

thing certain is that between the lords and their feudatories there were links of genuine loyalty which drew high and low together as they have not been drawn since the so-called chains have been broken. If the tenant lived hard, the lord had little luxury. Earls and countesses breakfasted at five in the morning on salt beef and herring, a slice of bread and a draught of ale from a black jack. Lords and servants dined in the same hall and shared the same meal. As to dress plain leather and woollen served for all ranks, except on splendid ceremonials. Examine the figures of the knights on the floor of the antechapel in the Temple Church in London. The originals of those forms were not brothers of the order or bound to poverty. They were the proudest and most powerful of the English peers. Yet their armour is without ornament save the plain device on the shield, The cloak is the lightest and simplest. The heavy sword hangs from a leather belt, fastened with an ordinary harness-buckle. As those knights lie there, so they moved when they were alive; and when hard blows were going they had an ample share of them. No fact of history is more certain than that the peasants born on the great baronies looked up to those lords of theirs with real and reverent affection—very strange, if one party in the contract had nothing but hardship and the other was an arbitrary tyrant. Custom dies hard, and this feeling of feudal loyalty has lingered into our own times with very little to support it. Carlyle told me once of a lawsuit pending in Scotland affecting the succession to a great estate of which he had known something. The case depended on a family secret known only to one old servant, who refused to reveal it. A Kirk minister was sent to tell her that she must speak on peril of her soul. ‘Peril of my

soul!’ she said. ‘And would ye put the honour of an auld Scottish family in competition with the saul of a poor creature like me?’

I doubt very much whether under the new system of contract and independence we shall see much more of this kind of devotion.

“Other good results may of course rise out of the change, but they will not take the form of attachment between employers and employed. Affection will hardly grow where interests are opposite.

“But if there are doubts about social progress, it will be said, history at least proves political progress. All history (we have been lately told) shows a growing tendency to government by the people and for the people—that is, to democratic republics. Church, monarchy, feudalism, reformations, revolutions, the chequered phenomena of the last thousand years we are to regard as a *præparatio evangelica*—a making straight the way for the advance of constitutional liberty, the last act and climax of the whole human drama. We are taught to observe first whole peoples in shackles, unable to call their lives their own. The rights of man assert themselves one by one. Rank loses its authority. Equality is at length established with liberty at its side. Brotherly love is to follow, and the perfect state will then be arrived at. Nations are no longer to be governed. They are to govern themselves. The individual is to be his own centre and the sole judge of his obligations and his interests. He is to have an equal voice in the making of the laws and the administration of the laws—to be free to act as he likes—think as he likes—speak as he likes, rightly or wrongly. It is his own affair, so that he does not rob his neighbour of his similar rights.

“This is to be the consummation of human political wisdom, the far-off