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FRANSISCO FERRER

Charles E. Hooper.

Still groans Prometheus bound, and still descends,  
From yon man-fashioned Phantom of the skies,  
The triple-headed bird of prey that blends  
Warfare with greed and sacerdotal lies.

Soldiers of Truth, they death-drops we salute;  
In them Humanity is heart renewed;  
Dried be the tear, the rising curse be mute;  
In blood lies Liberty's beatitude.

But what of Spain—priest-trampled Spain? Who knows  
To-morrow's doom of infamy or fame?  
At least in they loved country still live those  
Who burn to spread they martyred spirit's flame.

"Long lie the Modern School"—They message, flung  
Straight to the murderous muzzles ere they sped  
Destruction to a brain too finely strung,  
Re-echoed, links the living to the dead;

The living, not in guilty Spain alone,

But wheresoever men have eyes to see  
And hearts to feel: There, ready, stands the throne,  
Reared by Light-yielding labors like thine own,  
That waits thy spirit's King, the World-community.

--London Literary Guide.

### **OBSERVATIONS AND COMMENTS**

THE whole history of the Catholic Church has been An uninterrupted orgy of violence and crime, persecution and murder.

The vicars of the meek Carpenter who taught "Love thine enemies" have ever preached his gospel with rack and thumbscrem. Fire and sword were their good Christian weapons. Darkness and ignorance their supreme opportunity. The terrible result is all too evident in countries ruled by the Church. Ignorance and poverty are most frightful in proportion To Catholic influence. Spain is its stronghold. Fearfully The black beast of Rome guards her ancient domain. She trembles at the approach of light. Justly she sees in the torch of science the threatened destruction of her tyrannical power. The Educator is her most feared enemy.

In the present, as in the past, the Church dreads nothing more than ideas,--ideas of liberty, of light and justice. Their touch-bearers are blasphemers, heretics. They must die, for the greater glory of the Church and The continued reign of superstition and darkness.

Thus Ferrer had to die. Nay, more. He had to expiate a double heresy, for he blasphemed both Church and State. Too wide his view to be confined to the peril of priestcraft. Too clear his sight not to realize the blight of authority, civil no less than religious, that holds mankind in bondage. Full well he knew that in the lexicon of the State Liberty has no more lace than Light in that of the Church. Against both these powers of darkness Francisco Ferrer was a mighty protestant. He opposed to their pernicious, enslaving activity the most efficacious method: the enlightenment of the child. He knew that an enslaved child meant a free man. But this great crime neither Church nor State could forgive. The black Shylocks demanded their pound of flesh. A servile government readily acquiesced, and thus the noblest, truest friend of mankind was assassinated.

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SELDOM has the solidarity of governments been more convincingly demonstrated than by the Ferrer case. Governments often deem it necessary to make hostile demonstrations against each other. Usually it is the stronger taking advantage of the weaker power, for the benefit of home capitalists, or to divert popular discontent into artificial channels, this fanning the fires of jingoism, so conducive to the interests of despotism.

But in the Ferrer case the various States have given a remarkable proof of solidarity. No European government found a single work of censure for the farcical trial and atrocious murder at Montjuich. And our own government, forever pretending to be truly representative, -- why has it ignored popular indignation at Ferrer's assassination? Why does it remain mute in the face of the world-wide protest? Neither Federal nor State government dared to utter a word in condemnation of the foulest deed of the twentieth century.

The powers at Washington never lose time in expressing, unauthorized, "the sympathy of the American people" for some royal idiot overtaken by the hand of an avenging Nemesis. This has been repeatedly done within recent years, without the knowledge or consent of the people; in fact, contrary to their desires and expressed sentiment, and in direct defiance of the American tradition abhorring and tyranny of the Old World despotisms. Why, then, is Washington mute at the outrage committed in Spain? If it may without authorization express the alleged sympathy of the American people for a dead tyrant, may it not voice the expressed indignation of the people at the wrong done to humanity? If the authorities, State and Federal, had possessed the faintest spark of manhood, they should have first expressed to the people of Spain and the orphans of Ferrer the sympathy of the American public and its abhorrence of the assassination. They the official representatives in America of the Catholic Church and Spanish government should have been notified that the American people could not tolerate in their midst the official presence of assassins' agents.

