

THE "DYING NATION."

Relentlessly as some male Atropos, whose office is to cut the fate-thread of a whole people, an English Tory Premier declared Spain a "dying nation."

England he lauded in contrast, assuring the world that in her steel-bound lexicon the word "moribund" could not be found.

Yet what other judgment could be expected from a noble Lord whose criteria of national health were the empire of "Dreadnoughts," the survival of Privilege, and the obeisance of an ever-duped proletariat to sumptuously-staged Exploitation.



But very stubbornly the Spanish nation refuses to display the normal symptoms of dissolution to bear out the English leech's diagnosis.

First she startles the world of art with the work of painters that puts to shame the academicians with their plethora of titles and famine of vitality: a Sorolla contrives to make sheer sunlight a glad prisoner of his canvases; he causes the galleries where they are exhibited to blaze with the Spanish noontide, and echo with the far-heard roar of surf on Valencian sands. The uncorrupt sea that the English Premier thought chiefly created to float ruinously expensive ships of death, this painter of the "dying nation" thinks more truly poured over the clean beaches to bring vigor to crippled boys, and mitigate their "sad inheritance." Again he depicts straight-bodied, ingeniously nude lads escorting little maids, with winning gallantry, to the foaming ocean bath; or shows a pair of the innocents a-sprawl side by side where the mercurial tide clings about the comely forms, and washes the plump flesh to the gleam of burnished silver. Unremittingly this artist prophesies the health and vigor that shall be Spain's when sun and sea are once given their beneficent will with the nation's babes and adolescents.

Then another token of unsubmitive life quickens the world's democracy to braver march toward radiant liberty: Spanish working men and women in their thousands refuse to fight the war of Greed for a hostile, hoaxing class, but bid them be starved and shot for their own profit if they will; mothers and sweethearts join the remonstrant throngs, and cry a plague on feeding the maw of battle any longer with their loved ones, for the masters' gain. Rulers and priests shout the frantic slogan of "Patriotism," and thunder the old anathemas of spiritual perdition in vain; barricades rise in the streets, and the foundations of the state are

proved by their appalling agitation to be the despised masses themselves. Whether such insurrection portend the death of Spain, or rather the death of Powers that keep her enslaved and crippled, must the future tell.



And now to these flagrant contradictions of the British fiat is added a resurrected teacher, whose body at instigation of Baal priests the rulers slew, but whose fate the next day stirred the nations to one cry of pain, and whose spirit leagues the world's enlightened in new pacts of love.

As Sorolla pleads the therapeutic ministry of sunlight and seacoast for his people's bodies, so Ferrer demanded the radiance of unveiled Truth, the ozone-breath and stimulant surf-drench of the great deep of Freedom, for their minds and souls.

The mole-blind filchers of the people's heritage can hear at least, and rage to find their bullets wing the martyr's words and work to every land, till all earth's bigots and tyrants read their fate afresh, in blood-red writing on the wall.

Though but the cell-wall of a lonely captive, yet the writing throbs now flame-bright with his outpoured life, and however restrained his words, what doom to hoar Slavery sounds like a trumpet through "Mene, Mene!" such as this:

Let us not fear to say that we want men capable of evolving without stopping,

Capable of destroying and renewing their environments without cessation,—of renewing themselves also.

Men whose intellectual independence will be their greatest force; who will attach themselves to nothing, always ready to accept what is best;

Happy in the triumph of new ideas, aspiring to live multiple lives in one life.

Society fears such men; we must not then hope that it will ever want an education able to give them to us.



A "dying nation" then, that thrives on death as others on sheer life, this Spain appears. Perchance another English verdict must be heeded, in presence of such portents, that avers:

Spain is not merely the land of the gypsy with the guitar, for there is a youthful and muscular Spain, covered with sweat, wearing a blue blouse, and with face blackened by the smoke of the forge.

It may be the English Premier who prophesied such a nation's demise, mistook the pallor of hunger for the ghastlier hue. Perhaps he would have been among those of old who laughed to scorn a certain Vagrant of the Syrian roads, when of a little maid they all agreed was dead, He steadfastly declared she did but sleep. But when He

raised her up and shamed the scoffers, He bade who loved her give her food to eat.

So might we now hear pleading for their famished land, the myriad martyrs who through long ages have died for Spain and Freedom and the Truth.

