

Mexican Notes

Either Way We Hold
The Winning Cards

For nearly four years the leaven of the Mexican Revolution has been at work. For nearly four years the plutocratic press has striven untiringly to conceal the true issues of the struggle. For nearly four years our labor organs, dominated by official cliques and tied to programs so petty and inadequate that they excite the scorn of every thinker, have rarely ventured to inform their followers that the Mexican peon has raised the standard of revolt against landlordism, and declared war to the death with the usurer and tax-gatherer. But movements born of vital truths are suns whose rays no cowardice can smother, and today the American people and all the world begin to understand. The peril of intervention, with the long and dangerous war it would entail, has broken the conspiracy of lies and silence.

The threat of war has done it. The troops congregated on the frontier and the fleets hovering off the coasts of Mexico have set tongues wagging and minds enquiring, as no pleading could have set them. Fear, which is still mankind's great schoolmaster, has made them think. Their own agony and their own cruel experiences in their own bitter struggle with plutocracy have prepared the soil, and already the crop that has sprung into such luxuriant growth in Mexico is sprouting vigorously throughout the United States. In every jungle-camp Mexican news and the possibility of intervention are constantly discussed. The men in the bread-lines and the blanket-stiffs, who traverse the whole country in their hunt for jobs, debate them eagerly. Even our most conservative labor press is being forced to write of them. My own particular business is largely the keeping track of newspaper opinion, and I am assailed by the admissions wrung, at last, from unexpected lips. Let me give some illustrations.

While Colquitt, governor of Texas, is howling for intervention and vowing that he will send State troops across the border, the United States Senator from Texas, Morris Shepperd, opposes him at every point in no less a publication than the "Review of Reviews." In this month's issue of that most conservative periodical he declares that President Wilson's policy of waiting is "a promise of freedom and opportunity to the lands below the Rio Grande," and adds: "Let it be remembered that it is no ordinary warfare that now prevails in Mexico. It is a war of extermination; a war of a large section of the masses against the domination of as cruel an aristocracy as ever crushed humanity beneath its pitiless heel. No quarter is asked; no quarter is given." And, before denouncing the aristocracy which has pillaged these outraged, these ragged, bare-footed masses" since the landing of Cortez, thirty years after Columbus made his first voyage, he writes: "The present contest in Mexico is an outgrowth of conditions that sink their roots in the past, and it must be fought to a conclusion before permanent peace will ever be possible in that country. It is a contest as inevitable as was the war between the North and South in our country some fifty years ago. Intervention by us would therefore mean either a postponement of the inevitable contest between certain elements of the Mexican people, or our permanent occupation of that country."

The editor of the "Review of Reviews" also has his say, and tells us that "the Powers of Europe had their experience in Mexico fifty years ago, and they are not likely to become embroiled again." He reflects the more enlightened opinion of our own age when he writes: "It is not the business of our government to follow adventurers or speculators into unstable or revolutionary countries, with the idea of guaranteeing their projects at the cost of the treasure and blood of those who pursue less adventurous careers here at home." Finally he says: "Taxes must be reformed, lands must be sub-divided."

Herbert Quick is one of the most noted syndicalist writers in this coun-

The important question for us in the United States is not whether in such and such an engagement Villa has defeated the federals, or vice versa, but what our final attitude toward Mexico and the Mexicans should be. On this we are rapidly acquiring an education, the grim logic of events exterminating one by one delusions hoary with age. One of these is that Mexicans fight for the love of fighting. As to this we are all beginning to understand that, on the contrary, they are naturally most peaceful but are now fighting because they have been driven into a corner by the monopolists, as we ourselves are being driven. That light on this particular phase of the question is breaking in from every quarter our editorial shows. Another delusion is that Mexicans are not much of fighters anyhow. As to that we reproduce the following despatch, taken from the "El Paso Herald" of April 11.

