

Railway strikes and radiator caps

BY TODD DOWNING

STREET-CAR WORKERS STRIKE.
TRAFFIC IN FEDERAL DISTRICT
PARALYZED.

NO AGREEMENT IN SIGHT BE-
TWEEN SOUTHERN PACIFIC AND
WORKERS.

THOUSANDS PARADE IN MEXICO
CITY TO DEMONSTRATE SYM-
PATHY WITH STRIKERS.

PULLMAN WORKERS DECLARE
STRIKE BEGINNING JUNE 30.

THESE are examples of the headlines of Mexico City newspapers during the early part of the summer. Strikes and rumors of strikes. Timorous tourists, envisaging riots and brickbats and bloodshed, turned back at the border and decided to spend their vacation in California, in Colorado, in Canada, where life could be depended upon to follow its normal, ordered routine.

Those who persisted in their determination to visit Mexico spent a not too uncomfortable day and night in a first-class chair car, ate in dining cars or in station restaurants, arrived in Mexico City on time and were whirled to their hotels in taxicabs.

"Strikes? Oh, those!" a shrug of the shoulders. "It is nothing, señor. Everything will settle itself one of these days."

Or, more disappointing still—"Strikes? Are there strikes?"

Everyone, after all, likes to imagine himself an adventurer (visions of settling back on the front porch at home and saying just a trifled unconcernedly to the assembled family and neighbors, "Oh, yes, I was in Mexico during the strike. Danger? Oh, yes, of course there was danger but I wouldn't have missed it for the world.") and it seemed just a bit flat to be unable to find the adventure at the end of the journey.

Those who read the English sections of the Mexico City newspapers learned that, true enough, everything settled itself, satisfactorily or otherwise. Pull-

mans once again ran back and forth to the border, streetcars again competed with buses and taxis and trains again followed the picturesque West Coast route. Those who did not read the papers became interested in Toltec pyramids, Colonial cathedrals, or modern bars, and forgot all about strikes.

Just what was all the fuss about? Is Mexico dominated by Labor? If so, is the labor movement following the same lines as in the United States? Is Mexican Labor red or merely a pale pink?

The answer (if there is a categorical answer to any question about Mexico) probably lies in the shrug of the shoulders and the flashing, teeth-revealing smile and the answer "Everything will settle itself one of these days."

The labor movement is, without a doubt, one of the most important products of the Mexican Revolution. From the ruthless oppression of Díaz, through the well-meaning but fruitless efforts of Madero and the iron-handed reaction of Huerta and Carranza, to the out and out sympathy and coöperation of Obregón and Calles, Mexican Labor has fought an uphill fight and has won. As with Agrarianism and other Revolutionary catch-words, the question remained—and still remains—what to do with it?

The question has not been settled. The cause being won and the leaders being rather out of breath from shouting time-worn slogans and waving the red and black flag, they began to look about them and think about their own affairs (if they had ever entirely lost sight of them). By Calles' time most of the labor leaders had followed the well-worn path to the government banquet-board and had begun to scramble for crumbs left by the military—bougainvillea-covered villas and frontón courts at Talpam and San Angel, salaries from half a dozen different sources, diamonds (legends about Luis N. Morones' diamonds grew to such alarming proportions that they were deemed worthy of a defense in the official publication of the CROM, the Mexican Federation of Labor). The workers, meantime, were left with a

plaything on their hands and didn't know exactly what to do with it. They don't know yet. Most of the speeches and parades and strikes that sound so alarming to foreigners are their efforts to find out.

It's like bullfight pageantry and anticlerical agitation and—radiator caps. Members of the American and other foreign colonies decry the thievery of Mexicans. Mexicans are thieves is an axiom with them. No one has made a statistical study of the comparative number of thieves in Mexico City and a city of the same size in the United States or in England or in France or anywhere else. There may be more thieves in Mexico City than in any other city of a million inhabitants. But press one of these Americans for an explanation of the cause of his complaint and nine times out of ten it will be radiator caps. While spare parts, tires and packages may be left in (comparative) safety in parked automobiles, it is absolutely fatal to fail to remove your radiator cap when you leave your car. It will be gone when you get back, though nothing else about the car may be disturbed. The small Mexican (or the large one, for that matter) who took it is, of course, a thief by any code of ethics, and one cannot blame the owner of the car for being incensed. But these radiator caps are, if one thinks about it, fascinating things. Such a wide variety—slender, silvery angels with outspread wings; round, colored globes; pretty little wheels that go round and round in the wind. It is so easy to remove them and just think of the endless collection that can be made! Philately and numismatics can offer no satisfaction equal to it.

So the Mexican tells himself that he is a free man, a citizen of a free republic (don't forget that 1821 did not bring true freedom to the masses in Mexico) and goes ahead making speeches, removing radiator caps and striking. If the blue-eyed, white-skinned foreigner doesn't like it—well, there are trains running to the border and liners leaving Vera Cruz every day. Mexico (the idea has begun to dawn) is, after all, a Mexican country.

