

Workers' Breadnought

PLENTY FOR ALL, POVERTY FOR NONE.

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MEXICO : Another View

By WILLIAM C. OWEN.

Mexico, like Russia, is a long way off, and as a rule the reports we get from either country are utterly unreliable. Most of them are the concoctions of hirelings. Others have dribbled from the pens of restless wanderers who, having scuttled over the country for a few weeks or months, deem it helpful to record their impressions. Being superficial, they are worthless; and, in reality, they depend on the observer's attitude toward life, and on the company he keeps. If I am a Prohibitionist, I naturally view with approval a country in which everything is shut up tight. If I am a believer in individual liberty, I find such a country detestable. In either case my personal convictions will colour my report.

Mr. Prince Hopkins, whose article on Mexico you published in your issue of September 22nd, is no doubt an estimable gentleman to those who look at life through spectacles similar to his

Let me state the original position, condensing from a pamphlet I wrote in 1912. Diaz, as reported by our own much-esteemed William Archer, had invited foreign plutocracy to "rifle the national treasure house." Plutocracy's investments—almost entirely in undeveloped natural resources—were estimated at two thousand million dollars. Great newspaper proprietors, such as General Otis, of the "Los Angeles Times," and William Randolph Hearst, owned million-acre ranches. One gentleman was advertising for sale a property of two million and a quarter acres, having a sea-frontage of five hundred miles and two excellent harbours. Los Angeles itself was full of wealthy land-grabbers whom the revolution had driven out, and there was the wildest gamble in Mexican real estate, to be bought then at a dollar an acre, and estimated as certain to be worth a hundred dollars an acre as soon as the United States Government should

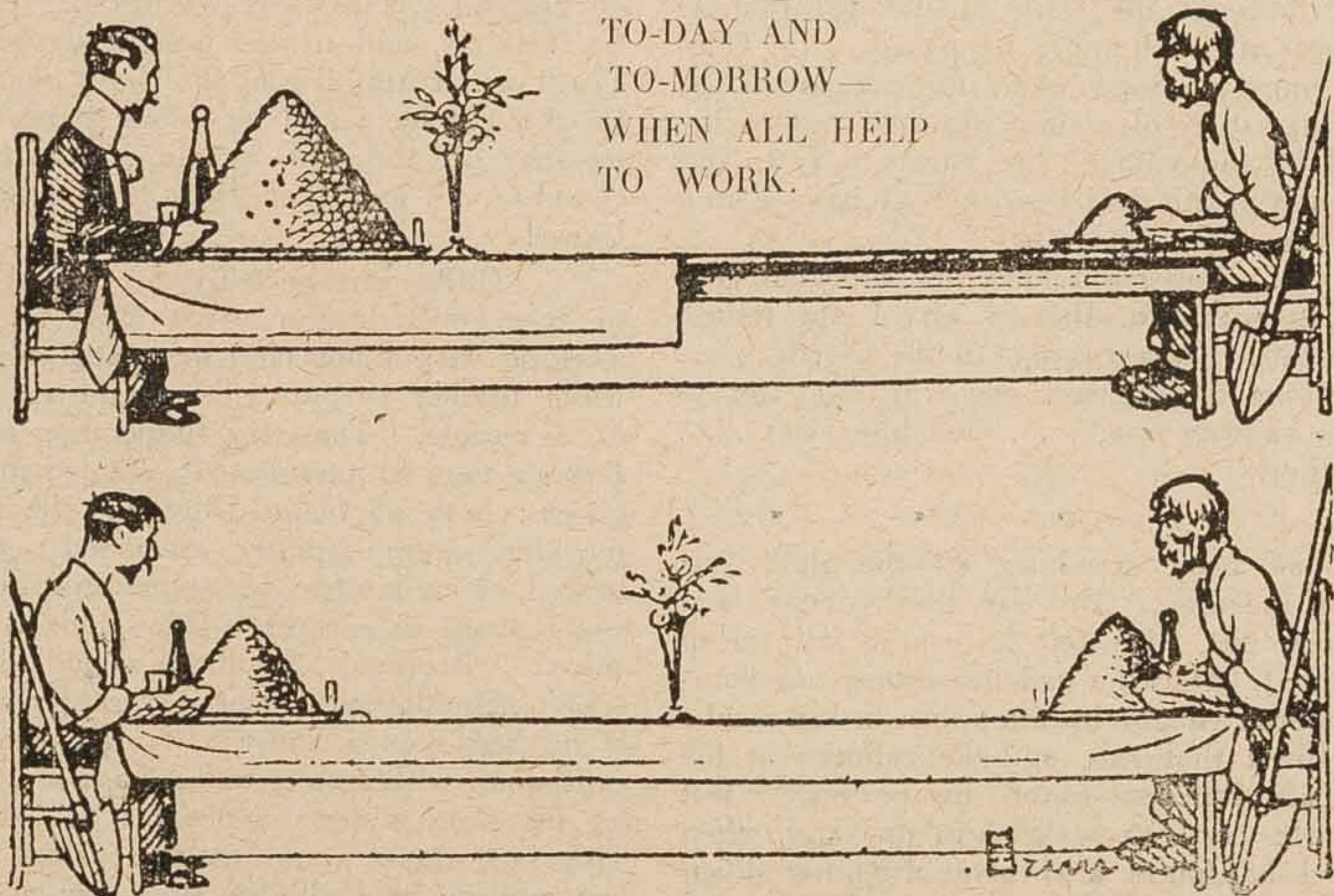
Representatives, deciding at the last moment to honour the memory of the man they had harried incessantly, ordered that the House should be draped in black, and decreed him a public funeral. This latter the family, with proper dignity, declined. But when Ricardo's brother, Enrique, visited Mexico City shortly after the funeral, Obregon's troops broke up the first meeting he attempted to address. Since then he has been touring the country; and, according to my latest information, he had been arrested four times, on charges varying from insulting the public authorities to treason against the State, which latter crime is punishable with death. On each occasion, so far as I can learn, he has been released because of the threatening attitude of an indignant population devoted to him.