"GOMEZ PALACIO, Mexico, March 31—The story of the attack upon Gomez Palacio and Torreon should be written in Mexican history as one of the bloodiest chapters. It should also be written down to the credit of the bravery of the Mexican—not the rebel nor the federal alone, but the Mexican, for both sides fought with the utmost bravery, suffered the most trying hardships and showed great courage, moral and physical. Men suffering from wounds bore up without a murmur as they dragged themselves, bleeding, to the rear; men stormed what seemed to be impregnable fortifications without so much as debating whether success were possible or not; men went for days without food or water, without complaining. The campaign has shown the capacity of the Mexican for suffering with fortitude; it has shown that he is as brave as the bravest. The battle has been one to test the nerves of the Anglo-Saxon, the Latin or the man of any race, and the test of the Latin has stood the acid. Hell could produce little that

try. He has issued a "Message to the Women of America," in which he says, among other fine things: "Your sons are in danger! Your lovers are in peril! There is a damnable conspiracy to tear them from you and kill them, or return them to you crippled, diseased in body, diseased in soul. Owners of great newspapers are also the owners of great estates in Mexico, which will be tripled in value the day the Stars and Stripes wave over the land. Senators stand up in the halls of Congress and demand intervention in Mexico because their own interests will be made more valuable. They talk of honor, but they think of dollars." I take the quotation from "The Public," and am delighted to see it there.

Lack of space forbids my intended multiplication of quotations from other well-known publications, with their frank admissions that the land question is all-important and that the entire system of monopoly must go. They cannot but affect enormously opinion in this country, and thereby that revolutionary world-thought now in rapid process of formation. The work is greater than we of today can estimate; for it goes on beneath the surface, in the silence of a million minds, preparing our race for that great transformation which the powers of darkness cannot delay much longer.

Nevertheless we may be certain that Money will put up a hard fight. Towering ambitions when thwarted stick at nothing, and greed can invent a thousand methods of disguising its sordid ends. Let us remember that this is a straight struggle between "Big Business" and the moralists, and that in all such struggles the proletariat hitherto has been whipped out of its boots. Let us not forget that Roosevelt is strongly in favor of "policing" the Latin countries South of us, and that our late Republican president boldly claimed for the United States suzerainty from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn. In a word, intervention may be forced on us, but if forced it is, we shall have most precious consolations. We may now be certain that this country will be a house divided against itself, and that temporary victory by monopoly will but prelude for it more serious trouble. Either way we win, for the coming revolution will not be denied. The world is aching for it.

W. M. C. OWEN.

is worse than much of the suffering endured by the men in the battle of Torreon."

This receives further confirmation from a Washington, D. C., despatch of the same date, which reads: "The endurance of the raw and undisciplined Mexican troops, both rebels and federals, in the battle at Torreon is surprising army officers here. It is estimated that for 11 days past these soldiers have been engaged in almost constant battle with little opportunity for sleep and practically without a commissariat."

Should Practice Gunnery.

Equally suggestive is the statement that Villa's army, 5000 strong, hurled itself on Gomez Palacio—"after seventeen hours' hard, continuous riding from Bermejillo" the artillery being still hours behind and not arriving until the following morning. One would hazard the opinion that such haste, while speaking volumes for Villa's confidence in the dash and endurance of his troops, was ill-advised. In reality the federals, after a temporary repulse, rallied in force and drove the rebels back with great slaughter. It is stated also that the federal marksmanship, especially that of the artillery, was far superior to that of the rebels, and it appears probable that, had they followed up their original advantage, the result might have been very different. In all such cases, however, argument as to what might have been is useless. The record simply proves the necessity not only of having guns but of knowing how to use them. The moral for us is that the unskilled mob is always helpless against police and military trained to shoot straight.

Another and still more useful military lesson is conveyed by the information that in Torreon, as in Gomez Palacio, "the federals were congregated in big bodies all over the city, while the rebels charged in open order." In other words, Villa is a guerrilla fighter, and understands the folly of massing men to face instruments of destruction so deadly as are modern guns. In this he shows himself in line with modern military science, and those who are clamoring for intervention may as well recognize, once for all, that the warfare they propose to precipitate will be one of guerrillas; a warfare such as, in all probability, the North American Indian would have waged successfully against the white invader had he been supplied with the repeating rifles the Mexican today possesses; such a warfare as revolutionists unquestionably will wage throughout the world against governmental forces if they, in their turn, are compelled to resort to arms. The day of the barricade is past, and we should stop thinking in its language.

