

is a question to which there seems no other answer than that of Henry George: "He can do nothing at all except to use his strength for the abolition of the great primary wrong that robs men of their birthright. The justice of God laughs at the attempts of men to substitute anything else for it."

S. D.



COINCIDENCE OR CONSEQUENCE?

On the night of April 18 the "Breadline," New York City's most characteristic "exhibit," stretched nearly a thousand feet along the sidewalk turning the corner of Eleventh street and Broadway.

It has become an institution; and as do all institutions performs a function vital to the community in which it exists. Several hundreds of men stood, two by two, awaiting the signal to march. We had forgotten time and place, in contemplation of the spectacle, until the boom of the midnight chime of Grace Church startled us and sent a bracing quiver through the "line." Grace church windows saw it all; have seen it every night since it began. The north end of the line extended past the door of a restaurant on Broadway—a restaurant distinguished by a glaring uniform of white enamel, that is known to travelers from one end of the land to the other. The restaurant is popularly understood to be the latest enterprise appropriated by the Rockefellers, to find employment for surplus capital.

There may be nothing more than an accidental coincidence in the merely local proximity of these three factors; but their economic and social relation is as evident and unequivocal as that of the upper and nether millstones and the grist that sifts between them. A grim, a tragic pantaloons set Fleischman's restaurant so near to Rockefeller's; but a more grisly Mephisto put them both under the eaves of that fane where its votaries partake in His remembrance of the body of their Lord—while, nightly, sheltered from the idle gaze of the curious by midnight shadows, the hungry hundreds slink from unnumbered kennels to get the bread of charity.

And people are beginning to talk. They are asking how much longer these men, and the multiplied thousands they represent, will continue to "take it lying down." These questionings are heard afar, even in the cloistered offices of a National Civic Federation. Immediately, professional secretaries become energetic, a definite campaign is begun to silence questions, to limit the

exercise of free speech, of a querulous, inquisitive sort. The press, the pulpit, the school, the court with its retinue, all fall into a line, until one wonders where the Breadline begins, or which end is the beginning. Is it a coincidence or a consequence?

WESTERN STARR.



THE PAST DANGER AND A FUTURE ONE.

Welcome indeed was the news that mediation in the Mexican trouble had been offered and accepted by both sides. That President Wilson accepted the proposition was a matter of course. An administration committed to a policy of justice and good will could do no less. There was not the same confidence concerning Huerta. But since he has also consented there seems to be a reasonable prospect of settling all differences with him without further bloodshed.

In the meantime it would be well to take precautionary measures against further efforts to involve us in war. It is intolerable that medieval notions of national honor or dignity, on the part of such an official as Admiral Mayo, may bring about a war. Naval officers, whatever their rank, should no longer be permitted to take such a stand as Mayo took at Tampico.

But it would also be well to adopt precautions against possible stirring up of trouble by others than admirals. With the outbreak of trouble came an insistent demand from the jingo organs that a criminally aggressive war be waged, not against Huerta alone, but against Mexico. They demanded nothing less than obliteration of the international boundary. What influenced this demand was well put some weeks ago by Herbert Quick: "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." Mediation of the pending dispute is a disappointment to these interests. With such great financial gains in view is it reasonable to believe that they will make no further efforts to involve us in war? It does not seem so. If at any time in the future some Mexican leader should act in a way to indicate that he is inviting trouble, it would be well to consider whether he may not have entered the service of these American interests. Owners of papers which raise the loudest shouts about patriotism may not be too patriotic to incite foreign insults to the flag. Just as patriotic gun makers of Germany were found to have incited anti-German feeling in France, so there may be patriotic American newspaper own-

ers not above inciting anti-American feeling in Mexico. Let Americans beware of letting their love of the flag be made a means of deceiving them into disgracing it.

S. D.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

CONCERNING OPPOSITION TO THE HOUSTON PLAN.

Houston, Texas, April 24.

The following copy of a letter which I wrote recently to a citizen of Dallas explains the facts regarding the opposition to the Houston Plan of Taxation:

I have your letter enclosing clipping from a newspaper, which purports to be an interview with Mr. W. T. Henderson, Commissioner of Finance and Revenue of Dallas.