ELIOT WHITE.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE UNEARNED INCREMENT TAX.

About the middle of January the First Hebrew Congregation of Oakland, California, bought a site for a new synagogue, paying \$40,000 for a lot containing 14,000 square feet, which is equivalent to \$124,146 an acre. That Congregation was organized in 1875, at which time it could have bought five acres in the same locality for about \$1,000—and held it for the workers and the increasing population of Oakland to make more valuable. By exercising that "business foresight," the Congregation would now be in much better "financial" condition. The five acres bought for \$1,000 would now be worth \$615,380, after writing off the original "investment" and the accrued interest; and, retaining the 14,000 square feet needed for the new synagogue, valuing it at \$40,000, the Congregation would have an "unearned increment" net profit of \$575,380; which shows that it pays to get in the way of others and make them pay you to get out of their way.

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Yes, it pays. Two weeks before the First Hebrew Congregation paid into a private pocket the \$40,000 of unearned increment to get a site for a synagogue, the Bixby ranch of 500 acres, in Orange County, California, near Los Angeles, was sold for \$200 an acre. That is, the less than one-third of an acre in Oakland sold for 200 times as much as a whole acre in Orange County. The land of the Bixby ranch is specially adapted for fruits and vegetables, has a railroad line running through it and fine markets within easy reach. The new owners will not use it. They did not buy it for use, but to subdivide and sell in small parcels to users; and as such productive land is scarce near Los Angeles, there will probably be plenty of buyers at prices ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 an acre. At \$1,000 an acre, the 500 acres will sell for less than the present value of five acres in that part of Oakland where the First Hebrew Congregation has bought the site for its synagogue. Who says a tax on the "unearned increment" would fall most heavily on the farmer?

W. G. EGGLESTON.

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AN INSIDE VIEW OF BALLINGER.

Tacoma, Wash., March 13, 1910.

The Ballinger-Pinchot investigation has developed one fact that is not news to some of us, and which President Taft should have understood when he was making up his cabinet. It is that the Secretary of the Interior, who is charged with the administration and protection of the public domain, should not

have been chosen from the region lying between the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific Ocean. Public sentiment in this vast region is as tolerant of robbing the public domain as in olden days it was tolerant of opium smuggling—an industry, by the way, which formed the foundation of several large and respectable Pacific coast fortunes.

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In an article in *The Public* last summer (vol. xii, p. 752) the writer pointed out that in economic thought and civic morality the Pacific slope is the most backward section of the country. Special reference was made in that article to the demand of the Western raw material men for inordinately high protection. It was pointed out that this demand was buttressed in the public sentiment of the Pacific coast region; that the West believes the first duty of government is to "encourage capital" by special privilege in one form or another, and that members of Congress, in supporting the most greedy demands for protection, were actually representing the sentiments of their constituents.

What is true of Western sentiment on the tariff question is likewise true of Western sentiment on the question of conserving and protecting the national resources. It is not the truth to say that Western public sentiment on this issue has become demoralized. There never was any contrary sentiment on the subject. You can't demoralize something that never existed. From the days of the pioneers the Western feeling has been, and now is, that "the earth belongs to the Lord's chosen, and we are the chosen."

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The history of the development of the West is merely the history of the exploitation of national resources by Big Business and for Big Business. Eastern millions and billions have been poured into this sort of enterprise, and the fact that the people of the whole country had an equity in the resources thus exploited has always been either ignored or vehemently denied. Public officials from Presidents down have winked at the robbery of the government; land-grabbing has for fifty years been a respectable occupation; public sentiment has condoned and does now condone the theft of the national domain.

The great bulk of the Western people, who, of course, have not themselves participated in despoiling the nation, have been taught to believe and do believe largely that it is necessary for the public domain to pass into private hands, in order to "develop the country" and "encourage immigration." The West is population mad; any appeal, made ostensibly in the interest of building up the country and attracting investment, is more potent than appeals to patriotism or civic honesty.

This feeling extends into all parties. No public man of prominence in the West is exempt from it. Take the case of ex-Senator George Turner, of Spokane, a man who has spent years in fighting railroad extortion, and who is the leader of the Democratic party in Washington State. Senator Turner, at the National Irrigation Congress last summer, indorsed the administration of Secretary