

VIEW FROM THE TOWER.

KNOWLEDGE INCREASED AND ITS RESULTS.

– CONTINUED FROM SEPTEMBER. –

Let us point out briefly some of the faults of the present social structure. Though in doing so we shall most frequently refer to social conditions prevalent in Europe, it is not because America has a perfect social system, but because our system being already a great reform over the others, the evils of the old system will thus be made the more apparent. Consider then, –

(1) The Law of Primogeniture – under which among the "Royal" and "Noble" families the eldest son or eldest daughter inherits the honorable station and titles and landed estates, while the younger sons are provided with sinecures, in the way of military or naval office, or a ministry in the Established Church, at good, comfortable salaries.

By this means, the vast land-holdings of Great Britain and other countries of Europe (the basis of all power and wealth) are retained in the hands of the favored families, just as royalty is. And it is by the power and influence of these favored families that the majority of the important and profitable and honorable political and ecclesiastical offices are filled by their faithful relatives and henchmen – often regardless of the value of their services, or even of their capacities for service.

The public, without their consent, directly or indirectly, pay for the maintenance of these "royal" and "noble" families, whose services though sometimes valuable are often useless, because that is and has been the form or arrangement of society there for centuries past; and because to rebel against it would be regarded as treason, and would involve a revolution and probably a civil war. For the grandees of the long-favored class have come to regard it as their God-given *right* to

rule "the common people" and to tax them, for their maintenance above them in every respect.

And while the "noble" and "royal" class is actually a minority, it is a plurality in influence, because there is always a multitude of hangers-on who either as tradesmen, servants, clerks, appointees or tenants have their interests joined with it, and thus share indirectly the fortunes of the favored class. These constitute the large class of "conservatives," whose interests are mixed, and who wisely seek to preserve peace and to bring about gradually a social reform which will clip the wings of royalty and nobility, one feather at a time, and elevate the common people, and give them their rights and privileges as men, piecemeal.

Nowhere in Europe has this conservative reform worked so well as in Great Britain. Gradually *the people* have sought and very gradually they have been attaining their rights, until now they have a voice and share in the government of themselves. But the more their knowledge increases, the more they realize that the privileges accorded them in the past were forced from the grasp of aristocracy, and were not favors at all, but their just rights. And the more they study the subject, the more they realize (especially in the light of the example of "Liberty enlightening the world," in the great Republic of America) that they have not yet obtained all their God-given rights; for they are gradually learning that the present power, titles, influence and landed estate of the favored class were not obtained as the gifts and favors of God, nor generally by honest industry and frugality; but were "*seized*" and appropriated in the long-ago by the ancestors of the present holders, – at a time when the motto was, "MIGHT *makes* RIGHT."

As the people come to see that the *land* is the basis of power and wealth, they realize that they are largely at the mercy of the aristocratic land-lords upon whose lands they raise their food and upon which they have built their houses. They see that every child

born in the land increases the value of the land and thus its rental value, and thus also the wealth of the lords and nobles, and the wealth, the influence and the power of all of the favored class, and decreases proportionately the value of labor and its influence. They see that governmental reform has gone about as far as it possibly can go under the present organization of society. They see that the land-power must in some manner be revolutionized, so that it will be more evenly divided among the sober, industrious, and growingly intelligent *people*.

All thoughtful men can see that because of the increased light it will be necessary to distribute the power, influence and other advantages accruing from ownership of the soil more generally than at present among the people; otherwise all respect for title to land from possession will soon be lost, and public sentiment will cease to protect by jury-verdicts, or by police and army service, the extravagant claims and titles of the few, as against themselves, the public, the many.

There is in mankind in general a sense of honor and honesty which under favorable circumstances is disposed to respect the *rights* of each other: (1) To all improvements, representing either mental or physical or machine labor put upon land to the enhancement of its value, such as buildings, fencing, shrubbery, cultivation, etc. (2) To *possession* of land of which a man is said in law to be "seized;" whether he got first possession by original discovery when the land was wild, unclaimed and unused, or whether it represents by purchase the energy and frugality of one or more generations. (3) Even if it could be proved that the title to property in the remote past came by fraud or by war, during the "dark ages," the majority of public sentiment agrees not to ignore present titles and interests of present innocent and honest holders.

Nevertheless there is a *limit* to honor, honesty and generosity among the masses of men, beyond which it would be imprudent for

the land-holding element to permit their case to go. When it comes to the point, as it has now done in Great Britain, where the population is greater than the soil under tillage will support in later-day decency and comfort, and where the landlords refuse to sell, and where the tenants would be unable to purchase by reason of long paying as rent all that the land would produce over the actual and bare necessities of life, the danger line is reached. There is danger not only of the masses *refusing* to protect the few in their claimed and hitherto recognized "rights" and wrongs, but there is danger of the sense of honor and respect for vested rights becoming soured into the very vinegar of hatred and envy, which would cancel and abolish forever all present claims and titles to the soil, as well as to royalty and general favoritism.