I have learned that Mr. Henderson sent to Houston and got copies of an afternoon newspaper which is antagonistic to the administration, and which is publishing false statements against the Houston Plan of Taxation. Most of the statements in this afternoon paper are erroneous.

The article states that the tax rate was raised from \$1.85 to \$2.00. This is not true, Houston's tax rate is \$1.85.

The Harris County Property Owners' Association scoured the woods for several weeks and succeeded by misrepresentation in getting less than 100 people to sign their list. But as soon as the association announced that they were opposed to the Houston Plan of Taxation, about one-half of these signers resigned from the taxpayers' association and notified the mayor and myself that they were not in sympathy with them. So there is left only 20 or 30 landowners who are now opposing the Houston Plan of Taxation. Over 10,000 people have signed their assessments for 1914 at an increased value on their land, and expressed themselves as satisfied with having their land valued at a fair price and buildings and other improvements upon land assessed at only twenty-five per cent on the dollar, while household furniture and cash is totally exempted from taxation.

The statement is false that the Somers System Company have placed values upon land in Houston. These values were placed there by a committee from the property owners themselves with my assistance, and all the Somers System people did was to make the mathematical calculation of the various other lots in each block.

The statement that a piece of land on one side of the block is worth only half as much as on the other side is true; and it is true in every large and growing city. There has been no discrimination in this city; and ninety-nine per cent of the taxpayers testify to that fact by signing their assessments without objections.

There are no more vacant dwellings here than there are in other cities of this size; in fact, there are no up-to-date dwellings vacant, those that are vacant are old, and the people are being educated in Houston to demand modern houses; and as soon as one is erected, a tenant usually moves out of an old house into a new one.

It is true that Mr. Henderson opposes the Somers System and the Houston Plan of Taxation, and I regret to say that he opposes it through ignorance of its merits. He has constantly refused to thoroughly investigate it. If he will give me ten hours of his time, I will undertake to convince him of the error of his conclusions.

J. J. PASTORIZA.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

MINIMIZING OF MORE IMPORTANT NEWS.

Chicago, April 22.

All the news space in the first seven columns of the Tribune this morning—April 22—is given up to the fall of Vera Cruz and the discussion of its significance. The Tribune knows what the public wants, especially the respectable middle and upper class public, to which The Tribune is the world's greatest newspaper.

Away over on page 17 of the same issue is a three-quarter column article headed, "Colorado Miners Leave Many Dead." The sub-head reads, "Twenty-six Known to Have Died in Battle Between Troops and Strikers."

The Tribune is not to blame. It is largely our own creation. But what have we respectable Chicagoans, Americans, to say for ourselves? The first seven pages given over to the fall of Vera Cruz; three-quarters of a column on page 17 the space used for the battle at Ludlow, Colorado. This is the treatment of two significant news items by newspaper men who know our tastes and are trying to please us.

Is there a lesson in this for the serious student of social tendencies? What may it mean to the struggling worker, torn between his traditional faith in the dominant ruling class and the urgent appeal of the revolutionist in his own ranks?

FORREST GUY DAVIS.



DO WE NEED A BIGGER NAVY?

New York, April 24.

Admiral Mayo at Tampico pushed us into a situation of which the end can not yet be foreseen. The gentleman was acting entirely in accordance with the demands of his calling, and possibly from a natural human desire to justify his existence as representative of his calling. But when the question comes up again it would be well to consider whether, as a nation, we wish to put more worthy gentlemen into a position where they are obliged to bring about situations which, were they merely law-abiding citizens, they might be the first to deplore. In relative harmfulness the navy has been leading the army by a long stretch lately. The Brüsewitzes and Förstners in Germany, with their ideals of military honor, have been able merely to murder or maim a few innocent civilians. How futile they must feel beside men who can drag a great nation into war by their acts.

GRACE ISABEL COLBRON.



The forms in which Christianity has been at different times disguised have been often hostile to liberty; but wherever the spirit has surmounted the forms, it has inspired a hatred of oppression and a love of freedom.—Macaulay's Essay (1825) on the West Indies.