CÆSAR'S COLUMN.

By Ignatius Donnelly.

Synopsis of Previous Chapters.—The scene of the story is laid in New York in the year 1988. The hero, Gabriel Waltstein a citizen of the African State of Uganda, whose origin, coming from New York, is unknown, by a curious series of adventures he becomes aware of the existence of a widespread secret organization, having its ramifications in all parts of the world and known as the Brotherhood of Destruction, having for its object universal revolution and the overthrow of the present corrupt and demoralized plutocracy. Having rendered one of the chiefs of the Brotherhood a signal service, Gabriel becomes intimate with him, and wins the confidence of the leaders in the movement. He learns that a young lady named Estella Washington, with whom he has fallen in love at first sight, is an inmate of the household of Prince Calano, a Hebrew immigrant of enormous wealth, one of the leaders of the clique of rich men who are the real government of the country. Prince Calano had purchased Estella from a wicked and unscrupulous aunt, intending to make her his mistress. Gabriel Waltstein resolves to save her, and enlisting the aid of Maximilian, an adventurer to the mines in Prince Calano, through the connivance of Rudolph, a member of Calano's household, who belongs to the Brotherhood, Estella is informed of her danger, and asks to be devoted for her rescue. In the momentous meeting of the Government it is to be held in Calano's mansion, and the Brotherhood are determined to have a spy on every action, overhear the proceedings. Gabriel Waltstein volunteers to undertake the perilous task which involves certain death in case of detection, and Rudolph undertakes to conceal him in a dark secretary where he can see and hear everything that goes forward. Before the meeting takes place Prince Calano attempts the ruin of Estella Washington, who barricades herself in her room, being secretly aided by Rudolph. She is armed with a poisoned knife which she determines to use in the last extremity. Acting under the orders of the Prince, one of his servants breaks down the door of Estella's chamber and he expires in horrible agony. Maximilian explains to Gabriel Waltstein the course of events resulting in the enslavement of the nation by the monopolists.

CHAPTER XI.—(*Continued*).

THERE are about 40,000,000 people in England, Ireland, and Wales, and 100,000 people own all the land in the United Kingdom.

For the past twenty years the United States has rapidly followed in the steps of these old nations. Here are the figures:

In 1850 capitalists owned thirty-seven and one-half per cent. of the nation's wealth.

In 1870 they owned sixty-three per cent.

"In 1880, out of 1,500,000 people living in New York City, 1,100,000 dwelt in tenement houses.

"At the same time farm lands, east and west, fallen, in twenty to forty years, to one-third or one-half their cost. State Assessor Wood, of New York, declared, in 1839, that, in his opinion, 'in a few decades *there will be some but tenant farmers in this State.*'"

"In 1880 the farm mortgages in the Western States amounted to *three billion four hundred and twenty-two million dollars.*"

"Did these wonderful utterances and most significant statistics," I asked, "produce no effect on that age?"

"None at all," he replied. "'Wisdom cries in the streets and no man regards her.' The small voice of Philosophy was unheard amid the blare of the trumpets that heralded successful knavery; the rabble ran headlong to the devil after gauds and tinsel."

"How comes it that the people have so long submitted to these great wrongs? Did they not resist?"