Such should have been the attitude of a government having even the faintest pretensions to being representative of the nation. But such pretensions are the veriest hypocrisy. Governments represent nothing but chicanery, fraud, and the violence of the few toward the many. The very essence of governments is suppression and murder. Their mission is to defend and preserve existing conditions of injustice, oppression, and tyranny—and this is why all governments are solidaric.

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LET no one deceive himself with the belief that the dastardly crime of Montjuich would not be possible in these United States.

It may seem like a far cry from American to Spain. And yet the comparison is justified. Indeed, this country has but scant reason to point the finger of scorn at benighted Spain, in the fond belief that we are more civilized, more progressive.

If the possibility of a Ferrer outrage may serve as a criterion of the people's place in the ethical progress of the world, then the "land of the free and the home of the brave" properly belongs in the utmost rear of the march.

Just twenty-two years ago a tragedy was enacted upon the stage of American life which, for brutality and monstrous malignity, far overshadows the terrible happenings in Spain. Eight of the noblest of men were torn from the midst of their friends and condemned to death under circumstances closely resembling the martyrdom of Ferrer. As in the case of the Spanish educator, the only crime of our Chicago comrades consisted in their loyal service to humanity. They had raised their voices in protest against social injustice and devoted their lives to the enlightenment of their fellow-men. This was the most unpardonable crime man could be guilty of—in Spain as in America,—a crime punishable with death.

The circumstances surrounding the trial of our Chicago martyrs were also peculiarly like those of Ferrer's. Perjury and false evidence were resorted to by an American court to accomplish the fiendish plot against the men Accused of complicity in the Haymarket bomb incident. Not a shred of evidence could be proved by Governor Altgeld, who liberated the three imprisoned Anarchists. But lack of evidence could be no obstacle to the infamous cabal of authority and privilege: in spite of their proved innocence five men were judicially slaughtered.

If anything, the Chicago court was more brutal, more atrocious than that of Spain. The latter at least has the excuse—pitiable as it is—of an actual condition of martial law. Nothing of the kind existed in Chicago, in 1887. Our comrades were tried, not by a court martial, like Ferrer, but by a civil tribunal which decreed the slaying of the Anarchists by resorting to every conceivable perfidy within the range of judicial authority.

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TO those who still cling to the ragged edges of American liberty, the latest governmental outrages should furnish sufficient proof that liberty is no more.

The President of a "free" people, embraces the tyrant of Mexico, whose dark and criminal deeds surpass eve those of the Russian autocracy. The government of a "free" country lends itself as hangman of the personal rights and liberties of people whose only offence consists in daring to oppose the despotic régime of the Mexican Tsar. At the latter's request De Lara, a cultured Mexican residing at Los Angeles, has been arrested, Refused a trail, and is about to be turned over to the Tender mercies of the Weyler of Mexico.

In our own city, a brilliant writer and cartoonist, Carlo De Fornaro, well known in artistic circles, has been convicted of criminal libel, because he, too, had dared to raise his voice in behalf of his outraged country. In the work, "Diaz, Tsar of Mexico," Fornaro boldly tore the mask off the hypocritical face of Perfidious Diaz, that the world might see him as he is.

The portrait drawn by the pen of this gifted artist Was the writing on the wall which evidently disturbed the slumbers of the Mexican oppressor. Criticism and the truth are ever a menace to tyranny. The Mexican government had successfully suppressed free expression in its own country and has now went its representative to accomplish the same result in America. That Diaz could fully rely on his colleagues in Washington to do his bidding is best proved by the outrageous action of the jury which found Fornaro guilty of libeling —Diaz. As if the English tongue is rich enough in strong expressions to libel a Diaz.

The thinking element of the West has awakened to the danger of Mexican rule in America, inasmuch as they have inaugurated a tremendous agitation in behalf of De Lara. Shall we in the East not follow their commendable example? A strong vigorous movement should immediately be started in behalf of Fornaro, in behalf of free speech. It behooves us to lend our assistance in freeing Mexico, for the time is not far when we shall need the assistance of Mexico to free us.

