

THE AMERICAN'S POWERFUL WEAPON

At the time of the assassination of the Russian Grand Duke Sergius a remarkable incident occurred in a Chicago church. Rev. Joseph A. Milburn, pastor of the church, took occasion to criticize the American people because of their attitude toward Great Britain during the Boer war, and he condemned what he called "the almost universal delight of the American people over the death of the late Grand Duke Sergius."

Mr. Milburn added: "It is deplorable that the people of this country should sympathize with the killing of royalty or officials in Russia, and manifest that sympathy in open delight. If such methods are to be used to quell oppression we would be just as much justified in using bombs on the financial oppressors in this country who are taking the food from the mouths of the poor by their use of arbitrary power."

At this point Dr. Franklin Martin, a member of the church, exclaimed, "And so we would be justified."

Replying to Dr. Martin, Mr. Milburn said: "But that would be murder."

Dr. Martin retorted: "And so is war," referring to the preacher's mention of the Boer campaign.

Mr. Milburn said: "But war is legalized and bomb-throwing is not."

It seems that a strong friendship existed between Messrs. Milburn and Martin, but the latter was evidently prompted to speak out in meeting because of his deep feeling. It is not often that one is brave enough to interrupt a preacher, and while such interruptions are not to be encouraged it is a good sign when men are so strongly moved by their convictions that they can put down all the barriers that have been raised by conventionality.

Mr. Milburn was right when he condemned assassination and bomb-throwing in any form. It is not true that the American people approve of bomb-throwing; it is not true that they approve of assassination; yet it is not at all strange that they did not express regret because of the tyrant Sergius' death. The people of Russia have suffered under so many oppressions that it is but natural that assassins spring up among them and that men charged with authority fall.

Mr. Milburn's logic was lame when he said

that "if the methods employed in the Sergius case were to be used to quell oppression, we would be just as much justified in using bombs on the financial oppressors in this country who are taking the food from the mouths of the poor by their use of arbitrary power." While, as has been said, assassination is not to be condoned under any circumstances, there is this difference between the condition of the Russian people and that of our own people: In Russia, whatever relief the people are to obtain from oppression must come from those in authority. The Russian people's only chance for relief depends upon the somewhat doubtful hope that light may finally break through into the black souls of their oppressors. But in this country—thanks to the fathers—there can be no apology for a resort to violence in any form. If the American people suffer because of the greed of certain men, the people have it in their power to obtain relief. They need suffer only just as long as they are willing to suffer. They have laws which, if enforced, would give them protection; and there is something about public sentiment in this country that once crystallized, no influence may withstand it.

Educators in the pulpit or in the press must not fall into the habit of drawing a parallel between the oppression by the Russian dukes and the oppression by the American trust magnates. There is not, it is true, wide difference between the character of the evils. Men who obtain a monopoly upon fuel and food, and because of whose greed all the people are seriously embarrassed, many of them actually suffer, while some freeze and starve, will have just as much of an account to settle at the judgment bar as the Russian autocrat who orders his soldiers to fire upon a gathering of helpless people who have approached the throne under the leadership of a minister of God, arrayed in the vestments of his church and holding aloft the cross before which all civilization kneels.

One careful observer of European affairs recently said: "The Russian people have eaten considerably more than their peck of dirt;" and until the form of the Russian government is changed, until the Russian people engage in a re-

bellion that, made lawful through success, becomes in the pages of history a revolution, the Russian people will continue to "eat dirt." The American people have been eating a good deal of "dirt" in recent years, but the American people will continue to "eat dirt" only so long as they like it. When they eat their fill they will think; when they think they will act; and when they act they will obtain relief from serious evils.

In the meantime the course of the patriotic educator in our own land is clear. Let him encourage men in every clime who struggle for their natural rights. Mr. Milburn referred to American sympathy with the Boers. That was very natural sympathy. Great Britain was the oppressor of two little republics. The Boers were struggling for their rights. A braver battle for freedom was never waged than that which the vallant men of the South African republics carried on against one of the greatest powers of the earth. Let Americans be encouraged to show their sympathy with all people who strive for the same great privileges we enjoy; let them be urged to discourage resort to violence in any form and in any land.

While the American people are being told that it is their right and duty to sympathize with men who seek larger privileges at the hands of monarchs, let them be reminded that they owe a duty to themselves and their own country in using the very simple power that has been placed in their own hands for the protection of the rights of the many against the avarice of the few.

If in Russia the bomb is the weapon, the American citizen—restless though he may have become under existing evils—may congratulate himself that he is of a country that, in the providence of God, stands at the head of the nations of the earth—a country where, in the effort to establish the rights of men, violence need not be resorted to and bombs need not be thrown. He may congratulate himself that the men who builded this, the greatest of all governments, placed within his hands the most powerful of weapons. It is "a weapon that comes down as still as snow-flakes fall upon the sod; but executes a freeman's will as lightning does the will of God; and from its force nor doors nor locks can shield you—'tis the ballot box." R. L. M.