Ah! laugh the Lords, such a prognostication is contradicted by all history. There have been agitations on the land question and other questions in the past very similar to these now in progress in Ireland and Scotland. History repeats itself. The results of present agitations will be the same as those of the past – the survival of the fittest. Royalty has not only the land, but the money and the brains and the control. We will stick to our colors. The result will favor us. We have conceded to the people all we can or will concede; for the more we concede the more they demand. To concede more than at present, would be to concede and give up all our power and advantage; and we will never do that. The people must learn to respect the law of supply and demand, and must not come whining to us of what they would like and what they do not like. If they do not want to live on our lands and pay the rents we demand, let them emigrate to America or elsewhere. As long as they have oats and potatoes they need not starve. What need have they for more? Ambition and knowledge are curses to the poor; they get dissatisfied with their lot in life and the station in society assigned them by Providence. If their families become too numerous for such portions of the soil as we wish to rent, let them break their families and their family ties and let them remember that they have no rights whatever that we and our families

are bound to respect. The facts that for centuries they and their fathers have lived upon the soil and have really given it its value, and that they have paid us and our fathers rents which would amount to hundreds of times the value of the lands, and that upon these rents our families have lived in elegance and luxury, – all this passes for nothing. We have the power; the present organization, its present laws and regulations, recognize our authority under the general law of supply and demand. The supply of people is plentiful and ever increasing, and the demand and value is consequently on the decrease. The supply of land is limited and its proportion of acreage to population decreasing, and the demand and value is consequently increasing. This law of supply and demand suits us, and it cannot be changed under the present organization of society. And we hold the key of power and do not fear a revolution. We have the Church, and the influence and wealth which secures the army and navy, and we have all the intelligent people upon our side, who all see that they would risk much in our overthrow.

But, "when they shall say, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail." They seem to overlook the fact that times are changed; that many are running to and fro, and *knowledge is increased* greatly among the common people. Superstitions and reverence for men and laws and customs are [R1153 : page 1] fading out fast. History, in its records of the past efforts of the people for liberty and rights, social, financial and political, states the fact that the few could and did gain the victory over the many, because of the greater intelligence of the few which enabled them to use the leverage [R1153 : page 2] of power upon the fulcrum of superstition and thus to control the masses. The conditions are all changed, as we have seen the Prophet Daniel foretold, by the increase of knowledge. "Knowledge is power!" It sets free the slaves of superstition. It tells them that the earth is the Lord's, and that he gave its soil as well as its air and its water to the children of men in common, and not to a favored class; and that each may seize and hold only so much as he can and will use and cultivate; especially after

vacant or "wild" lands are all taken up. It tells them that though all men are *not equal*, (some men having a *superiority* and fitness, moral, mental or physical, over and above other men, which qualifies them for the more important positions and honors and trusts of the public service,) yet all men are free to do anything that is right or good in the service of their fellow-men that they may be found the most capable of doing. In a word, knowledge shows that class distinctions which make anything else than *character* and *ability* the tests of the right to do all the ruling of the world, are not to be tolerated, and are not authorized either by reason or by God's Word.

The fact that we have cited Great Britain as an illustration should not be understood as implying that its aristocracy and its common people exhibit the extremes on this question. Quite to the contrary. The extremes of society are much wider in other countries of Europe, and the injustice practiced upon the common people greater, because, more degraded, they will submit to it. Increase of knowledge is the remedy for all. The following clipping from the *Fortnightly Review* tells of a much wider difference in Hungary. The correspondent says: —

"Aristocratic traditions still prevail, and a nobleman thinks nothing of flogging a peasant whom he finds straying in his park, or directing his game-keeper to set man-traps for poachers. A friend of mine, who lately rented some shooting from a Hungarian nobleman, was informed by the game-keeper of the latter how he had treated a poacher whom he once found in his master's preserves with some wires in his hand. He twisted the wires into a noose, with which he hung the man to a tree, and waited till his victim's face became black before letting him down. This process he repeated three or four times, until he considered the punishment adequate.

"It is sad to see the wretched peasants, who are requisitioned as 'beaters,' paraded before a battue on a bitterly cold morning, and again paraded in the evening, while their clothing is searched by the

gamekeeper before they are given their scanty pay and allowed to return to the villages, sometimes many miles distant, from which they have been summoned."

And the same or even worse conditions prevailed in France until the Revolution, in the end of the last century, when the people arose and confiscated property and abolished the privileges of the aristocratic class. All know of the terrible state of affairs that overthrow of aristocracy and royalty caused. The streets literally ran with blood and for a while anarchy prevailed. And as the Lord shows us through the Prophet Daniel that the knowledge now being shed abroad will bring about the great time of trouble, such as was not since there was a nation, so he shows through the symbols of John the Revelator that the French Revolution was a picture and foretaste of that great trouble coming upon the whole civilized world.

The coming trouble will be a period of divine *judgment* upon the kingdoms of so-called "Christendom" and upon the nominal church so closely yoked to them, none the less because it comes about in a *natural way*. It will render vengeance and justice to those who have misrepresented God's character and plans for the upholding of their own false systems political and ecclesiastical; and who in the name of God's church, in the name of Christ's kingdom, and in the name of his law and authority, have abused their power and influence selfishly, and frequently presented more of the spirit and methods of Satan than of Christ.

Beloved, followers of Christ, avenge not yourselves. Wait *ye* on the Lord. He will establish a righteous administration of government shortly, and is already preparing his implements (unknown to the world) by which the present rule shall be brought to an end and the control of earth given to a truly royal class (Christ and the Church), whose perfection and love shall secure to men every advantage, and shall bring the willing and obedient up by restitution to that grand

perfection of Eden, lost by sin. And then the dominion of earth shall again be given to again competent man.

(To be continued.)