The despatch first quoted from also said: "Many of the telegrams credited to Villa have not really been sent by him. Whence they came I do not know. Villa is using guns and hand grenades, not typewriters. He told the correspondents at the front frankly that they could send no despatches until he had taken Torreon." One reads also with satisfaction: "Villa is a fighting man. He was everywhere, and his greatest delight was to join the assaults on foot and throw hand grenades himself."

Fighting is ugly business; but, since it is forced on us by the tyranny of one side and the stupidity of the other, it is well to have generals who bear their full share of it; and, above all, generals who do not sacrifice the business in hand for the sake of gratifying the curiosity of non-combatants. In these United States we sadly need leaders with the courage to say: "The public be damned! This is my task and I mean to put it through without paying the slightest attention to the public."

War Would be Hateful.

Even Geo. Harvey, who in this month's "North American Review," as editor, appears frankly to President Wilson "to save Mexico; to save his party; to save himself," by extending official recognition to Huerta, declares himself strongly opposed to intervention. He uses the following language: "Senators and Representatives who demand 'action' which would lead to armed intervention may reflect the opinion of their own restricted constituencies, but they wholly misinterpret the wish of the country. Never was a war so unpopular, so hateful in the eyes of the people, as would be a war now with Mexico."

How is it that we find the editor of such a periodical as the "North American Review" condemning armed intervention in Mexico? Surely it

testifies to the success of a long propaganda, conducted by many besides ourselves, which at last has opened the public's eyes to the fact that the struggle in Mexico is economic, and that the Hearsts and their like are inviting us to sacrifice our lives for the land monopolists and speculators, for heartless usurers and Wall Street. Unfortunately, thankful as we may be to the present administration for its waiting policy, which has allowed us time for education, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that our politicians, from the President downward, still represent the Mexican Revolution as a political issue, to be solved by constitutional methods. In so doing they grossly deceive the public, for, as we have repeated until it must have become tedious, the Mexicans as a whole are indifferent to the personality of their office-holders—Madero at the height of his popularity got less than twenty thousand votes—but long exceedingly for a restoration of the old conditions under which all were sure of access to the land by which they, like all others, have to live. How stubbornly political is the view still held by President Wilson, is shown by the official notice served on Huerta, which the article in the "North American Review" reproduces verbatim. We call special attention to paragraph 5, which followed the requirement that Huerta should resign and the suggestion that a group should be appointed, charged with the duty of forming a constitutional government. It runs as follows:

Cracking the Whip.

"That such a course is absolutely necessary, to the end that he, the chief executive (Huerta) merit the approval of the first magistrate (President Wilson), for the reason that the government of the first magistrate has firmly and irrevocably decided, by one method or another, to eliminate completely all assistance that Huerta believes he may receive from foreign sources, if he persists in remaining in power, it being a further fact that only a few days longer can he, Huerta, be free to select the course he chooses to follow. His withdrawal, and the consequent absolute liberty of action in the re-establishment of constitutional power, alone will be accepted by the chief magistrate. This government cannot urge with too much insistence, now that the outcome is inevitable, that Huerta reach his decision wisely and at the same time give full consideration to the terrible consequences which will follow his vacillation or refusal."

Many a proud Mexican will have regarded that message as couched in the language of a master to his lackey, with the threat of a whipping added. Harvey says properly that it was a declaration by one President of war on another President. He adds, with evident approval, that "the old Indian coolly ignored the demand." We for our part detest Huerta, since he represents the old "Cientifico" regime, but we condemn unequivocally the high-handed course taken by President Wilson, precisely because it rallied Mexican sentiment to Huerta's side and added greatly to his strength. We direct special attention to the fact that of all the plenipotentiaries sent by our President to Mexico only one had real knowledge of the country and its language. That one was Senator del Valle, of Los Angeles, and in the "San Francisco Bulletin" of August 25, 1913, Del Valle wrote as follows: "The idea of conquest, the loss of national entity through the aggression of this country, has been a national specter in Mexico for over sixty years."