His crime is, of course, that he tells the people not to believe in the paternal promises of a Government, but to take their own fortune into their own hands. Unfortunately every Government, however liberal its professions, will fight to the death for its own self-preservation; and I am satisfied that Obregon will put down any really threatening revolt as ruthlessly as did any of his predecessors; or as Lenin, Mussolini, or the British Government habitually do.

By the way, "that very able, young hero," Diaz, was originally an outlaw, seized power by the sword, and gained the backing of the people by his furious attacks on the Roman Catholic Church as the great land monopolist. Incessantly history repeats itself, and it is hard for those of us who have studied the career of Porfirio Diaz to feel confidence in any of these dictatorships which promise to do such wonderful things for the people, and do so uncommonly well for themselves.

Meanwhile in Mexico, as elsewhere, the disinherited still remain disinherited. Power, the Power that holds our race in slavery, moves on.

Whether American Imperialism will succeed in adding to its many triumphs the conquest of Mexico is one of the great conundrums of the future; but it is not Obregon that will stop it. He is as eager for recognition by the United States, as the Bolsheviks are eager to receive credentials from the British Empire. All Governments understand instinctively that their main business is to assure their own survival.



own. I have been on one occasion his guest, and think I know him well; because he has given me every opportunity of getting at his beliefs. He is what may be best classified as a "New Thought" man, and his own works show that he believes in all sorts of compromises, which I myself regard as the emasculation of the revolutionary movement. His means enable him to travel extensively, but I do not believe he has any real insight into the situation as it has been in Mexico for more than fifteen years.

When Ricardo and Enrique Mazon, with a few devoted followers, started the movement which drove Porfirio Diaz into exile, they were faced with a revolutionary situation of the most unyielding type. It stands to-day, in material essentials, practically unaltered. The one great change effected—a change of inestimable value—is that the Mexicans are now more hopeful, and have become a frankly-revolutionary people. It is necessary, therefore, to bamboozle them with fine words, in order that the Monopolies against which they revolted may be freed from further assault. For that work President Obregon is, as far as I can see, precisely the man. Madero and Carranza had previously tried their hands at the same game, and paid for it with their lives. They were comparatively clumsy operators who turned instantly to brute force for the suppression of discontent.

have intervened, put down the revolution and occupied the country. That was the situation. Mexico had been sold out for a song, and plutocracy was fighting like a tiger for its investments.

Since then no politician has dared to aspire to office without promising the disinherited Mexicans restoration of their lands. Madero gained the Presidency by profuse promises. He broke them, and tried to secure himself against the national wrath by conscripting an army estimated at 350,000 men. Carranza made similar promises, and used the federal forces to make war on and slaughter Zapata, who had actually restored the land to some four million peasants. Now Obregon promises, and Mr. Hopkins remarks that "unfortunately the natives are sometimes as greedy to get back the land as the foreign concessionaires are to retain it."

Mr. Hopkins states that he recounted to Obregon a story of his own suffering at the hands of the United States authorities, and that Obregon replied: "We welcome men of every opinion here, hoping that out of the conflict of views new truth may come." Let us examine.

As no one can tilt straight against vast interests without being handled roughly, the Mazon brothers spent many years in gaol. Ricardo Mazon died last year as he was stepping out of a United States penitentiary, and the Mexican House of

Tullamore Gaol

By T. D. SULLIVAN.

Oh, Tullamore Gaol is a charming place
(Bang the bolts and clatter the tins),
Tis Loyalty's school for the Irish race
(At six a.m. the trouble begins).
Rub and scrub, and tramp away,
Pull and pick, and hammer all day,
Smash the stones and turn the clay
(And mourn for your political sins).

A dear old man is Featherstone-Haugh
(Bang the bolts and clatter the tins),
As tender and sweet as a circular-saw
(At six a.m. the trouble begins).
Jingle, jangle goes the bell,
Up on your feet and out of your cell,
Wishing the Government, say to—well—
(So turn from your political sins).

But though 'tis said these things are so
(Bang the bolts and clatter the tins),
The system fails with men I know
(At six a.m. the trouble begins).
Fed or famishing, well or ill,
Their hearts are warm for Ireland still,
With love no tyrant's power can kill
(And pride in their political sins.)