

DEUS EX MACHINA.

That the coal strikers would lay down their arms on a personal appeal from the President, in a conference with him in the presence of the operators, no sane man could have expected. The very calling of the conference was proof that their premeditated weapon of general distress was doing its deadly work. Their being summoned as high contracting parties gratified their love of distinction and sense of power, while it confirmed them in the belief that Federal interference was not to be feared from President Roosevelt, notwithstanding his emphatic announcement that the existing situation must terminate at once. Moreover, on any supposable agreement that might be reached, the only pledge which they could carry out would be to declare the strike off. In fact, they brought with them only a specious offer to arbitrate the unarbitrable, which the operators rejected, not as operators but as men, defending the rights of man.

Regarded by itself, therefore, the conference was but another of the spectacular performances to which the President has accustomed us. He manifested his concern for the impending national calamity; he brought both sides together as no other intermediary could have done; he had nothing to say about the merits of the strike, still less about the philosophy of trade-unionism; he listened to offer and argument from either hand, and then the meeting dissolved back into its original unsubstantiality. If it had no design of furnishing public ground for taking the decisive step which should give quietus to Mitchell, as on a memorable occasion to Debs, it was worse than useless. It fostered hopes of success which must be disappointed if this country is to be saved from perdition. It intensified by delay the already prevailing suffering and anxiety of mind. It gave grounds for suspecting the same political paralysis at the White House as at the capitol of Pennsylvania; to which Mitchell's proposition to leave the choice of arbitrators to the President decidedly lent color. For it must not be forgotten that the President found himself in Washington, not as the careful watchman at the seat of government, but as the disabled party stump-processor—stumping virtually in his own behalf for a second term.

There was another disqualification, less obvious but not less positive, for his initiating a paper settlement. President Roosevelt is a protectionist—not more profound, not more original, than his predecessor. He was dealing with the perfect flower of protectionism in trade-unionism. For this reason, among others, he was predisposed to view the strike as a legal condition—in other words, to cheat himself with names. What he could not see before him was

the rival President that Mitchell is, who says to the Constitutional President chosen by the suffrages of the whole people, whom he is bound to protect against rebellion and civil chaos, "Thus far, and no farther." There appeared but one right in the coal regions, the right to strike, and to terrorize, maim, and murder men ready to work in harmony with the operators and to supply the direst need of the country. Because this right has by tolerance and the decay of manhood become a vested one in the minds of most Americans, its essential destructiveness to our institutions has failed to penetrate the Presidential mind. Hence Mr. Roosevelt was not the man to illumine the situation and electrify the patriotic feeling of the country by the fitting word, calling a spade a spade, and to adopt the only measures demanded by the gravity and urgency of the crisis.

There is, connected with the foregoing, a subordinate deception or fallacy, which confounds the unthinking. What we may call the Strike Power, as of old (when times were better, albeit not so good) we spoke of the Slave Power, is assumed to rest upon the conferences of a body of freemen, whereas its constituency is recruited by press-gang methods and its policy dictated by absolute compulsion, not to speak of other methods known to those who rig conventions for ordinary party purposes. Its sole brake is the chance of failure. The size of the majority required for appearance of free will and deliberation is of no consequence. A majority of one might have precipitated the present pandemonium; and, what is equally to the purpose in the purview of White House conferences, the slightest grievance—the discharge of a single man or mule-boy—would, given a prospect of success, have been made the pretext for the renewal of the struggle for domination never to be allayed till there has been a moral awakening on the part of the American people. Mitchell would have gone with as much effrontery to the White House with a grievance that he could carry in a brown-paper parcel, as with one that required a Saratoga trunk. His cruel contemplation of the misery inflicted upon the remote innocent and helpless by his warfare would have been as steady in the one contingency as in the other. He rests secure in the forced allegiance of some, the deluded allegiance of others, the would-be emancipated thralls of Capital who

"—burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom graven on a heavier chain."