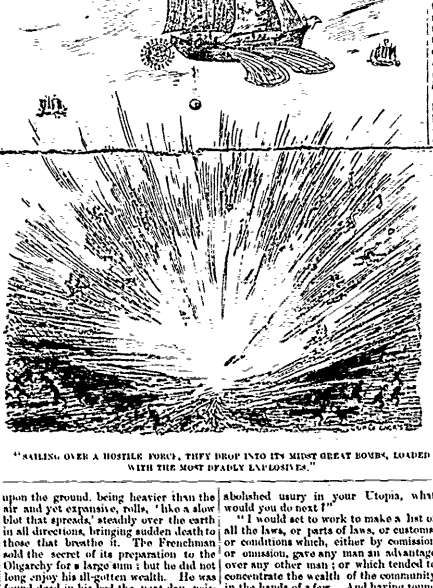
"They did," he replied; "but the fruit of the tree of evil was not yet ripe. At the close of the nineteenth century, in all the great cities of America there was a terrible outbreak of the workingmen; they destroyed much property and many lives, and held possession of the cities for several days. But the national government called for volunteers, and hundreds of thousands of warlike young men, sons of farmers, sprang to arms; and, after several terrible battles, they suppressed the revolution, with the slaughter of tens of thousands of those who took part in it; while afterwards the revengeful Oligarchy sent thousands of others to the gallows. And since then, in Europe and America, these have been either exterminated, or most of them terminated in the same way. The condition of the world has, however, steadily grown worse and worse; the laboring classes have become more and more desperate. The farmers' sons and daughters, be counted on to fight the workmen; but the fruit has been steadily ripening. Now the yeomanry have lost possession of their lands; their farms have been sold under their feet; cunning laws, transferred the fruit of industry from the pockets of great combinations, who loaned it back to them again, secured by mortgages; and, as the pressure of the same robbery still continued, they at last lost their homes by means of the very wealth they had themselves produced. Now a single nabob owns a whole county; and a state is divided between a few great loan associations; and the men who once tilled the fields, as their sons are driven on to the cities, swell the cohorts of the miserable, or remain on the land a wretched peasantry, contented for the means of life with the hordes of Mongolian coolies. And all this in sight of the ruins of the handsome homes their ancestors once occupied! Hence the materials for armies have disappeared. Human greed has eaten away the very foundations on which it stood. And of the farmers who still remain nearly all are now members of our Brotherhood."

"But have not the Oligarchy standing armies?" I asked.

"Yes. In Europe, however, they have been constrained, by inability to wring more taxes from the impoverished people, to gradually diminish their numbers. There, you know, the real government is a secret horde of bankers, mostly Israelites and the kings and queens and so called presidents are mere toys and puppets in their hands. All ideas of national glory, and chin dry, all pride at battles for empire, or supremacy, have long since passed. Europe is a banking association conducted exclusively for the benefit of the bankers. Bonds take the place of national aspirations. To squeeze the wretched is the great end of the government. to find and subjugate the destroy of the peoples.

"The standing armies of Europe are now simply armed police; for, as all the nations are owned by one power—the money power—there is no danger any danger of their assaulting each other. But in the greed of the sordid commercial spirit which dominates the continent they have reduced, not only the numbers, but the pay of the soldiers, until it is little better than the compensation earned by the wretched peasantry and the mechanics, while years of peace and plunder have made the rulers careless and secure. Hence our powerful association has spread among these people like wild fire. The very armies are honey-combed with our ideas, and many of the soldiers belong to our Brotherhood.

"Here, in America, they have been wise enough to pay the soldiers of their standing army better salaries; and hence they do not so readily sympathize with our purposes. But we outnumber them ten to one, and do not fear them. There is, however, one great obstacle which we have not yet seen the way to overcome. More than a century ago, you know, dirigible air-ships were invented. The Oligarchy have a large force of several thousands of these, sheathed with that light but strong metal, alluminum; in popular speech they are known as *The Demons*. Sailing over a hostile force, they drop into its midst great bombs, loaded with the most deadly explosive, inclosed with bullets; and, where one of these strikes the ground, it looks like the crater of an extinct volcano; while leveled rows of dead are strewed in every direction around it. But this was not all. Some years since a French chemist discovered a dreadful preparation, a subtle poison, which, falling upon the ground, being heavier than the air and yet expansive, rolls, like a slow blot that spreads, steadily over the earth in all directions, bringing sudden death to those that breathe it. The Frenchman sold the secret of its preparation to the Oligarchy for a large sum; but he did not long enjoy his ill-gotten wealth. He was found dead in his bed the next day, poisoned by the air from a few drops of his own invention; killed, it is supposed by the governments, so that they would possess forever the exclusive monopoly of this terrible instrument of slaughter. It is upon this that they principally rely for defense from the uprisings of the oppressed people. These air-ships, 'the Demons,' are armed with bombs, loaded with this powerful poison; and, when an outbreak occurs, they sail, like great, foul birds, dark-winged and terrible, over the insurgents; they let fall a shiple bomb, which inspires such terror in the multitude that those not immediately killed by the poison fly with the utmost speed; and the contest is at an end. We have long labored to bring the men who arm these air ships, and who manufacture this poison, over to our cause, but so far without success. The Oligarchy knows their value and pays them well. We have, however, bribed one or two of their men, not themselves in the secret, but who have inspired the others to make demand after demand upon the government for increased pay, knowing that they held every thing in their power. The Oligarchy has been constrained to yield to these demands, which have only led, under our inspiration, to still greater claims; and it is our hope that before long the rulers will refuse to go farther in that direction; and then, in the discontent that will inevitably follow, the men will yield to our approaches. It will be the old story over again—the army that was called in to defend effete Rome at last took possession of the empire and elected the emperors."



