

an outrage of dastardly iniquity, for it was one of those crimes in which the murderer, in order to gratify his spite against an individual, not merely wrecks that individual's property, but with callous indifference takes the lives of scores of innocent people as an incident to the achievement of his sinister and criminal purpose.

On this General Otis, after stating that in this article the writer (myself) had "endeavored to make himself solid with the labor unions, but has only succeeded in provoking a roar of anger from them, all the way from Gompers to Tviemoe," comments as follows :

"If" the "Times" Building was dynamited, says Mr. Facing Both Ways, then those who did the work should be punished. The labor unionites are angered at this suggestion, because they do not want the dynamiters punished even IF they are guilty ; and the "Times" . . . feels that the "if" is an upholding of the cause of disorder, and a distinct aid to the villains who incited and procured the murder of twenty innocent men and the destruction of \$500,000 worth of property.

General Otis in this article thus takes the very position against which all good citizens should protest when taken by the labor men. That is, the purpose of my article was to protest against assuming before the trial what it was hoped to prove or disprove at the trial ; and in this way General Otis is guilty of conduct which could not be too severely denounced if the offender were a labor leader, and which therefore cannot be too severely denounced when the offender is a violent opponent of organized labor and a consistent enemy of every movement for social and economic betterment—just as he has shown himself the consistent enemy of the men in California who have dared resolutely to stand against corruption and in favor of honesty.

The article by Mr. Gompers in the "American Federationist" offers the most striking contrast, in tone and temper, to the article of General Otis. Mr. Gompers's editorial is an article of the type which any magazine should be glad to have appear in its columns. It is a fair and honorable statement of a position with which I only in part disagree, couched in language which warrants respectful and careful attention. On the point that General Otis raises, *i.e.*, his own contention that the building was dynamited, Mr. Gompers takes the opposite side. In

## MR. GOMPERS, GENERAL OTIS, AND THE DYNAMITE CHARGES

In an article in The Outlook of May 6 on the dynamite outrage which, it is charged, was perpetrated against the Los Angeles "Times," I called attention to the fact that certain labor men had tried to create a public opinion in favor of those arrested simply because the crime was committed against a capitalist, and because the men charged with committing it were members of a labor union. I urged that we should all, as good citizens, confine ourselves simply to trying to secure a just and fair trial, so that no innocent man might suffer and that every guilty man might be punished. The Los Angeles "Daily Times," edited by General Harrison Gray Otis, has published an editorial on the article in question, presumably written by General Otis, and for which, at all events, he assumes editorial responsibility ; and Mr. Gompers has quoted the article in full and written a long editorial on it in the "American Federationist," the official magazine of the American Federation of Labor, a magazine published in the interests of the trade union movement. These two articles offer an instructive contrast, to which I am all the more glad to call attention because I do not agree with Mr. Gompers as to the need of writing the article which I did write. One sentence of my article in The Outlook ran as follows :

If the explosion was not an accident, but the deliberate act of any man or men, it was

my article I confined myself to stating what was the rightful path to follow *if* it proved that the building had been dynamited, and *if* any labor union man were implicated in the crime; this is the only right way to look at the matter. After reading Mr. Gompers's article carefully, I still feel that at least some of the labor men so framed their statements about the explosion as to convey the impression—and, I fear, to excite the feeling among their followers—that this matter was to be treated as a case of class conflict, and that the labor men were to rally behind the accused as a matter of class duty and loyalty. It is due to the labor men to say, however, that Mr. Gompers shows in this article that certain of the capitalist newspapers of the stamp of that owned by General Otis have been responsible for far more brutal utterances than can be attributed to any recognized labor leader. The attitude of General Otis in his paper affords a curious instance of the anarchy of soul which comes to the man who in conscienceless fashion defies property at the expense of human rights—no less surely than it comes to the man who in the name of human rights wars upon all men of property, good or bad.

In concluding a noteworthy article, Mr. Gompers writes as follows:

We could well wish that Mr. Roosevelt might devote some little time to reading current trade union literature in order to ascertain real union sentiment. . . . We should like him to read, for a time at least, the leading publications of the trade-unionists. He will not find in them the harsh words which disclose a virulent spirit toward the opposing side. We would be most willing to place a file for the last year of these magazines in his hands and have him candidly express its effect upon him. We give no space to inflammatory teachings. We try to bring the faculty of common sense to bear on all matters with which we deal. We have no room in this magazine for vituperation, heated denunciation, or groundless accusations. We do try, of course, to tell the truth plainly and to lay claim to all of labor's rights fearlessly.

This is an honorable invitation expressed in an honorable way, and I shall certainly take advantage of it. Now, let me answer directly the questions he puts to me, implicitly rather than explicitly, in this article. Mr. Gompers says that the trade-unionists only wish a fair trial. That is all

I wish. Let us find out who is guilty and who is innocent. I said in my article that it was entirely proper to provide money to secure such a trial. Mr. Gompers claims that illegal and improper action has been taken in kidnapping the men. That is a matter which can be settled only through the courts, and I shall welcome any effort that is made thus to settle it. Now let me most earnestly ask Mr. Gompers and those associated with him in the cause of labor—a cause of which I hope I may say I am a very earnest and sincere friend—that they, in their turn, make it equally evident that they do not intend to stand by the men right or wrong, that they wish them to have an absolutely fair chance to prove their innocence, but that they will join with every other citizen in hearty condemnation of them, and will endeavor to bring them to punishment, if they are guilty. No feeling of hostility to the Los Angeles "Times" must be allowed to interfere with this. It may be quite true that the Los Angeles "Times" has again and again shown itself to be as much an enemy of good citizenship, of honest and decent government, and of every effective effort to secure fair play for working men and women, as any Anarchist sheet could show itself to be. But that has nothing to do with the question. If, instead of the newspaper of General Otis, it was the newspaper of the late Herr Most, I should strive just as hard to bring to punishment the murderers, whoever they might be; if the paper dynamited had been a Socialist paper in Milwaukee, I should strive just as hard to bring to justice the wrongdoers as now when the paper dynamited happens to be a capitalist newspaper in Los Angeles. I ask merely that all good citizens, whether wage-workers or not, shall take the same view. Mr. Gompers must remember that I have seen a good many of these things from the inside. I spent much of my time in Montana when the Western Federation of Miners was in its heyday of wrongdoing there and in Idaho, and I felt that the labor leaders did grave injustice to themselves, and furnished capital to the most violent and unscrupulous enemies of labor, by their failure to denounce the general attitude and some of the specific deeds of the Western Federation—and to

show this attitude and the character of these deeds I refer to the official Government reports of the investigation made while I was President. Too many labor men adopted toward the responsible leaders of the Western Federation just the attitude that certain capitalistic papers controlled by Wall Street adopt toward the great trusts which are known to do grave wrong but which just keep clear of the clutch of the law. I shall always protest against accepting "law honesty" as warrant enough for supporting a business man or politician, and the ability to escape conviction for murder as warrant enough for upholding a labor leader when the outside circumstances are such as conclusively to show that either the politician, the capitalist, or the labor leader is an undesirable citizen.

Mr. Gompers and those associated with him are taking the lead in a great movement which may be made and I believe will be made a movement for incalculable good. My desire is to co-operate with them and help them in every way, and I very earnestly hope that they will steadily so conduct themselves as to make it not merely the duty but the privilege of all decent citizens thus to co-operate with them.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.