Much silly talk has been heard about the country having got along without anthracite coal in past ages—as if it could readjust itself to substitutes in forty-eight hours and in the bitter season of the year; as if it had not been sought to drag on the soft-coal miners into line with the anthracite, with a narrow avoidance of that catastrophe. Every

one knows that coal ranks with air and water in the life of modern civilization; and we ask, if Nature had concentrated the water supply in one particular tract of this part of the continent, and its custodians had, for a question of wages or other consideration, attempted by force to lock the gates and withhold the supply till their demands were satisfied, how long would the people have looked on complacently at the President and the Governor of the containing State making a football of responsibility for the continuance of the famine? Or we will make another supposition, that the anthracite coal deposits were in a Southern State, and mined by negroes organized in a trade-union, and that they undertook to play Mitchell's anarchistic game; does any one believe their leader would have been invited to confer with the President, or that we should not have heard one cry of "Lynch them!" and seen volunteers spring up on all sides?

We can as well revert to turnpikes and stage-coaches as dispense with coal, and coal is inseparable from the iron of our rails and from the traffic that is carried over the rails. Commerce to-day means nothing if coal be eliminated; they can no longer be thought of apart. The country has justified one courageous President in seeing to it, by prompt and efficacious interposition of Federal troops, that no conspiracy of strike and boycott against railroads should defeat the Constitutional provision for the protection of commerce. Nothing but a legal quibble can establish any difference in the situation created by Debs in 1894 and that initiated by Mitchell to-day. No trains, no commerce; no coal-mining, no commerce. The difference is in the occupant of the White House—in 1894, Cleveland, the civilian; to-day the most bellicose of the long line of Presidents.

President Roosevelt has followed up the abortive conference with a putting of the screws on Governor Stone that ought to have been applied before the President set out on his campaign tour against Trusts, no one of which has inflicted such material and moral damage on this country, so raised the price of a prime necessary of life, or excited such apprehensions regarding the very framework of our Government. Whether the Pennsylvania militia ordered out *en masse* will suffice to restore order and protect willing industry, remains to be seen. We do not ourselves believe that it was necessary to await Governor Stone's tardy and reluctant action, or the ultimate call which he may still have to make for Federal aid. His impotence during the past two months at least has been a trumpet-call. Were there no statute under which he might act, were there no construction of the Constitution broad enough for the emergency, the true saviour of society would still perform the deed. When an arbitrary clerk obstructed on roll-

call the organization of the House in the Twenty-sixth Congress, an ex-President, promoted to that body, offered a resolution to remove the unlawful obstacle. "But who will put the question?" inquired all; and John Quincy Adams responded, "I will put the question myself."

A NEW KIND OF TRUST.

Prof. John B. Clark of Columbia University has been delivering lectures in several Western cities on the subject of Trusts, and he has detected in the mass a new microbe which seems capable of a large development. It consists of an alliance between the Trust and the labor union in particular trades, who join together to fleece the consumer and divide the proceeds between themselves. This kind of microbe has only just become visible, but an example of it is found in the glass industry. "Glass-blowers," says Professor Clark, "are scarce, and for lack of them many glass pots are idle. The public pays a high rate for its window-panes. The men and their employers have still an issue to settle with each other, for it has still to be determined how much of the tax which the public pays shall go to each of them; but in collecting the tax their interests are one, and the issue between the industry as a whole and the purchasing public takes precedence of that between masters and men within the industry."

This throws a new light on the vaunted efficacy of the tariff to raise the wages of the laborer. We create in the home market a monopoly in the production of an indispensable article, avowedly in order to benefit the wage-worker. Of course, somebody must pay the piper. The consumers, who are the whole people, must contribute to that end; but how is the wage-worker to get his share? The employer will not pay more for labor than the market rate if he can help himself. The laborer understands that perfectly. He does not expect anybody to pay more than he is compelled to. So he forms a trade union, and limits, as much as possible, the numbers who shall be admitted to it. He limits the number of apprentices, and he calls all who would like to work at that trade but who are not members of the union "scabs," and pelts them with brickbats when necessary. He boycotts all who buy non-union goods. The employer does not relish that kind of unionizing, because he does not like any monopoly but his own, yet if he can prevent competition among producers he will consent to make an alliance with his employees against the rest of the community; not very cheerfully, perhaps, but he will do it because he does not see any easier way to go on. By and by it becomes a compact between the two that they shall charge as much for their goods as the

tariff will allow, and divide the proceeds. Then the political party that enacts the tariff claims great merit for having taxed nine-tenths of the community in order to raise the wages and profits of the small remainder.

