difficulties that appear to be insuperable. The entire Mexican territory swarms with gangs of men holding their different flags—Zapatista, Vazquistista, Reyista, Magonista."

So it is not really a Reyist movement, as they would have it appear to be for the purpose of belittling and discouraging it, since Reyism finds no sympathy among the masses of the Mexican people. It is a true revolutionary movement with a character markedly economic, and is nothing else than the revolution Madero sold out at Juarez City. But that revolution had so sold a foundation that such action could not kill it, and it continued to be fomented by the Liberals and Zapatistas. With the entry into action of the Reyistas and the Vazquistas it became general once more, and that fact is of itself the best proof that this is no question of turning from one tyrant to another, inasmuch as the self-same elements that took up arms in November a year ago are now again in arms.

Madero did not keep his promise to give the people back their land, and for this reason the revolution has spread. The proletarians who are militant in the bourgeois Reyist and Vazquist parties are not bearing arms for the sake of elevating Reyes or Vazquez Gomez to the Presidency of the Republic. They have thrown themselves into the struggle with the idea of obtaining economic well-being, just as they threw themselves into the struggle when Madero was a revolutionist.

Bread the Necessity

Perhaps Gomez will foist Reyes or Vazquez Gomez into power, but the reign of either of them will be as ephemeral as that of poor, disillusionized Francisco I. Madero. Henceforth there will be no stable government in Mexico, for what the people want is to eat and no government can give them bread. That the people have to take, by destroying the capitalist system and assuming possession of the land, the instruments of toil, all that exists, for the use and enjoyment of all, without exception.

Until this shall have translated itself into actual fact there will be not peace but war between the poor class and the rich; the war of those who are hungry against those who have too much; until finally the Red Flag waves victorious throughout the length and breadth of Mexico.

It is not Zapatism; it is not Vazquism; it is not Reyism; it is not Magonism. It is the most serious manifestation of the self-preservation instinct of the individual and of the species; it is the desperation of the disinherited masses, tired at last of carrying their heavy load; it is misery; it is the supreme resolution of a people that is rising in its might to crush, with its hands that were yesterday in chains, all those who oppress and exploit it.

What is needed now? The direction of all these formidable energies toward true liberty—liberty based on economic freedom—and this can be gained only in one way—by the forcible expropriation of the lands, the waters, the mountains, the houses, the mines, the factories, the workshops, the railroads, everything, in short, that the poor may organize production in accordance with the requirements of each productive community.

This, comrades, is our task. This time our movement has a firm basis in the example set us by the inhabitants of the extensive districts in which expropriation of the land has become an accomplished fact. Forward!

Now for the taking of what remains! Let Reyes and Gomez aspire to the Presidency. For our part, let us take possession of what belongs to all and is now in the hands of the few. What political master will be able to impose himself upon us then?

All aboard then for a united effort! This is a precious moment and the workers should take advantage of the situation in which the country finds itself.

What Would You Peons Do?

(From "The Mexican Revolution," By Voltairine de Cleyre.

The Chicago Daily Socialist reports, "A new revolution in Mexico." It isn't a new revolution at all. It is the same revolution, which did not begin with the armed rebellion of last May, which has been going on steadily ever since then, and before then; and is bound to go on for a long time to come, if the other nations keep their hands off and the Mexican people are allowed to work out their own destiny.

The Mexican revolution is one of the prominent manifestations of this world-wide economic revolt. It possibly holds as important a place in the present disruption and reconstruction of economic institutions as the great revolution of France held in the eighteenth century. It did not begin with the odious government of Diaz, nor end with his downfall, any more than the revolution in France began with the coronation of Louis XVI, or ended with his beheading. It began in the bitter and outraged hearts of the peasants, who have suffered under a ready-made system of exploitation, imported and foisted upon them, by which they have been dispossessed of their homes.

For the Yaquis there was worse than this. Not only were their lands seized but they were ordered, a few years since, to be deported to Yucatan. Now Sonora is a northern state and Yucatan one of the southernmost.

Yucatan hemp is famous, and so is Yucatan fever and Yucatan slavery on the hemp plantations. It was to that fever and that slavery that the Yaquis were deported in droves of hundreds at a time, men, women and children—driven and beaten like cattle. They died there, like flies, as it was meant they should. Sonora was desolated of her rebellious people, and the land became "pacific" in the hands of new landowners. Too pacific in spots. They had not left people enough to reap the harvests. Then the government suspended the deportation act, but with the provision "that for every crime committed by a Yaqui, five hundred of his people be deported. This statement is made in Madero's own book.