Perpetual Franchises In The Philippines

Of all the mistakes of the American government in dealing with the Filipinos, no mistake is likely to have as far reaching an influence for evil as the granting of perpetual railroad franchises. Every railroad is to a certain extent a monopoly, for a second railroad can not be built with promise of profit until there is traffic enough to support two roads. A railroad, therefore, can collect almost twice as much as it ought to before a second railroad would dare to build a parallel line. Usually, when competing lines are built between central points they are built far enough apart to leave each one in undisputed control of local traffic. To fasten a perpetual franchise upon a community is to burden all future generations.

No generation has a moral right to mortgage posterity unless a permanent improvement is created equal in value to the incumbrance. Who will calculate the value of a perpetual franchise? The future is so uncertain that the purchaser of a franchise would not pay any more for a perpetual franchise than he would for one running fifty or a hundred years. If asked to give more because the franchise ran forever he would reply that it was not only purely speculative but that while the present generation of stockholders would have to pay the purchase money remote generations would be the beneficiaries, if any benefits ever actually accrued. When one looks back over the last hundred years and notes the changes that have taken place in the methods of transportation he understands how unlikely one would be to pay more for a two hundred year franchise than he would for a franchise running a hundred years, or even fifty.

But while a purchaser would not gamble much on the future value of a perpetual franchise the people who live along the railroad may be subjected to a never-ending injustice. If one generation could rightfully mortgage future generations it would be impossible for those living at the present time to secure a compensation at all commensurate with the burden imposed on those yet to be born.

If it would be inexcusable for people to barter away the rights and welfare of their own children, what shall we say of those who, acting as

guardians, assume to dispose of the property of their wards in such a way that, without securing any material advantage to the wards, the rights of future generations are surrendered. Every Filipino paper opposes perpetual franchises, every Filipino who is free to express his own opinion opposes them, and no American can defend them.

It would be far better for the Filipinos if the guaranteed rate of interest was higher, if necessary, and the franchise limited to twenty-five years. It would be better still, if the American government would advance the money for the building of such roads as may be needed and then, giving the Filipinos the benefit of the low rate of interest at which our government can sell bonds, provide a sinking fund that would enable the Filipino government to own the railroads as soon as our government was reimbursed.

In France, railroads were guaranteed dividends and also a sinking fund sufficient to pay for the railroads within fifty years, at the end of which time they became the property of the government. Such an arrangement in the Philippine Islands would be much more advantageous to the Filipinos than the plan adopted, which grants a perpetual franchise and for thirty years guarantees an interest rate more than twice as large as our government has to pay.

Aside from the economic injustice done the Filipinos by the perpetual franchises they involve a political menace which the Filipinos are quick to recognize. Our financiers see a vital connection between gunboats and investments, even when they can not see any connection between the constitution and the flag, and a perpetual franchise means that our nation will be perpetually appealed to, to guarantee dividends on investments made on a never-ending concession.

The Filipino students, in a memorial recently prepared, call attention to the dangers concealed in the perpetual franchise, and ask what hope there is of obtaining self government when their material interests have passed "under the eternal control of American capital."

Even in our own country the doctrine of "innocent purchaser" has been carried so far

that the rights of the patron who makes the railroad profitable and whose geographical position compels him to use the railroad whether he wants to or not, are subordinated to the interests of stockholders who are under no compulsion to buy, and might, on inquiry, ascertain the proportion of water as compared with money actually invested in the road; how then, can we expect the Filipinos, who through coming ages must patronize these roads to be more successful in protecting themselves from the exactions of holders of perpetual franchises? If our government takes the side of the stockholders when both stockholder and patron are Americans there will be more danger of our government taking the side of the stockholder when the latter is an American and the patron is a Filipino.

The perpetual franchise is a mistake that ought to be corrected at once. If our government attempts to substitute a limited franchise for a perpetual one it will learn how much the selling price of such an intangible asset is above the purchase price, but the sooner the change is made the less will be the cost.

So long as the American officials sell, or even advocate, perpetual franchises in the Philippine Islands, Filipinos can not be blamed for doubting the intentions of our government. The trend in the United States is away from long time franchises. Why, the Filipino asks, should perpetual franchises be fastened upon helpless wards of the government?

MISDIRECTED

The Kansas City Journal, a republican paper, speaks about magazines and newspapers that print attacks upon the senate as "helping to tear down the fabric of our institutions and undermine the confidence of the unthinking masses in the integrity and efficiency of the American government." Why does the Journal neglect to direct its criticism toward the men who are responsible for the evils which these magazines and newspapers attack? It is these men, rather than those who condemn their unholy acts, who are helping to destroy our institutions.