

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 14, NO. 67.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1913.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“INVEST IN SPANISH, AMERICA.”

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II.

THE second of the attractions which the boomer paper *Below the Rio Grande* enumerates, in the advertisement which it carries entitled “Invest in Spanish America” is “Plenty of Labor.”

No doubt, there is in Spanish America a mass of capital-less humanity so vast as to make the mouth of the American Capitalist Class water with appetite for the labor-power of the said mass, and to grow green with envy.

That the mouth of the American Capitalist Class should water is natural. So did the mouth of the fox in the fable water at the sight of certain grapes. That the American Capitalist Class should be moved with envy is less natural—unless the arriving at false conclusions from the mass of “valuable misinformation” on economics, dispersed by our Universities, be considered natural.

No proletariat, no capitalism, hence, no profits. The mass of proletarians is a necessary condition for satisfactory profits. True. But all is not said when that is said. A superabundance of proletarians, tho’ indispensable to capitalism, is not necessarily translatable into a proportionate superabundant quantity of profits. The economic fact is illustrated in Spanish America. Shocking tho’ the conditions be that West Virginia, located in English America, was recently discovered to be the theater of, conditions in Spanish America are generally immensely more shocking. The Putumayo horrors are not exceptional in the Putumayo regions. The “Putumayos” mark most, if not all, the spots where capital sets up its tent below the Rio Grande.

In other words—

Though “plenty of labor” is a characteristic of Spanish America, another characteristic there is, due to climatic and other considerations, which will be treated more

to the purpose under the next or third head, “Low Wages,” go so far to counteract the superabundance of labor as virtually to cancel it.

In West Virginia, that much homage had to be rendered to civilization as to raise the pretence of “Law” in order to cover the fact of Brutality. As illustrated in the Putumayo region, on the contrary, no pretence of Law is thought of; or, for that matter, can be thought of. The physical whip, shot-gun and cudgel have to be resorted to in order to commercialize the existing superabundance of labor. Now, then, orders for military courts-martial, court decisions to confirm these, and lawyers to boot, are, in the end, dirt cheaper to purchase than the arsenal of whips, shot guns and cudgels, together with the personnel that is requisite to operate them to a purpose. The net result is that there is hardly anything left of the otherwise promiscuous superabundance, to say nothing of the constant danger that the entrepreneurs in the Spanish American Putumayos run of being given the short shrift that bandits received when caught.

The situation concerning “Plenty of Labor” may be summed up in the words with which the situation concerning “No Competition” was summed up in the first article of this series:—

“Trading and Developing Companies” may, or may not be posted upon these facts. The College training, that their leading geniuses may have received, may render them easy dupes; or they may have shed their College training and, having made their “experience,” at the cost of their own bank accounts, transfer their field of operation to this country, where, setting up an office for the “developing” of Spanish America, they turn their activities towards inverting the process—improving their own bank accounts by allowing others to make their “experience.”

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Uploaded February 2016

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