And here we arrive at the crux of the whole variegated Mexican problem—nationalism. The labor movement, agrarianism, anticlericalism—all are aspects of the newly awakened racial, national consciousness. (In Mexico it is the same, for Mexico is and always has been an Indian land.)

The application of this consciousness to labor is easily demonstrable. Capital in Mexico is foreign, non-nationalistic. Mining, petroleum and railroading are American, British and Canadian; hard-

(TURN TO PAGE 29, PLEASE)

cent Benet, and many others, musicians and painters and sculptors as well as writers.

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CHIEF WHITE BULL

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15)

time for my speech. I got up and talked (through my interpreter, John Little Cloud) to the crowd, explaining what I had come for, and that I had been a soldier, and had brought a present for the Chief, because he was a soldier too. Afterward I got out a Sam Brown belt, and put it on him, and hung on it the sabre, engraved with his name, which I had selected as the most fitting gift for my old friend. He stood up very straight in his red shirt and big black hat, eagle-wing fan in hand, and when I had finished, accepted the gift with a ringing "How!" Then he and the old warriors danced with great fervor, and I was led out into the middle of the floor and publicly thanked by one of the chiefs for the honor I had shown their famous leader. The dance went on all night, and in the morning we began our talks together.

All day long White Bull would sit on a pile of blankets in my cabin, erect and keen-eyed, gesturing with both hands in the sign language to accompany his words, while the interpreter explained, and my secretary (Frederick Carder) noted what was said. When White Bull talks of old times, the cabin is generally crowded with old men who come to listen in, some of them veterans of the very fights he is telling about. I always kept tobacco on hand for these visitors, who sometimes were called upon by White Bull for some little fact he had forgotten. We began our talks about sunup, and kept on (with time out for lunch) until sundown. At the end of such a strenuous day, the interpreter, Carder, and I would be "worn to a frazzle," half lying down, or leaning against the mud-chinked walls. But White Bull would still be sitting erect, cross-legged, as wide-awake as ever, and would become indignant if anyone asked if he were tired. When the talk was over, he would mount his horse and ride out a few miles to see how his ponies were getting along! And in the chill dawn, when I would be shivering in my O. D. shirt, I would go outside my cabin and find the chief seated there, almost naked, enjoying the cool morning air!

Those talks were thrilling. The Chief is a good story-teller, and a wonderful mimic. When he describes a battle, you hear the yells and singing, the rapid clapping of hands suggests the rifle-fire, he imitates the screams of the dying,

and in pantomime shows how a slain man fell and lay on the ground. It is as good as a motion picture. And when he killed his enemy, he burst out into a hearty laugh of triumph. "Got him!"

But at last his stories were ended, and it was time to shake hands and part. I think all four of us were deeply moved by that parting, for all realized that it might be our last time together. Not much was said, and when I shook hands with the Chief, he said nothing, but held me tight with his free arm around my shoulders for two or three minutes. I hopped into the car, afraid to trust my voice. The last I saw of the old man, he was standing, watching, erect and motionless by his cabin, as our car shot away for the long drive home.

Let Sitting Bull's critics say what they will. When I find that a man like White Bull reveres the memory of Sitting Bull, I *know* that Sitting Bull was a great man.

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RAILWAY STRIKES AND RADIATOR CAPS

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

ware and machinery, German; large-scale factories and department stores, French; and so forth. Many nationalities with conflicting interests—hence no unity. Labor is, compared with Capital, unified. It has, as Carleton Beals expressed it, "the common coefficient of an empty stomach." It was united by all the bitterness of centuries of exploitation; it is composed, in large part, of indigenes who, though once separated by racial and linguistic barriers, found a common race-affinity in their struggle with the white man. If it has seemed at times that there has been overmuch discrimination against American capital, it has been due to the increasing predominance of American capital in Mexico.

There will be strikes on Mexican streetcar lines and on Mexican railways for some time to come. Tourists will have to put up with occasional delays, will have to suffer the inconvenience of first-class, clean, well ventilated day coaches. But any such experience will fall far short of being worthy of the name Adventure.

Strikes are steadily diminishing. (Read the statistics if you doubt it.) The Church question has been settled, satisfactorily (even many Catholics admit it). The agrarian question will be worked out in time. The tumult and the shouting of the Revolution are dying down and the real work of the Revolution is beginning.

The new spirit of nationalism is apparent everywhere. "Compre artículos del país y haga patria" read placards in

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all the stores. "Buy Mexican products and make Mexico." Rivera and Orozco and Montenegro are covering the walls of the schools with arresting pictures of Mexico's pre-Spanish past.

