

If Mr. Hepburn means to follow up and to stand by this dictum, and with the same energy that has made his name a household word as a legislator on great issues of international policy, the exercise of that misdirected energy could open no more appropriately than in this ominous vote for the immediate laying down of the keels of two Dreadnaughts—even though the first programme was for four.

Whatever is in the wind, whatever is in the mind of those politicians of Congress who are proceeding on the theory that this is a "warlike nation," double lines of battleships will be the first and main requirement, of course, in the light of the experience of Russia, with even her overland war of land acquisition finally fought and lost on the sea.

But are we on warlike enterprise bent? Are we going ashore in Asia after making the Pacific "our own"? Are we to forsake the field of commercial and manufacturing competition with the world, to say nothing of moral influence, for the primacy of the western hemisphere, and take to that of conquest, Bonaparte fashion, marching legions of men and horse and trundling artillery across the Andes or shipping them overseas? It seems too absurd, too "opera bouffe," on the face of it—like a Fourth of July procession of antiques and comiques enacted by boys who have too evidently been out all night.

Yet there is this constant glorification and parading of our new navy, there is our still unashamed if no longer exultant contemplation of our bloody and tricky conquest of the Philippines, and here is an overwhelming vote in Congress backing the warlike blast of Hepburn.

E. H. CLEMENT.

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RADICALISM AND THE CASE OF ROOSEVELT.

"The passing of Roosevelt" is now a favorite title for editorials.

There is rejoicing in many quarters, and only the blind and deaf among the Rooseveltians will venture to assert that the jubilation is confined to "reactionaries."

The reactionaries, no doubt, are impatiently counting the days and hours which separate us from the day of release, but thousands of radicals and progressives and tens of thousands of clean-minded and decent moderates, sympathize with, if they do not fully associate themselves with the reactionaries in the expression of such feelings.

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Yet Roosevelt's popularity has been due prin-

cipally to his radicalism, and it may seem strange that his retirement should be so eagerly awaited and so gratefully contemplated in progressive circles. Has not Roosevelt fought the rich malefactors? Hasn't he, unlike the average President, reflected the spirit of the age and evinced an appreciation of the claims of the disinherited? Hasn't he denounced monopoly and plutocracy; hasn't he pleaded for fair accident and liability laws; hasn't he shown himself friendly to the wage-earner?

Yes, he has done these things, and more. On some of the vital questions of the day he has, in his own way, voiced democratic sentiments and represented the cause of the masses in opposition to the cause of an aggressive and arrogant plutocracy. But, unfortunately not only for himself but for the cause he has tried to serve, his characteristics are such that his aid is fatal. A movement is stronger without than with him.

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The "case" of Roosevelt can be illustrated very simply. Suppose a group of advanced, rational, self-respecting reformers is joined by a person who is incapable of loyal co-operation, who is loud, vulgar, shallow, egotistical, untruthful, sensational, censorious, pharisaical and generally irresponsible. The greater the energy and the power of this person the worse for the group and the work it is seeking to do. Radical opinions do not absolve either an individual or a movement from the obligations of justice, of honor, of reasonable consistency.

The trouble with Roosevelt is that he is irresponsible. This is the characterization of the radical Republican of Springfield, Mass. In private life or in small official positions he would have been regarded as an erratic, quarrelsome, ridiculous character with some good impulses. In a great office—and with sycophants and journalistic prostitutes to distort the facts daily and flatter him at the expense of fact and truth—even his blunders and offenses have been glossed over. We have heard silly talk of Roosevelt's "genius," but what would that genius have done for him if the correspondents and editors had been candid and had written as they felt and thought about his performances?

The glamor and prestige of the office dazzle the thoughtless, while its power and influence paralyze the weak and the timid. What would be contemptible in the ordinary man becomes "the higher strategy" in the patronage-dispensing and commanding "ruler."

We are, however, asked by some well-meaning men to overlook Roosevelt's essentially ignoble characteristics for the sake of his "deeds."

The assumption that underlies this demand is that lasting good can be accomplished by indefensible means, and that to denounce the indefensible in a "doer" is to injure the cause with which he happens to be identified for the moment. There is nothing in human experience to justify this assumption.

