

less civilizing benefactions will color the life of the last man in the line.

"Freedom to trade" is the most promising legend than can be written upon the flaming, waving banners of the progressive hosts of democracy in all parts of this big round world, which are now gathering for a final onslaught upon the breast-works of institutionalized privilege.

All over the earth are its evidences, and nowhere is the preparation for the "final assault" more plainly seen than right here in our own beloved country.

HENRY H. HARDINGE.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

EVILS OF MEXICO'S OLD REGIME.

Los Angeles, Aug. 7.

Diaz became President at a time when Mexico was so tired of revolutions that any peace was welcome. His rule was so good that by degrees, as the country revived, a genuine "Era of Good Feeling" set in, which reached its zenith about 1900. That is the secret of Diaz's long reign. The roads became so safe that an unarmed man could travel about with a mule load, of bullion through towns and wilderness alike. In the large towns, law and order prevailed. In the smallest villages the Indians were let alone. It was only in the small towns above the order of villages—that is, in places just large enough to have a single appointee to govern them—that dreadful injustices were done, and the rest of the country never heard of them, for a Mexican lives and dies near his birthplace, and sees little of the rest of the country. In some of the little towns the Jefe Politicos were very good men, and ruled as justly as possible. President Diaz aimed to have them all good, but was sometimes deceived; that is the weakness of benevolent despotism.

We had therefore, in 1900, a condition of profound peace, with all rancor forgotten, and President Diaz generally beloved. On the haciendas, some owners were good, some mistreated their peons; in the Communities, the Indians lived peacefully in their primitive way; in the Pueblos (towns) the Jefes Politicos ruled, ill or well, as they chose, but mostly pretty well; and in the big cities were at least order and written law—very good order and very good law. Europeanism thrived in the cities; Orientalism in the Pueblos; Feudalism on the Haciendas; and communistic barbarism in the Communities. And on these last, the ruins of an ancient civilization, as a foundation, all the other forms were reared in order, the cities being the only modern thing.

In Sinaloa and Durango, we always called the Jefes Politicos "Judges" for short. Officially they were Jefes Politicos in Durango, and Directores Politicos in Sinaloa; but in smaller towns they were called Sindicos or Celadores. All kinds of them were called "Judges," for they were judges as much as anything else. It was a legal evil that these men were appointed by the State Governors. Peonage

was an illegal evil, expressly forbidden by the Federal and State Constitutions, and the Civil Code.

After 1900 new frictions arose. The old Generals of 1867, who hungered to be President, were all dead except a few thoroughly attached to Diaz. No one doubts that Diaz had procured the assassination of many of them. People condoned it as being for the good of the country. But in 1900 there was the beginning of a very important change, namely: President Diaz began to get old and deaf and to lose his faculties. By degrees, he became a mere figure-head or cat's-paw for his "friends," the Cientificos. The Cientificos governed, and he was merely their tool.

The Cientificos governed with a terrible despotism, and seemed to have a frenzied idea that nothing could shake their absolutism. They ceased to make the old pretense of democracy. They sent soldiers to harry parts of the country so loyal that no soldiers were needed—places which had until then been well treated and never believed the stories of outrage from other parts, because in their own territory they saw only law and order.

Formerly anyone who could reach Diaz's personal attention was sure of justice; latterly, he was only sure of injustice.

But chiefly, of course, the Cientificos exploited the country where Diaz had not. Diaz has been a soldier and office holder all his life, was born poor, and is now quite rich, although he probably spent his presidential salary as fast as he made it. But no one accuses him of any graft. His wealth came from speculation in stocks and bonds, with an advance knowledge of legislation to be enacted; and from speculation in lands where he, as President, knew a railroad would soon be built. In either case, the money came from the general loot of capitalism, not from the public treasury, and not by confiscation or attainder of oppressed persons' property.

But the Cientificos, while they did not create a raw shortage in the treasury, gave themselves subsidies out of it for railroads they never built, and practiced other grafts. But also they gave away the most unheard of concessions. One company was empowered to import dynamite at a low rate of duty, but to all other importers the tariff was raised, so as to give the favorites a monopoly. They agreed to build a dynamite factory in the country, but only made a threadbare pretense.

The sole right to take gravel from the Culiacan river bed was given to two Cientificos; but Governor Canedo telegraphed President Diaz that if that public property had to be deeded to individuals, he would outbid any other bidders, and buy it himself, in trust for the people. As the Cientificos did not dare stir up any trouble, they let the matter go. But the worst concession I ever heard of was that giving away the sole right to fish on the Pacific Coast—a coast six thousand miles long. (There shall not be any monopolies, says the Constitution of 1857.) Thousands of poor fishermen found the very ocean given away, and their boats condemned to rot, themselves to starve—unless they paid the company a royalty, or took wages from it, or made such other terms as the company chose to give.