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THE killing of Prince Ito by a Korean patriot Marks an important step in the awakening of that unfortunate country. The birth of the individual revolutionist historically precedes national revolt. And surely Korea has sufficient cause to rejoice over the deed of her son, more courageous than his brothers. For Ito, as Resident General of Korea, proved a veritable demon in the ferocious suppression of every aspiration of the Koreans for national independence and well-being. His administration reduced that country to the last extreme slavery. The shot that laid Ito low was but the echo of a people's desperate cry For relief.

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IT is no exaggeration to say that Samuel Gompers is The most perniciously reactionary factor in the American labor movement. It is he, chiefly, who is responsible for the present pitiful, helpless condition of the organized workingmen of this country. His whole official life has been devoted to instilling the belief that the true solution of the labor question is to be found in the "closer approach of capital and labor." He has preached the gospel of harmony between master and slave till the workers have grown to look upon the exploiting parasites as their true benefactors. His craft union methods and tactics have encouraged internal strife and robbed the workers of their initiative and independence. They have been persistently drilled to rely on the authority of their leaders—in and out of the union—and their minds poisoned and their energy paralyzed by the sanctity of contracts. Self-help and direct economic action have been tabooed, legal justice eulogized, and the courts apotheosized till labor has become emasculated of all manhood.

Not content with having degraded and debauched American labor, Gompers undertook to carry his pernicious gospel to the workers of Europe. On his recent trip abroad he exhausted the colors of the rainbow in painting the prosperity an power of the American workingmen. He was inexpressibly shocked by the miserable condition of the wage slaves of the Old World; he severely [criticized] their ineffective methods of fighting the encroachments of capital, contrasting them with the enlightened and successful tactics of the "world's most powerful labor body," the A. F. of L.

Having thus satisfactorily—to himself, chiefly—accomplished this mission, Gompers set sail for American, the Eldorado of labor.

But oh, the irony of fate! The last strains of his Swan-like song has scarcely left his lips, when the electric wire flashed the news to Gompers that the Court of Appeals had ordered him to be thrown into prison! It has confirmed the judgment of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, declaring— in essence—that American labor had no rights as against capital, and no standing in the courts of law. Did Gompers, the head of the "world's most powerful Labor body," indignantly protest against this infamous Judicial raping of his organization? Not he. He is too Loyal a slave to rebel against sacred decisions of the august Judiciary. In the last issue of the American Federationist Gompers servilely proclaims his unshaken faith in the ultimate triumph of justice and calls upon the faithful to—appeal to the higher court.

Sancta Simplicitas, if not worse. Has Gompers the courage to call upon American labor to proclaim a General Strike as a protest against the court's decision, . . . but, then, neither Gompers nor his organization has the courage of virile manhood.

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FOR years New York and Brooklyn have been police-ridden cities. So much so that one was not quite safe from them in his own home. As to outrages on fundamental principles, that was an open daily exercise of the police.

Since the removal of the military police Commissioner Bingham, his successor has tried to rescue free speech, at least, from the clutches of his subordinates, and especially to free hallkeepers from the police reign of terror.

Like all reforms, the efforts of our new Commissioner have succeeded in relieving the agony, but not in curing the disease.

There are still numerous precincts where captains reign supreme, bullying hall owners and preventing the holding of meetings.

One of these heroes, Captain Shaw, has just been removed to Brooklyn, where he continues his old tactics practiced for many years in New York.

A meeting of Comrade Goldman was stopped November 5th in the habitual sneaky way: intimidation of the hallkeeper.

When Captain Shaw was confronted by the order of his superior to keep hands off the meeting, the brave knight lied himself out of the difficulty, throwing the blame on the lights in the hall, which had suddenly refused to burn. Our friends procured from the Commissioner permission to hold an open air meeting, at which they addressed—during an hour and a half—an audience of three thousand people attracted by the police closing the hall.