Foreign Suspicions.

Harvey fills pages with extracts from leading papers in this country, Europe, South America and Mexico itself, all strongly condemnatory of President Wilson's course; and it is to be noted that, outside this country, the opinion is expressed most freely that the United States government is plotting to swallow Mexico. Thus, the "Berliner Courier" regards our President as "aiming at stripping Mexico of her political independence; but, above all, at establishing in that country the economic supremacy of the United States." It adds that "if that government had desired nothing more than the establishment of peace it would have recognized Huerta long ago," and it denounces our course as "sly." As for "El Imparcial," of Madrid, it says bluntly: "We have every reason for deeply distrusting the United States. We have already frequently pointed out how the Northern Republic is attempting to take Mexico in her net."

From another standpoint we of the Mexican Liberal Party have no cause to complain of President Wilson's course. For years we have been sending "Regeneracion" to all parts of Central and South America, Cuba, Italy and Spain, that we might arouse the opposition of the Latin race to a sense of what invasion by the United States would mean to them as well as Mexico. We have striven to array racial solidarity as a barrier to the encroachments of the Money Power; and we are now most confident that if armed intervention is attempted it will arouse active hostility from the Rio Grande to Cape Horn, and cost the United States, in loss of prestige and many other ways, a sum no intellect can estimate.

Even Senator Fall is now declaring himself as opposed to intervention, but says he favors "interposition," to be prefaced by the solemn announcement that "we are not making war on Mexico and do not propose to acquire their territory." The fine distinctions he draws will be distrusted by all who reflect that he, and the wealthy corporations he represents, have acquired already vast slices of Mexican territory. Former-President Taft also has pronounced strongly against armed intervention, saying: "It would involve the garrisoning with a sufficient force of every town. It would involve the organization of columns to chase the guerrillas into their mountain fastnesses and across trackless desert plains, and the subjugation of fifteen million people. I don't know when we would get through; I don't know how many lives it would involve; I don't know how much it would cost, but I do know it would be a drag upon us, and then when we had got the thing done the future would still be doubtful and still be a charge and a burden upon our government and upon our treasury."

At this writing, according to the "San Francisco Examiner's" special despatch from Vera Cruz, dated April 13, "President Huerta has ordered General Zaragoza at Tampico not to accede under any circumstances to Admiral Mayo's demand for a salute of the American flag within twenty-four hours in reparation for the arrest of American marines—an arrest for which apology had been previously made. It is difficult, after studying the orders sent to Huerta, as given above, to imagine him as saluting the United States flag except as some I. W. W. or other rebel is compelled to, from time to time, by vigilance committees. Such a man yields to force and fear, but in his heart of hearts he curses the flag more bitterly than ever, and in the inmost recesses of his mind regrets that he cannot turn it to the basest uses. How hollow a sham is outward respect so violently enforced! How foolish to suppose that hungry outcasts can reverence a government that has made them what they are, or that Mexicans can forget that the Stars and Stripes represent vast territory that was once their own!"

ANARCHISTS PROTEST.

The International Anarchist Federation of America, having Brooklyn, N. Y., as headquarters, writes us that it has decided to invite all Anarchist-Communist groups in the United States and Canada to join it, for the purpose of carrying on more efficient propaganda. It has singled out for special attention the cases of our Mexican comrades now imprisoned at San Antonio, Texas, and that of the Italian, Masetti, who shot his colonel in the hope of stopping the slaughter of the Arabs in the infamous war of conquest now being waged by Italy. The Federation also desires to remind all comrades that an International Congress will be held in London the end of July next.

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.

WE MOVED
Our Offices to
2205 Court St