While Diaz's private life was as pure as Madero's (that is to say, irreproachable), the Cientificos were

some of them monsters of profligacy. It took years for people to realize that Diaz was no longer at the helm; and even then they said "Let the General die in peace." But when the Cientificos foisted Corral as vice president, it became plain that if Mexico was to be saved in time, it was idle to wait for Diaz to die.

About 1900 the Cientificos gave away the lands of the Yaqui Indians, and then began deporting the Indians to serve as slaves in Yucatan, on the haciendas of the Cientificos. For years the servile press justified the Yaqui war. They deceived me, a single-taxer, as they deceived others. They kidnaped men all over Mexico to serve as forced soldiers against the Yaquis. I remember in 1905, my first eye-opener was the sight of an aged woman going down the middle of the street, scorning the sidewalks, escorted by two compassionate-looking soldiers (milfilia men) and hysterically shrieking at every step, "Oh, Jesus! Oh, Jesus!" I found her son had been arrested, and when she went to the jail to see him and discover what trivial charge might be against him, and taking with her some dainties she had cooked so that he might not have to eat the jail fare, she found he was already gone on his way to the Yaqui country. She was a widow, and had no one but him.

When Yaquis could get away from Yucatan they returned 2,000 miles to Sonora, begging their way through the entire country, and always got assisted home. I have many times fed them and given them money to get to the next place. They went openly, for the various State governments made no effort to arrest them—or possibly it was only in states like Sinaloa, where Canedo was Governor, that they could go openly. The Southern Pacific Railroad also assisted them, and in general the whole northern capitalist class, for in the north wage-workers were wanted, not slaves; and the southern capitalists were depleting the labor market of those of the north.

In 1907 I got my second eye-opener. I passed through Sonora, and at every station saw soldiers and guards. As there were no Federals in northern Sinaloa, only militiamen, I had never before seen Federals in all their war equipment, with trains of wagons, field guns, caissons, knapsacks, tents, and everything. At one station they brought up about 40 Yaquis (about half a dozen families) and sent the men away on one train, the women in another direction on another train, and the children scattered around so as to break up every family. The women got down off the army wagons, the men ceased their dusty tramp, and they parted without complaint. Not even the children cried. I was told that these unfortunates would be run into Guaymas at dead of night, and the train stopped on the end of a long wharf, whence the prisoners would be transferred to a steamer, without the people of Guaymas knowing anything about it. The Yaqui slave trade was undoubtedly the most atrocious thing anywhere in Mexico; it could not be forever concealed from the enlightened northern Mexicans; and being known was more than any people could stomach. Thousands of well-to-do professional and educated people, whose chance of personally suffering outrages at the hands of the Cientificos was very

remote, became disaffected because of this Yaqui question, and eventually threw themselves into the revolution.

To refer again to the land question on the haciendas: the great estates are handed down from father to son. It takes an exceedingly large body of land to support the owners in moderate luxury. Even where willing to sell, the hacendadoes want to sell the whole tract, and will not cut it up or sell part. The price, when a sale does take place, is from 25 cents to \$5 per acre. It is more folly than greed that makes the hacendadoes try to perpetuate conditions. There could be no better fortune for them than a good, constitutional government, under which they could subdivide and sell their lands at prices such as prevail in other countries. The secret of the low value is not far to seek: there is no market for anything except by shipping to foreign countries. The great mass of the people can buy only a few cotton rags and a bushel or so of raw corn per month per family. The wages they get are from 12 to 50 cents per day in our money, the higher price being right along the border, where a short journey would take the workmen into the United States.

Everyone has read, times without number, about the "marvelous resources" and untold natural wealth of Mexico. It is so much the fashion to say that, that it is almost a heresy to come right out and say the plain truth: It is a poor country, not a rich one.

First, about the mines. Gold and silver are the principal products, chiefly silver. The country has a fatal lack of iron in proximity to coal. Coal is almost absent, and iron never near the coal. Mexico is one of many countries that illustrate the servitude of nations whose mines produce silver and gold to those whose mines bring forth iron and coal. All the gold and silver countries are in bondage to the coal and iron countries.

Oil is one of the newer resources, and is not to be despised.

As to agriculture: It seems to me that the greatest legacy the human race enjoys, next to the planet itself, is the work of the Great Glacier, which once covered northern Europe and America. It smoothed the plains for the plow, broke up the rocks, powdered the soil, and left navigable rivers and useful lakes—which latter help to increase the rainfall and equalize it.

