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EDITORIAL

FLAG LAWS AND DESECRATION.

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A NUMBER of citizens, venerating the stars and stripes, have had certain laws passed prohibiting the use of that symbol for advertising purposes. They believe that thereby they would save the flag from disgraceful uses. They evidently had not heard of Dr. Johnson's oft-quoted statement "Patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel," or their belief would have vanished. Two seemingly dissimilar occurrences of recent date are on hand to demonstrate that under present conditions laws and sentiments in favor of the flag are utilized against the flag, i.e., the institutions which it is supposed to symbolize. In other words, the flag is being put to far more disgraceful uses than those which its venerators sought to avoid, thanks to their unconscious aid.

The Western Miners' Federation used the flag to lay bare the misdeeds of the capitalist authorities of Colorado. These consisted of lawless acts, depriving citizens of their rights and liberties. For this Charles Moyer, the president of the miners, was arrested for "desecrating the flag"; that is, the capitalist authorities of Colorado threw him into prison and maltreated him for using the flag in an endeavor to resort {restore?} the freedom and liberty which it is declared to symbolize! The flag was desecrated by those pledged to prevent its desecration, they using the sentiments and conditions created by the flag venerators to accomplish their illegal and oppressive ends.

More recently, a Boston capitalist, beaten in a huge fraudulent gas deal with larger capitalists, most likely in a spirit of pique and retaliation, published an expose of that gas deal in a prominent magazine. The cover design of this magazine showed an eagle and a flag. There was no printing on either. The police of Boston have stopped the sale of the magazine on local newsstands, alleging that the cover design is in violation of the Massachusetts Flag Law, which prohibits the use of the

flag for advertising purposes. In brief, the flag is used to throttle free speech, one of the institutions it is declared to stand for. Once again it is desecrated by those pledged to prevent its desecration, they using the sentiments and conditions created by the flag veneratorators to accomplish their illegal and oppressive ends.

The real flag desecrators have wrapped themselves in the flag before. It is characteristic of all ruling classes to use the sentiment embodied in and clustering about national emblems to perpetuate the system on which their domination depends. The modern flag veneratorators, unable to note the emptiness of symbols no longer in harmony with their surroundings, continue to furnish the modern ruling class the customary means to this end, their belief that they are preventing the use of the flag for disgraceful purposes to the contrary notwithstanding.

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