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EDITORIAL

THE AMERICAN FLAG.

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WHEN, at the late Union Square May Day demonstration in this city, held under the auspices of the Socialist party, Haywood Anarchist associates of the S.P., fired by the cry: "This is International Day, we will not speak under that flag!", rushed to the platform and sought to tear down the American Flag, there was exhibited that feature of the Anarchist which has been more than once commented upon and demonstrated in these columns—under-developed mentality and over-developed bestiality.

He who knows history knows also the history of flags. There is hardly a flag in Europe that was not born of rapine, and does not symbolize rapine. Whether it be the British flag, with its "Three crosses quartered" symbolizing the practically forceful annexation of Scotland and Ireland to England; or whether it be the Austrian flag emblematic of the mailed hand that organized feudal disorder into an imperial system, and crushed down the peasantry; or whether it be the Russian flag, a testimony to the theory that bloody tyranny is of divine right, and, the bloodier, all the more divine; or whether it be the German flag, the insignia of militarism rampant; or whether it be the flag of Spain hearkening back to terrorism of body and mind;—whether it be the flag of any of these and most of the nations of Europe, their flags are living modern mementos of cruel oppression in the Past and reminders that their Past reaches into the Present. Even the flags of Holland and Switzerland, born though they were of national aspirations for independence, are not free from the soilure that attaches to the others. Aye, even the Tricolor of bourgeois France is no exception. 'Twas not the Rights of Man alone that it proclaimed; it simultaneously proclaimed, by the early statute against the right of the French proletariat to organize itself economically, that the proletariat had no rights, and that, by Man, the bourgeois alone was meant.

While all the European flags rose out of the fumes of human sighs, were planted upon the prostrate bodies of subjects, and were meant defiantly to proclaim the double wretchedness as a social principle, it was otherwise, it was the exact opposite, with the “Stars and Stripes.”

Apart from the circumstance that the American Flag was first raised by men, who, however, and pardonably, mistaken in their sociology and economics, did sincerely believe that the American Flag, raised over the boundless natural opportunities which the land offered to industry, would insure the citizen the power and responsibility of being the architect of his own fortune; apart from the circumstance that the American Flag was the first to wave over a Constitution that “legalizes revolution”;—apart from these and many other kindred circumstances, the historic fact that the scientist, the noble-minded, the venerable Franklin, when the scheme of the flag was presented to him, a blue field with a star for each State, expressed the hope that the day would dawn when every Nation in the world would be represented in that blue field with her own star,—that fact confers upon the American Flag the lofty distinction of being the first on earth to urge the Brotherhood of Nations; the first to herald the Solidarity of peoples; the first drapery-symbol of Peace on Earth;—that fact renders the American Flag the anticipation of the Red Flag of International Brotherhood, and endears it to the heart of civilized man.

Of all this the under-developed mentality of the Anarchist knows nothing, can feel and know nothing.

Hatred being the active element in his sufferings-torn heart, the milk of human kindness having soured in his breast, the Anarchist knows only of the oppression that flags, generally, have symbolized—and he acts accordingly.

The Flag of Franklin and of Jefferson the Anarchist knows of only in the hands of the modern bourgeois, who seek to conceal their civic crimes in, and to justify them by its folds. Hatred bereaving him of his mind’s eye to see, the Anarchist perceives not that the misfortune that has befallen the American Flag has, in spots, already befallen the Red Flag itself, in so far as it has fallen into the hands of the Passaic County Local and of the Officialdom-and-Press of {the} New York City Local of the S.P., who, under its folds, and in gratification of their personnel {personal?} ends, sought but yesterday to stab the I.W.W. proletariat on strike in the back in

northern New Jersey. Finally, the milk of human kindness having turned to gall in his breast, and over-developed the beast in him, the Anarchist, like a demented bull, bellowingly wreaks his vengeance upon a Flag, desecration of which is desecration of the Red.

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