Mexico lies south of the glaciated region, and did not share in the great benefit. The whole northern interior is a trade-wind desert, where the planted quarter-section will never displace the cattle range. The coasts are wetter, especially the east coast; and everywhere the rainfall increases toward the south. But the topography is rugged. The shaping of the land has been left to the work of erosion, and the result is networks of great mountains, such as are not known in our country. Even the valleys are not flat—they have never been planed, but carved by erosion.

The material of the land itself in its origin is eruptive. Almost all the rock at some time burst forth in a molten condition. The rocks that are rich in plant food are sedimentary; and they are rare in Mexico. The two coastal plains are pretty good, and the south may have a good deal of good land;

but there is no navigable river in the country (there is a little one in the far south) and few lakes.

B. F. BUTTERFIELD.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

NOT A "RADICAL COLONY."

New York, August 24.

The continual reference by newspapers to "Free Acres" as a "radical colony" necessitates this explanation: "Free Acres," as expressed in its Constitution and provided in the Deed of Gift, is intended as a working model of the Singletax. Like our other Singletax Settlements, it is not a "radical colony" in the generally accepted sense; nor is it composed of radicals any more than of republicans or church workers. We have some of all. No one's opinions are asked as a condition of taking a perpetual lease; all he has to do is to pay his rent and to mind his own business. Our people are lawyers, secretaries, merchants, doctors, salesmen and literary people, and so on, whose opinions are mostly the current opinions. We do not necessarily share our opinions; the only thing all have in common is the rental value of the land. This seems to me the most hopeful basis on which to establish any colony. The colony has had its most successful summer in all respects.

BOLTON HALL.



A DISFRANCHISING SCHEME.

Los Angeles, Calif., August 22.

The California State Realty Federation stands sponsor for asking the voters of California to vote Yes on having their voting rights abolished.

Their bill proposes to prevent every person from voting at bond elections in this State who does not own property. Apparently an advertising scheme to sell some of "their" big land holdings to the propertyless, so that they may vote with dignity or have a home to fight for in case of a war.

About 35 per cent of the people of California own their homes free today out of an approximate present population of 3,000,000. A mathematical calculation applied to this scheme will evidence the fact that about 1,950,000 persons will be denied the privileges of their fellow kind in the future. This certainly "looks good"—to the 35 persons who are said to own one-seventh of this State. Francis B. Cutting, who used his ingenuity in drawing up this dangerous bill for the State Realty Interests, says, in support of it, that it will allow only "the interested, intelligent and affected classes" to express themselves where bonds are voted.

This initiated measure was not much seen on the streets of California cities during the work of soliciting of signatures. I understand it was chiefly circulated among the employes of real estate, title and railroad companies and banks. What the proponents of this bill overlooked was the common sense of the "other classes." These "other classes" do pay their share of bonded indebtedness and interest besides, when they pay their rent on the "interested, intelligent and affected classes" property. Prof. Carl C. Plehn of the Department of Economics of University

of California, says that questions of taxation are too complicated and technical for the average person to understand and vote upon. The Professor usually spends his vacation telling the people that.

President Joseph F. Sartori of the Security Savings and Trust Bank, who was so successful in preventing the United States Government from establishing a regional reserve bank in this city, and also in preventing the people from adopting the Home Rule in Taxation Amendment two years ago, is another friend of the Realty Board's measure. He favors particularly the retaining of the poll tax, an automobile tax to maintain good roads, and the abolition of the State tax on real estate. The State Realty Federation is going the limit to beat the Home Rule in Taxation Amendment, which is on the ballot as Local Taxation Amendment No. 7.

WALDO J. WERNICKE.

NEWS NARRATIVE

The figures in brackets at the ends of paragraphs refer to volumes and pages of The Public for earlier information on the same subject.

Week ending Tuesday, September 1, 1914.

The European War.

The general features of the war are the advance of the Germans in France, the advance of Russia in Prussia and Galicia and the successes of England on the sea. [See current volume, page 826.]



On the Franco-German Frontier.

The decisive events of the war have been confined to the Franco-German frontier. The steady pounding of the German forces has compelled the allies to fall back from their advanced position in Belgium, Lorraine and Alsace, and reform in France on the strategic first line of defence. The four days' battle which ended in this change of front was accompanied by enormous casualties, but no official detailed reports have been received.



While the German army has advanced along its whole front, the extreme right, essaying to turn the Allies' left, has pushed its way toward Paris as far as La Fere, or within 60 miles of the French capital. The English troops are co-operating with the French at this point, and although both fought valiantly they were compelled to retire before the overwhelming number of the German troops. The retreat of the Allies has been made in good order, and the men have not lost their spirit. An attempt was made by the French to draw off some of the Germans who are overwhelming their extreme left by a vigorous attack on the Lorraine border in the entire Vosges region, but even this did not stop the steady advance of the Kaiser's troops toward Paris.