

No doubt they will act with the highest motives. But it is just this combination of high motives and nasty corruption which has made the later record of the Grand Army of the Republic so humiliating.

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## Blundering into Mexico

**T**HOUGH not much is being written about intervention in Mexico, a great deal is being said about it in personal talk. The commonest state of mind seems to be that Mexico is a bore, that its condition is hopeless, and that sooner or later we shall, like a lazy giant aroused, "go down and clean things up." This task is regarded neither as interesting nor important, and the great mass of us give little thought to it, as we go on to denounce the secret diplomacy, the undemocratic foreign policy, the imperial aggressions—of Europe.

On the whole, most people in this country would rather not think about Mexico if they can help it. There are, to be sure, a few downright fools who think they would derive pleasure from staring at a map in which all of Central America was painted red, white and blue. There is, too, a noisy section of our own people which betrays its own "Kultur" by a sense of boundless superiority to the "greaser." Working through and with the flag-maniacs and the would-be bearers of a white man's burden, there are American and foreign business interests hoping to draw in this government as a protection of their investments. Another element in the situation is the Catholic Church, just now a victim in Mexico of a typical anti-clerical revolution. There are here enough passions to swamp reason—jingoism, racial contempt, profit-seeking, religious loyalty. If you want war these are impulses to tap, these are the materials out of which to brew an uncontrollable agitation.

Yet with the exception of the people along the border, there are few who really desire a conquest of Mexico. The interventionists tell us that this undoubted apathy is due to the suppression of news about Mexico, that if it weren't for the cable censorship and the extreme secrecy of Washington the lid would blow off. They tell us hair-raising tales of plunder and murder and rape, of danger to Americans, of wholesale destruction, of famine,

element of organized society has dissolved, a country in which hundreds of local military chiefs acting on their own caprice are all that is left of government. Mr. Hyde's "Plain Tale From Mexico," which we publish in this issue, may be taken as a moderate statement of the opinion of Americans who have lived in Mexico. The Mexico they tell about is a place where industry has ceased, where men sow without any assurance that they will reap, where the sanctions of marriage, property, security of life, have disappeared.

It is a dismal outlook they offer us, of a people eighty-five per cent illiterate, ruled by an alien race, knowing enough to rebel but not enough to consummate a revolution, a people misled, betrayed, sold out, subject to constant meddling and intrigue from the cleverer and richer and stronger foreigners who swarm amongst them. The Mexicans seem to be impaled upon an endless series of dilemmas. They cannot have order until they have some kind of social justice, but they cannot have a redistribution of land without a powerful central government loyally supported. They cannot have any kind of representative democracy without much greater education, but no educational system will work amidst chronic revolution. They cannot restore peace on any terms without large shipments of arms and big foreign loans, and they cannot secure loans unless the stability of their government is fairly well assured.

It may be asked how all this concerns the United States. It concerns us first of all because the Wilson administration by intervening in Mexican affairs has put an enormous moral obligation upon us. Our government made it impossible for Huerta to govern, it favored the Constitutionalists enough to encourage them but not enough to make them triumph. In a thousand and one ways we have got ourselves entangled in Mexican responsibilities. Upon our recognition of any government that is set up its stability will depend. We can kill any *de facto* ruler, as we did Huerta, by financial suffocation. And if a government is established, recognized by us, and then overthrown by a just or unjust revolution, the course of events will depend very largely on the attitude of this government. The notions some people seem to have that you can draw a line around Mexico and ignore the Mexicans, "leave them to settle their own problems," is an entirely unrealistic view of international affairs. To ignore Mexico would not be to leave it alone; all Mexico would feel the effect if we tried to isolate her. It would mean economic paralysis, a starvation of government, unlimited consequences, for though the world may

make international know-nothingism impossible.

This is our situation to-day. Most of us do not wish to go into Mexico. We regard it as a disastrous adventure, which will kill so many people and cost so much money and produce so little good that anyone who talks of it lightly is dangerous and ought not to be at large. With all that, we recognize the responsibility of this government in Mexico, and realize that unless some miracle happens, the push toward intervention will become irresistible. Now if this dilemma exhausts the ingenuity of statesmanship, we are in a bad way. It may be, though, that it does not, and it is with this hope in mind that we are writing. If some alternative course can be found, it will justify a good deal of talk and effort and ink and paper. That this country is drifting into danger will not be denied; that the future ought to be planned now is obvious. More to start the discussion than to end it, we should like to suggest a few axioms and hypotheses in a constructive Mexican policy.

Assume a real desire to avoid military conquest and to see established in Mexico a government acceptable to a large share of the articulate Mexicans, and strong enough to keep the peace. It would seem, then, that whatever may be thought of the President's policy in the past, at the moment watchful waiting is his only course. But for what is he to wait? For the appearance of some man at the head of a powerful faction who seems to give evidence of fitness to govern. If such a man emerges he will deserve a whole-hearted support from this government, a support which would enable him to secure loans, and to fight down the incipient rebellions which will undoubtedly continue to flare up all over Mexico for some years to come. This will involve stamping upon many excellent land programs and disappointing some who hope to see Mexico appear very soon as a socialized agrarian democracy. These hopes are, in our opinion, not now within human possibility. The disease of clericalism and feudal landlordism cannot be stamped out by force. Something can be done by revolution, but more can be done by economic change and the growth of industrialism. For this peace and security are essential, a return from the habit of living by war and plunder to the production of wealth. A generation of guerilla warfare will not produce a race of Mexicans fit to establish a civilization for themselves.

We take it, then, that anything we can do to support a likely government should be done. If that fails, if we try it and more fighting ensues, then we are face to face with all the interventionists prophesy.

It is toward this ultimate situation that we

ourselves whether there are forms of diplomatic and economic pressure which might be applied to compel the Mexicans to police themselves. And even though active intervention should become inevitable, this country ought not to be content to assume that the only way to proceed is by an invading army. A foreign policy with any ingenuity would try every weapon before it drew the gun. It might, for example, see whether some one of the revolutionary factions could not be helped by money and ammunition while all other factions were blockaded. It might try to reach some kind of understanding with South American powers by which pressure from the United States would be converted into Pan-American pressure, and so cleansed of the taint of aggression. There are innumerable possibilities like these which we could profitably discuss now. They should be discussed without the hysteria which rushes for intervention, and without the hysteria which grows pale and dumb at the possibility of it.

We are facing to-day one of the great situations of our history, and unless we plan now to meet it intelligently and humanely, with all the foresight and ingenuity at our disposal, we may at any moment find ourselves in the midst of a panic greater than we can control.

## Blinders

FOR one excited edition of the evening papers it looked as if Mother Jones and John D. Rockefeller, Jr., were going to forget and forgive. Then something happened and Mother Jones reopened the feud. It was said that she had been warned by her comrades not to be overcome by any personal sympathy for the "misunderstood young man." At any rate, the threatened harmony broke down, leaving behind it a wreckage of editorials on the value of "getting together and talking things over."

There is no doubt that Mother Jones and Mr. Rockefeller were on the verge of liking each other enough to dull the edge of conflict. Two mythologies were in danger of destruction, for two human beings were looking at each other sufficiently to see that neither was the devil. Why should there then have been any interruption? Why in a world of stupid misunderstanding should any one be so perverse as to put a stumbling block in the way of an exchange of sympathies? Why shouldn't the capitalist and labor leader try to see each other as they are, consider each other's difficulties, and go away with less bitterness in their hearts?

Nothing in the psychology of labor is so hard for well-meaning people to grasp as the instinct