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EDITORIAL

COMMERCE OUR MIKADO.

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TWELVE men have just been executed in Japan on the charge of “conspiring against the life of the Mikado.” Three workingmen have just been convicted in the United States Circuit Court in New Orleans on the charge of “conspiring to interfere with Commerce.”

The two events have occurred at a great distance from each other; equally distant from each other do the charges look, or sound.

Closer scrutiny discloses the oneness of the two occurrences.

The Tokio, Japan, affair was the interpretation put by the Mikado's Government upon the conduct of certain of its subjects. These, having found fault with the Mikado system, sought to reform what they considered abuses. No enthroned Abuse fancies its reformation legitimate. Every such plan, let alone all agitation in pursuit of such plans, lands plump within the criminal code. The conduct of the Japanese subjects was pronounced “a conspiracy against the life of the Mikado.” Life for life; and the subjects were beheaded.

The New Orleans, U.S., affair was the interpretation put by the Government of Capitalist Commerce upon the conduct of certain of its “citizens.” These having found fault with the Capitalist Commerce system of giving them starvation wages, and treating them as though the wages were alms, organized their fellow dock laborers, 50,000 in number, with a body which they called the New Orleans Dock and Cotton Council as their central administrative authority, and perfected the organization to a point that, from the moment a bale of cotton or load of lumber or any other through freight reached the port until it was stowed on a vessel, it was not touched by any except the members of the ten or more Unions affiliated with the Council. The effect of this was to resist the downward trend of wages, and to brace up against the beggar-treatment. The enthroned Abuse of Capitalist Commerce

resented the attempted reform of its practices in the style and manner of the tribe of Abuse everywhere. It was in New Orleans, no more than in Tokio, a difficult matter to find some gracious voice ready to season a plea at law, however tainted and corrupt, and some sober brow to bless the plea and approve it with a text. The dockers were, accordingly pronounced guilty of “conspiracy to interfere with Commerce.” Freedom for freedom; and the subjects of Capitalist Commerce are to be put behind the bars.

It is no figure of speech, no fanciful thought, that the world, to-day, is one broad slave-pen, ruled over by one despot, whose name may vary according to differences in language—“Mikado” in one place, “Capitalist Commerce” in another—Abuse in all.

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