

LIGHT IN DARKNESS

"And it was a cloud and darkness" to the Egyptians, "but it gave light by night" to Israel. Exod. 14:20.

How differently matters appear from different standpoints. That which rejoices us as being evidence of our Lord's presence – the separating of wheat and tares and the falling of some earth's gigantic systems, is to others a dark cloud. That which to us is a token of dawn of the Millennial Day – the unrest of nations – the raging of the tribulant waves of the sea, are to others dark clouds which put the time of blessing afar off. This is well illustrated in the following item clipped from a secular paper. The writer and the world in general look at the cloud from the standpoint of the Egyptians – it is very dark. Our readers we trust can see it from the standpoint of Israel. Since the storm is to scatter the powers of darkness and let in the healing rays of the sun of righteousness the sooner it comes the better. We quote as follows:

EVIL OMENS.

Europe at the present time is full of signs and premonitions of a coming crisis. Visibly she is drifting upon another of those cataracts of events which break the course of history; each one of them a series of rapids, down which the past has descended into the present, and the present will plunge into the near future. Far be it from us to dispel the comforting dream of that "Millennial" time when the nations shall rest in amity, cultivating the arts of war no more. Doubtless it will come, but the world is a long way from that happy goal.

"Speaking of the thoughtful classes, it is no exaggeration to say, that all over Europe there is a sensation of disquietude, rising in some quarters into anxiety and serious apprehension. In national as

well as individual life, a vague and blind presentiment of evil has at times portended a disastrous conclusion; but at present the presumption is not blind. There are visible grounds for this disquietude; yet no man can tell the exact shape which the present will assume: still less – and this is the worst part of the disquietude – what will be its magnitude, or where will it end. That danger is ahead – danger to the peace of Europe, or more – hardly any intelligent reader of the newspapers can doubt."

"In these days, is not the thought too shocking to be entertained that, despite all our progress, and much vaunted civilization, the closing years of the century may yet witness as bloody and momentous a contest as that by which the century was ushered in? Is it not to be told that Europe is waiting for another Waterloo, ere it can hope to reattain a new epoch of equilibrium and peace?

"How humiliating, too, is the thought that, after all, and when (as it may seem) we have all but perfected Law, Government, and Society, the dangerous classes, and 'dissolving forces' are becoming more formidable than ever, and that the 'social revolution' – Atheistic Communism and Nihilism – may yet shake to its foundations the entire system of civilization which modern Europe has been so slowly perfecting as the highest product of the Aryan Community of nations.

"On the continent it is no exaggeration to say that there is not a Cabinet, nor even a Parliament, that does not sniff gunpowder in the air, or does not quake at the thought of secret plans and machinations of state-craft which are believed to be at work in the dark, slowly or swiftly working to an explosion – Governments are quietly but eagerly keeping watch upon each other, as if on ground which they suspect is undermined.

"How different this some twenty years ago, when the great Great Exhibition of London was inaugurated.

"It was the 'Palace of Peace' – the 'Palace of all Nations,' a 'World's Fair,' where all peoples and races came together in peace and prosperity, making rivalry. War was to be a thing of the past, and instead of the conquests of monarchies, and the fiery collision of armies, there was to be a brotherhood of nations, and the only rivalry, a series of Great Exhibitions all over the world.

"Happy delusion! fond dreams of statesmen and philanthropists, how rudely have they been swept away!

"Nor are the signs of trouble all external, or confined to the attack of State upon State, or of race upon race. Most pitiful of all is not Civilization itself upon its trial? The fabric of society, which under the guidance of Christianity Europe has been slowly building up since our continent emerged from the dark ages, – even it – our boasted and highest achievement – is not exempt from the coming perils – and though we may recoil from the thought, that our modern civilization may perish as utterly as Nineveh and Babylon, of the Pharaohs, and of mighty Rome herself; still he is an ignorant man who does not know that in the garden of the world, there are no plants of perennial growth, – and a blind one, if he does not mark how widely the red fires of destruction [R578 : page 5] already smoulder, – threatening to burst forth and consume our social civilization, the stately fabric of European society.

"Is it possible to conceive a greater contrast than that between the Europe of 1851 and of 1883. Again we ask, What does it all mean?

"Viewed in the most practical of fashions, what does it imply and forebode? An English philosopher has suggested, as a possibility, that a whole nation may become insane at times even as individuals do. And there is not a little in history that supports such a conjecture. Yet hardly a whole continent, or, even, as it now appears, a still larger mass of the varied population of the globe! But

even assuming a well-nigh universal insanity among the human race, as the explanation of the present startling phenomena, at least be it remembered that it is an insanity of war, and one which is only too likely to lead to and end in, a stern, and an appalling reality."’

– Blackwood's Magazine.