The fight against monopoly and plutocracy gains nothing from such incidental assaults on elementary principles of behavior as Roosevelt has wildly and continually made.

It is not giving comfort to the enemy to express abhorrence for Rooseveltism as exhibited in the original Panama scandal (an instance of international burglary rendered the more detestable by the Pecksniffian professions of regard for international law which accompanied the outrage), or for the Roosevelt of the Harriman campaign correspondence (the "practical" Roosevelt, who is so anxious that others should avoid even the appearance of evil), or the Roosevelt of the Paul Morton episode, or the Roosevelt of the steel trust "waiver," or the Roosevelt of the spoils practices and unscrupulous use of patronage in the interest of his favorites, or the Roosevelt of the Taft-Bryan campaign. Our hatred of legal robbery and unfair privilege does not require us to affect respect for reckless slanderers, tricky and mendacious controversialists, shallow and ignorant dogmatists, with minds as unstable as water, who happen also to denounce legal robbery and unfair privilege.

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How the reactionaries would treat a sane, high-minded, sincere champion of justice and democracy in the Presidential office, is a question that has no bearing on the Roosevelt case. Certainly, the radicals would rejoice in such a champion; and of them it cannot be said that they condemn Roosevelt for the good aspects of his administration.

It is genuine democracy to despise despicable qualities wherever they are found, to insist on the application of the same tests to high and low, to repudiate machiavellianism and the preposterous claims of brief authority to infallibility and worship.

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S. R.

Satire untouched by wrath or sorrow, satire acquiescent and flippant and amused at itself, satire unburdened by the sense of outrage and of pain, is the most tragic thing in the world.—Vida D. Scudder.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER FROM STRICKEN ITALY.

Rome, Jan. 19.—The disaster at Messina has stunned us all. Imagine—the first report was 25,000 dead; six hours later 80,000; the next day the number jumped to 100,000; and now, after two weeks, the official report is 210,000 dead. In addition to that there are some 85,000 wounded, and a great many of those will die. Every one in Italy has pitched in to help.

The first I heard of the disaster was the morning of the 28th when I was on my way back from Geneva where I had been to pass Christmas. At Damodossola there got on the train an officer who had his family at Reggio, Calabria. He was dazed, so that at Milan where we changed cars, I had to lead him around by the hand. I took care of him until we reached Florence, then bade good-bye to him after putting him on the train for Rome. I spent one day in Florence and came on to Rome. A captain in the artillery here asked me to take charge of another man who lived at Messina. So I took him down to Naples and put him on the boat. And what a scene! As the boats arrived the wounded were carried to the trains which stood ready on the dock. Each boat brought a couple of thousand wounded. And wounded so terribly! I brought back two who were delirious, and took them to the Vatican where the Pope has 400 beds. Every house in Rome and Naples is a hospital, and after two weeks they are still coming. No one has spoken above a whisper. We hear but one phrase: "Messina and Reggio are dead." The theatres, which were closed for ten days, are now giving benefit performances.

The one thing, however, which is most remarkable is how law and order has prevailed, and the wonderful promptness with which the country sent relief. The news of the disaster reached Rome at 10:00 a. m. on the 28th. At 1:00 p. m. the first relief train left, loaded with soldiers and provisions. From that time trains were run just as close as possible. Hundreds of tons of bread left Rome every day, and there was at Messina and Reggio an army of 200,000 to dig the wounded out of the ruins.

And after that terrible disaster there comes the news of last night's quake at Florence and Bologna. No one was killed, but considerable damage was done. The quake was also registered here in Rome, but I did not feel it although I was awake. It seems as if all Italy were unstable. But you know there is a saying that as Florence was born from a lake, so it will disappear and be swallowed up—as bad as Virgil's about Sicily, "Hic fuit Trinacria." I don't intend to be mixed up in any quakes if I can help it, and for the present I shan't stay over night at Florence nor in any other city which is subject to them. My dialectic study takes me soon to Siracusa and Catania, but I shan't stay over night in either of those places, as the peninsula seems especially unstable now, and every day shocks are recorded in that district. Think of it, on the 28th, 96 shocks of the first degree in Catania, and since then on an average eight or ten a day! You can imagine the state of mind in the whole of Italy now. Last night