The glass industry is an instance very much in point. The duty on common window glass of the smaller sizes is one and three-eighths cents per pound. It ranges from that figure to four and three-eighths cents for the largest sizes. The tariff act does not specify what is the equivalent ad-valorem rate, but since the rate in all unspecified articles is 45 per cent. ad valorem, we assume that the duty on common window glass is not less. If the glass-blowers have secured their rights under the tariff, if they have secured what the politicians said they intended to give them, they have got all that they are entitled to under the most generous interpretation of the doctrine of protection. We recall the fact that some years ago, when those who habitually "tinker with the tariff" procured the passage of a bill adding to the dutiable value of imported goods the cost of boxing, baling, and cartage of the same, the glass-blowers made a computation of the amount that this provision would add to the cost of foreign glass, and then struck for the whole amount as wages, and got it; and we think they were quite right in doing so. The men who tinkered the tariff in this way said that they did so to protect the American laborer, and it was no more than fair that the American laborer should take them at their word.

Evidently protection belongs not to the statics, but to the dynamics of political economy. It is not stationary. It is always on the move. Having exhausted everything that was conceivable under the tariff, it took the form of combination among producers. It is now about to take the labor unions into partnership, or rather the latter are forcing themselves in. Such union is not practicable in all cases, but it is so in trades requiring a high degree of skill. By preventing boys from learning particular trades, and putting up a wall against the immigrant laborer and imported goods, it is possible for the Trust and the labor union jointly to put up the prices of particular goods to the limit of the conscientious scruples of the joint producers. Professor Clark considers the danger serious, but not irremediable. Society may yet protect itself, he says, but "it will take the united effort of classes who have not yet worked together to remedy it." He refers, doubtless, to the consumer and the non-union worker. Eventually these classes will be compelled to organize for self-defence. The ranks of labor are going to be recruited as long as the world lasts. People will continue to be born, and they must find ways to earn a living. If the avenues of employment are

monopolized by the new kind of Trust, by means of the boycott or otherwise, the classes thus injured must meet the issue systematically, and not at hazard as now.

"ON PROTECTION LINES."

Tariff revision thunders are crashing in all parts of the Republican sky. The National League of Republican Clubs meets in Chicago, only to find that tariff reduction and the relation of the tariff to Trusts are the burning questions of the hour. Republican orators and Congressional nominees in all parts of the country are forced to speak on this one topic. They deprecate, they quibble, they evade, but still they talk about it. In some cases they take a bold stand for amending the tariff; in others, they vehemently protest against laying an impious hand upon the sacred Republican ark of the covenant; but in all cases they confess that the question has burst full on the country again. The "closed" tariff is wide open once more. The "settled" protective policy is in a state of wild upheaval. Party leaders are quaking and wondering what will come next; but all of them can see that divisive forces are at work in the Republican ranks. That top-heavy protection which they thought was the very making of the party, now threatens to break it.

In these circumstances, a phrase is needed as a life-preserver in the whelming floods of popular agitation. Senator Lodge grasped for such a form of words in his speech at Boston the other day. Personally, he wants nothing done to the tariff, but said that if the people demand revision, he would waive his individual preferences and allow them to have their way. This was certainly magnanimous of him. He might have insisted stubbornly, and then the people would have had no remedy, except revolution. But Lodge is pure benevolence when it comes to letting the majority rule, and he graciously gave notice that he would not thwart the popular will. But on one point he was very firm, even stern. Any reduction of the tariff that might be made must be "on protection lines." He wanted that understood. Free hides for Massachusetts manufacturers could be had only on condition that the act of Congress making them free should be labelled in capital letters a protective act. If it was a question of making hides free in the name of free trade, why, you would first have to walk over the dead body of Henry Cabot Lodge. "Cut down duties, if you must," he said heroically to the American people, "but do not fail to call it an extension of the protective principle." The fact that protection has hitherto always meant marking duties up has nothing to do with the case.

Almost on the same day, Senator For-