Now, what in all conscience would any one with decent human feeling expect a Yaqui to do? Fight. As long as there was powder and bullet to be begged, borrowed or stolen; as long as there was a garden to plunder or a hole in the hills to hide in. When the revolution broke out the Yaquis and other Indian people said to the revolutionists: "Promise us our lands back and we will fight with you." And they are keeping their word magnificently.

"This law of unappropriated lands," (which expelled from the land they had occupied for centuries thousands who were unable to display title deeds) says Wm. Archer, "has covered the country with Naboth's vineyards." I think it would require a Biblical prophet to describe the "abomination of desolation" it has made. It was to become landlords of this desolation that the men who play the game—landlords who are at the same time governors and magistrates, together with enterprising capitalists seeking investments—connived at and themselves devised the iniquities of the Diaz regime. The Madero family alone owns some 8,000 square miles of territory; more than the entire State of New Jersey. The Terrazas family, in the State of Chihuahua, owns 25,000 square miles; rather more than the entire State of West Virginia, nearly half the size of Illinois. What was the plantation-owning of our Southern states in chattel slavery days compared with this?

Who made the land? Did the frock-coated and begloved gentlemen who call it "theirs" make it? No; the land is a natural commodity, for the use of every living creature. Who made the houses, the fabrics and all that goes to render life comfortable? Was it the gentlemen we see living in rich palaces and lodged in luxurious hotels? No; all that came from the hands of the poor, who huddle in huts, rot in prison, wither in brothels, and die in hospitals, on the gallows, everywhere, in the noon of life.

Bandits! Who would want these things are not the bandits. (From the Spanish of Ricardo Flores Magon.)

WAR TO THE KNIFE.

The number of arrests is infinite. The jails are full of conspirators and other thousands of completely innocent persons, together with opposition journalists and agitators, many of whom disappear mysteriously. The places where strikes occur have been converted into military camps, and on every hand abuses and atrocities are committed either by Madero's direct orders or by those of the authorities imposed on us by this new tyrant. Executions without legal trial multiply, and the "Fugitive Law" is today more in fashion than it was under the rule of Diaz.

All this has contributed, naturally, to the spreading of discontent and rebellion over the entire country with the velocity of a fire in an oil refinery, and uprisings follow one another throughout the vast territory known as the Mexican Republic. The encouraging feature is that, with very rare exceptions, all the rebels take as the basis of their operations—expropriation.

All this, furthermore, has assisted in bringing it about that Madero has lost prestige with everybody, and that even in the Capital itself, under his very nose, huge street demonstrations take place, in which cries of "Death to Madero" issue repeatedly from the very lips that but a short while ago were loud in his acclamations.

Authority will Not Tolerate Discussion

The superintendent of the New Mexico penitentiary, at Santa Fe, has written us, most politely, that the Board of Commissioners does not consider "Regeneracion" proper reading for the unhappy inmates of that institution. We are not surprised, we recognize that those who imprison the body also seek to keep the mind in fetters, and that liberal ideas can expect no sympathy from jail officials. We register a protest, knowing at the same time that it can have no direct effect.

Authority, so dear to the State Socialist, is always the same, and we take occasion here to cite another recent experience. In Carrizo Springs, Texas, our Mexican comrades have formed a new group, entitled "Jesus Maria Rangel," having as its object the assistance of the agrarian revolution now convulsing Mexico. Our correspondent, who is a highly educated professional man, writes us that the county sheriff immediately took it upon himself to forbid all meetings, saying that he had read in the English section of "Regeneracion" that its editor was an Anarchist and that "these infernal fellows are after what may cost half the world its life." Shades of Tolstoy, Herber Spencer and all the innumerable Army of Freedom's champions! Vainly do you devote your lives to the science of liberty. Vainly do you "scorn delights and lead laborious days" that you may point the road to the annihilation of poverty and all that poverty begets. Vainly do you ransack the literature of all the ages to prove the reality of what is, to a county sheriff, but a murderer's dream.

Which reminds us that when, in September, 1908, Antonio de P. Araujo was sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment for violation of the neutrality laws, Judge Maxey, of Texas, calmly said: "I admit that I am prejudiced against the defendant, but I am resolved to break up this conspiracy against President Diaz of Mexico. In my judgment President Diaz is a great and good ruler, and any man who dares to lift a hand against his administration should be severely punished."

Are we still living in the Dark Ages? Most decidedly we are—at least in Texas.

WHO ARE THE BANDITS? Bandits! That is what the defenders of law and order call us. Why? Because while we are teaching our brothers in misery that all should be for the benefit of all, we are also inviting them to take possession of that all.

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