"SAILING OVER A HOSTILE FORCE, THEY DROP INTO ITS MIDST GREAT BOMBS, LOADED WITH THE MOST DEADLY EXPLOSIVES."

"You are right," I replied; "there is nothing that will insure permanent peace but universal justice. And in the only evil that grows no poisons. Universal justice means equal opportunities for all men and a repression by law of those unjust and abnormal selfishnesses which ram millions for the benefit of the usands

CHAPTER XII

GABRIEL UTOPIA

"But what would you do, my good Gabriel," said Maximilian, smiling, "if the reformation of the world were placed in your hands? Every man has an idea of his own in his head. Give me some idea of yours."

"First," I said, "I should do away with all interest on money. Interest on money is the root and ground of the world's troubles. It puts one man in a position of safety, while another is in a condition of insecurity, and thereby it at once creates a radical distinction in human society.

"But," said Maximilian, "how would the men get along who wanted to borrow?"

"The necessity to borrow is one of the results of borrowing. The disease produces the symptoms. The men who are crushed by borrowing are infinitely less in number than those who are ruined by it. Money in itself is valueless. It becomes valuable only by use—by exchange for things needful for life or comfort. If money could not be loaned, it would have to be put out by the owner of it in business enterprises, which would employ labor; the general prosperity of the community would be increased thereby, and there would be therefore more enterprises, more demand for labor and consequently higher wages. Usury kills off the enterprising members of a community by bankrupting them, and leaves only the very rich and the very poor; for every dollar the employers of labor pay to the lenders of money has to come eventually out of the pockets of the laborers. Usury is therefore the cause of the first aristocracy, and out of this grow all the other aristocracies.

"Well," said Maximilian, "having put away usury in your Utopia, what would you do next?"

"I would set to work to make a list of all the laws, or parts of laws, or customs, or conditions which, either by omission or omission, gave any man an advantage over any other man, or which tended to concentrate the wealth of the community in the hands of a few. And having found out just what these wrongs or advantages were, I would abolish them *instanter*."

"But," said Maximilian, "that you were not immediately murdered by the men whose privileges you had destroyed—even as the Gracchi were of old—what would you do next? Men differ in every detail. Some have more industry, or more strength, or more cunning, or more foresight, or more acquisitiveness than others. How are you to prevent these men from becoming richer than the others?"

"I should not try to," I added. "These differences in men are fundamental, and not to be abolished by legislation; neither are the instincts you speak of in themselves injurious. I should establish a maximum beyond which no man could own property. I should not apply his accumulations when he had reached that point, for with many men accumulation is an instinct: but I should require him to invest the surplus, under the direction of a governmental board of management, in great works for the benefit of the laboring classes. He should establish schools, colleges, orphan asylums, hospitals, model residences, gardens, parks, libraries, baths, places of amusement, music halls, sea-side excursions, in hot weather, fuel societies in cold weather, etc., etc."

"But," said Maximilian, with a smile, "it would not take long for your rich men, with their surplus wealth, to establish all those works you speak of. What would you do with the accumulations of the rest?"

"Well," said I, "we should find plenty to do. We would put their money, for instance, into a great fund and build national railroads. Then both farmers and workmen would live better, at less expense and less toil."

"But," said he, "all this would not help our farmers in their present condition—they are ruined by debt."

"True," I replied; "but put on a limited scale a positive wealth, we should limit the amount of land he could own. I would fix a maximum of, say, one hundred or five hundred acres, or whatever amount might seem just or reasonable. Abraham Lincoln, in the great civil war of the last century, gave the Southern mutineers so many days in which to lay down their arms or lose their slaves. In the same way I should grant one or two years time, in which the great owners of land should sell their estates, in small tracts, to actual occupants, to be paid for in instalments, on long time, without interest. And if they did not do so, then, at the end of the period prescribed, I should confiscate the land and sell them."

"But, as you had abolished interest on money, there could be no mortgages, and the poor men would starve to death before they could raise a crop."

"Then," I said, "I should invoke the power of the nation, as was done in that great civil war in 1861, and issue paper money, receivable for all taxes, and secured by the guarantee of the faith and power of five hundred million people, to make advances to every these ruined peasants beyond the first years of distress—that money to be a loan to them, without interest, and to be repaid as a tax on their land. Government is only a machine to issue just such help the people, and we have not yet developed half its powers."