And it may be an observer's imagination, but it seems that more and more dark-skinned people are gathering about

that corner of the Zócalo, Mexico City's central square, where the enormous stone serpents which once adorned Montezuma's temple rear their heads out of the ground, and gazing more and more thoughtfully at these tangible evidences of a glorious (and recoverable) past.

readers without confusion. — SALLY LITTLE BRANDT. ▲

Belles lettres and bell ringers

New Hesperides

Andrew Robert Ramey and Winifred Johnston, *New Hesperides*, New York. Thomas Nelson and Sons. 1932.

HERE is another book, a distinct contribution to its field, which Sooners may add to their literary honor roll for it was written by a member of the university English faculty, Professor Ramey, in collaboration with a former member of the English faculty, Winifred Johnston, '24as, who is the wife of Dr. Charles Perry, head of the department of philosophy, and a contributing editor of *The Sooner Magazine*.

No shelf of poetry is complete without the inclusion of a book in which poetry is explained, described and classified in its various forms. Of the books of this nature which have been written, this appears to be one of the most complete, concise, thorough and beautiful.

The critique on poetry which precedes the general introduction to *New Hesperides* is not only informative, complete and well-organized but it is a beautiful piece of writing.

The authors divide poetry into three major classifications: Lyric Poetry, Narrative Poetry and Dramatic Poetry.

Each of these general classifications is subdivided into the forms which come within that range and each particular form is not only explained but illustrated.

These illustrations are by no means the mere machinery of explanation and example. They constitute a large portion of the bulk of the book and contain such a wide variety of complete poems by both modern and classical poets that the owner of the volume would search far for a better general anthology.

The selection of poems is most catholic. The older schools are well represented by such familiar old favorites as Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Shelly, Burns, Herrick, Longfellow, Poe; the more recent schools are represented by such names as Robert Frost, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Sara Teasdale, Witter Bynner, Carl Sandburg and others.

The index is a valuable piece of work in itself. There is a complete index to authors, poems, and discussions arranged conveniently in alphabetical form. Beside the author's name in the index appear his birth and death dates.

The book was written for Nelson's English Series of which Ernest Bernbaum is general editor. It was designed especially for the general reader and student but will doubtless prove invaluable to the teacher also.

The Preface best explains the purpose of the book and describes it:

"New Hesperides has been planned for the student or the general reader who desires to enter into the racial heritage left him by the poets.

"It is a readable book. . . .

"It is a book which is its own guide. Every type of poetry here illustrated has been sufficiently discussed in the introduction preceding it so that no book of reference is needed by the reader interested in knowing the characteristics distinguishing the various kinds of poetry.

"It is a book which puts the reader in touch with the poetic terminology which should be the property of every cultivated individual. The book of poetry which adheres to the strict classification of selections according to form must necessarily omit such historic types as the elegy, the epic, the romance, etc., in which content, rather than form, is the distinguishing feature. The editors of this book have preferred to accept poetry in its own confusion. . . . The wider sweep of reading thereby made available seems to them sufficient warrant for following this plan in a book designed for the general reader."

This general reader might add that by "accepting poetry in its own confusion" the authors have given it to their

"Inmate, Ward 8." *Behind the Door of Delusion*. New York. The MacMillan Company. 1932. \$2. A world strange to the man on the street crowds through these intensely interesting pages. The author is an Oklahoma newspaper man, for years a civic leader; he played on the first football team of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical college against the University of Oklahoma, and wrestled on the first Aggie wrestling team. He has had long service with one of the leading press associations and on Oklahoma newspapers. Although a man of great brilliance, gradually liquor took possession of him; the physical craving for it, as he states, was destroyed frequently; but the mental desire remained. Eventually, he voluntarily agreed to be committed to one of Oklahoma's state hospitals for the insane. Curiously, the author chooses to use the old term "asylum" and it seems particularly appropriate, in the sense of refuge. Now, under the patient care of physicians, he is building back; soon there will be the supreme test, whether he can resist liquor. And if he can. . . .

But from this preface do not draw any conclusions about the book. If you start it, you will finish it at a sitting, for without any attempt at literary effect, the author has achieved a powerful story of an unknown phase of America, strongly reminiscent of Dostoevsky. The revelation that only one physician usually is assigned to from three to four hundred patients shows how neglected is one of the most important problems of modern society. That is all the budget allows; and considering the tremendous mental reconstruction work Oklahoma's state hospitals are doing, it is a tremendous tribute to the high type of physician that takes care of the insane.

From the time the author is checked in as a patient until the time he begins to look forward to a cabin in the New Mexican mountains, a little, exclusive world is spread before you; people as sane as you but for one obsession, viewing critically each newcomer and with uncanny skill diagnosing the new one's failing and his personality; the community routine, the "policing" of the sleeping quarters, the dining, the group amusements, all form part of a book as engrossing as any you will pick up this fall. There are the people who have declared themselves insane to escape debtors and who end up really insane; there are the sleeping sickness victims, many of them on their way toward recovery, thanks to the skillful experimentation of this Oklahoma hospital staff. And there is the swift travel of