The meeting was unusually quiet and orderly, which did not seem to please the Brooklyn police. Suddenly a sergeant appeared on the scene, roughly demanding our permit. When Comrade Reitman did not comply quick enough with the demand, he was placed under arrest. The following morning he was fined five dollars for the terrible offence of having told the policeman that it was none of his business whether we had a permit. Not a policeman's business to meddle in the free exercise of a right? No this business to break up a peaceful meeting? That was, indeed, a crime.

The comic side of the affair was furnished by His Majesty, Capt. Shaw. He appeared before the Judge to swear out a warrant for Comrade Emma Goldman, who, he said, had called him a grafter and had attacked the Catholic Church. Even a Brooklyn judge could see the humor of the situation. He would not issue the warrant, but went out of his way to tell our comrade that he knew her theories stood for kindness. It is to be regretted, however that the Judge doesn't know enough of them to practice kindness in the courts. The brutality and coarseness of the officers that morning were the most disgraceful scene we have witnessed in a long time.

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THE industrial Workers of the World of Spokane, Wash., are setting a splendid example of fighting the enemies of speech.

The local authorities had suddenly decided to stop the I. W. W. open-air meetings. Our Spokane comrades have been carrying on an energetic propaganda, striking at the very vitals on Mammon by their fearless denunciation of the employment sharks—the modern eunuchs of capitalism. Hence the attempt to throttle free speech.

But our friends were not to be so easily daunted. They insisted on their rights. They were not naïve enough to believe that anything would be "granted" them. They had the courage to demand and take their rights, by continuing to hold open-air meetings, police orders to the contrary notwithstanding. The energy and determination of the brave fighters resulted in numerous arrests: Comrade Elisabeth Gurley Flynn and two other I. W. W. organizers, as well as the editors of the Industrial Worker and the secretary of the Central Committee of the I. W. W. unions, were thrown into jail. But prison and threats of bodily injury could not discourage these devoted men and women. No sooner was one speaker dragged off the platform than another took his place. Scores of fighters stood ready to assert their right of free speech, so that the Spokane prison is now overfilled, and plenty of comrades are on hand to continue the fight.

That these methods of establishing our rights are the proper ones has already been proved by Comrade Flynn and others at Missoula, Mont. There the number of I. W. W. people willing and ready to go to prison for free speech so overtaxed the town jail's capacity that the authorities were forced to cry for mercy. They feared the town would go into bankruptcy if our comrades persisted in becoming the city's free boarders. Thus freedom of speech was established in Missoula. Thus also—and thus alone—will it have to be established everywhere.

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THE case of Comrades Schreiber and Adams, now before the Supreme Court of New Jersey, has again demonstrated to what depths government will stoop in its persecution of Anarchists.

Schreiber and Adams were convicted last June in The Trenton court of "conspiracy to rob" (no robbery had taken place), on the exclusive testimony of a certain New York police spy and his assistants. The evidence against them was so flimsy, the trial such a farce, that the Machinist Union (of which Schreiber was a most active member) took up the matter, raised funds and appealed the case to the Supreme Court.

The arguments of counsel before the latter body are sufficient to convince even a prejudiced mind that the verdict of guilty against Schreiber and Adam was the direct result of police conspirators seeking promotion. Of course, the underlying reason for the prosecution was the circumstance of the prisoners' being Anarchists.

Our experience with authority has been of a character to exclude surprise at any atrocity government might commit. But that workingmen, strikers at that, should lend themselves the willing tools of a police outrage, is very sad indeed. We blush for American labor to acknowledge that the jury which condemned Schreiber and Adams consisted almost exclusively of striking hatters.

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WE hail the resurrection of the Firebrand, the fortnightly Anarchist review published and edited by Ross Winn. In these days of general apathy and ever-growing encroachment of despotism every additional champion of Liberty is a valuable aid in the service of humanity. Comrade Winn is especially fitted for the task: he is a born fighter, with a clear, broad outlook, and a sharp and fearless pen. The trumpet calls, the need is great—Welcome, Comrade!

Those wishing to subscribe for the Firebrand may Address Ross Winn, Mt. Juliet, Tenn., or the office of

MOTHER EARTH.