

## A CIVILIZED AGE.

## CHAPTER I.



**SIMON OLDCASTLE** was rich, Tom Jackson was poor. Both harbored the spirit of discontent.

The one had surfeited upon the sweets of life. The other had tired of the husks of poverty.

They had both dabbled in the literature of the industrial controversy. The one was

fond of enlarging upon this popular sentiment, "Humanity is not fit for any condition of affairs which would make improvement possible." The other's mind was filled with bitterness and his pockets with dynamite.

They were both interested in Somnolentia, that potent drug announced to give prolonged sleep, with testimonials from Edw—d B—ll—my and numerous others.

"Will you try it?" asked the plutocrat.

"I will try it," responded the toiler.

Oldcastle disposed of his wealth, and they betook themselves to a far away obscure cave.

## CHAPTER II.

When they awoke it was August, A.D. 2183. They immediately set out for Toronto.

"The banks won't take this money," said the conductor. Their only cash was old Government currency.

"Don't the Government compel them to take it?"

"The Great Mammon Trust is stronger than any government." And they had to tramp it from Hamilton.

Bewildered and curious, they welcomed the companionship of a fellow tramp, an intelligent, hustling farmer, who was too poor to go by train.

The resurrected pair began to ask questions.

"Why are there no small boats on the bay?"

"The Association won't permit it."

"What Association?"

"The Canadian Navigation Association. They own the lake."

"Own the lake?"

"Certainly. Why not? Grant from Government."

"And what are those objects yonder?"

"Sky Owning Company's rain machines and wind directors."

"Who pays them?"

"The farmers."

"Suppose you don't pay?"

"Clouds and fog cover your land."

"What right have they to shut out the sun?"

"Government grants the privilege."

"That's barbarous."

"It's civilization, sir."

"The sky should be free to all."

"That's rank communism, sir."

"What makes you talk so abruptly, in such curt phrases?"

"Habit."

"How came the habit?"

"By evolution. Pursued by mortgages for generations—no time to waste."

"And what makes your ears so long?"

"Evolution."

"Ain't they in the way when you work?"

"They're mighty handy."

"What for?"

"To keep the flies off."

"Why don't you brush them off?"

"Haven't time."

In due course they reached Toronto.

"What a ragged woman!" remarked Oldcastle.

"Sewing girl. The good looking ones go to the harems."

"Harems?"

"Of course. Government grants privileges."

Here the street rose by an incline to the top of the business blocks, or rather what seemed like one solid building.

"Saves space under the roadway," explained their guide. "Lighter and airier business places."

"And what are the lower flats used for?"

"Tenements for the poor, of course. They are too dismal and unhealthy for anything else. Good-bye!"

Jackson and Oldcastle sat down to rest themselves on the coping of a light well. From several windows away down the wall, distressed children were suspended in rude seats to enjoy the luxury of light and air, such as it was. For it was malodorous air that came from the dwellings below. You could cut it in slices were it not for the hardened curses intermixed.

They stopped a passing politician to ask about an imposing pile of handsome buildings half encircling the city.

"They are the poorhouses, gentlemen," he replied, "the pride of this philanthropic age."

"Behold your future home, Jackson," said Oldcastle, "for we are dead broke."

"I have an idea," said Jackson.

"Can you cash it?"

"Maybe. I once had five dollars, and I deposited it in that bank."

And with Oldcastle to identify him, and their farmer friend of the morning to vouch for Oldcastle, (for a consideration,) he withdrew his five dollars and accumulated interest, in all \$122,356.88

"A pretty good world, after all," he soliloquized. "The doctrines of unrest are for the needy and distressed. For me, stability, the security of my wealth." And to adorn his home he bought this motto beautifully wrought, "Humanity is not fit for any condition of affairs which would make improvement possible."

But he is not parsimonious. From his purse he helps Oldcastle to eke out an unsatisfied existence. For to the plutocrat of old, resurrected as a toiler, it is a world of sham and injustice. Gloomy conceptions are the sole product of his brain. He is a propagator of revolutionary ideas, and his pockets and his hand-satchel are stuffed with dynamite cartridges of various makes and sizes.

EDWIN F. MOORE.

DR. THOMAS' eulogy of Alexander Mackenzie was a splendid piece of eloquence. There's nothing like having a good subject, if you want to talk well, and have the necessary gift.

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