"But," said he, "would not your paper money have to be redeemed in gold or silver?"

"Not necessarily," I replied. "The adoration of the gold and silver is a superstition of which the bankers are the high priests and mankind the victims. Those metals are of themselves of little value. What should make them so?"

"Why, then, are they used as money?" he asked.

"Who can tell? The practice dates back to prehistoric ages. Man always accepts as right anything that is in existence when he is born. Gold and silver are the bases of the world's currency. If they are abundant all forms of paper-money are abundant. If they are scarce, the paper-money must shrink in proportion to the shrinkage of its foundation; if not, there come panic and convulsions, in the effort to make one dollar of gold pay three, six or ten of paper. For one hundred and fifty years *the production of gold and silver has been steadily shrinking, while the population and business of the world have been rapidly increasing.*

"Take a child a few years old; let a blacksmith weld around his waist an iron band. At first it causes him little inconvenience. He plays. As he grows older it becomes tighter; it causes him pain; he scarcely knows what ails him. He still grows. All his internal organs are cramped and displaced. He grows still larger; he has the head, shoulders and limbs of a man and the waist of a child. He is a monstrosity. He dies. This is a picture of the world of to-day, bound in the silly superstition of some prehistoric nation. Every decrease in the quantity, actual or relative, of gold and silver increases the purchasing power of the dollars made out of them; and the dollar becomes the equivalent for a larger amount of the labor of man and his productions. In this makes the rich man richer and the man the poorer. The iron band is displacing the organs of life. As the dollar rises in value, man sinks. Hence the decrease in wages; the increase in the power of wealth; the luxury of the few; the misery of the many."

"How would you help it?" he asked.

"I would call the civilized nations together in council, and devise an international paper money, to be issued by the different nations, but to be receivable as legal tender for all debts in all countries. It should hold a fixed ratio to population, never to be exceeded; and it should be secured on all the property of the civilized world, and acceptable in payment of all taxes, national, state and municipal, everywhere. I should declare gold and silver legal tenders only for debts of five dollars or less. An international greenback that was good in New York, London, Berlin, Melbourne, Paris and Amsterdam, would be worth something. Wealth, re leased from its iron band, would leap forward to marvellous prosperity. There would be no limit to the development of mankind, save the capacities of the planet; and science, through the skill of man, could be increased a thousand fold beyond what our ancestors dreamed of. The very seas and lakes, judiciously farmed, would support more people than the earth now maintains. A million fish owe now go to waste where one grows to maturity."

"But," said Maximilian, "it is not right and necessary that the intellect of the world should rule the world?"

"Necessary, yes; right, no; but what is intellect? It is breadth of comprehension; and it implies gentleness and love. Intellect, if it is selfish, is wisely selfish. It perceives clearly that such a shocking condemnation as our present condition can not continue. It perceives that the miserable safely batten down the hatches over the starving crew and passengers, and then riot into drunken debauchery on the deck. When the imprisoned wretches in the hold become desperate enough—and it is simply a question of time—they will fire the ship or scuttle it, and the fools and their victims will all perish together. True intellect is broad, free sighted, wide ranging, merciful, just. Some one said—I add that 'the gods showed what they thought of riches by the kind of people they gave them to.' It is not the poets, the philosophers, the philanthropists, the historians, the sages, the scholars, the really intellectual of any generation who own the great fortunes. No; but there is a subsection of the brain called *cunning*; it has nothing to do with elevation of mind, or purity of soul or knowledge or breadth of view; it is the lower, basest part of the intellect. It is the trait of foxes, monkeys, cats, rats and other vermin. It delights in holes and subterranean shelters; it will not disdain filth; it is capable of lying, stealing, treachery, knavery.

"It is not for *that* that rules the world of wealth; it is *Cunning* and *Muscle* only dominated mankind—the muscle of the baron a right arm, and *Intellect* had to fly to the priesthood, the monastery the friar's gown, for safety. Now *Muscle* is the right hand, and *Cunning* is the baron—the world's master.

"Ten thousand men are working at a trade. One of them conceives the scheme of an invention, whereby their productive power is increased tenfold. Each of them, we will say, had been producing by his oil, property worth four dollars and a half per day, and his wages were, we will say, one dollar and a half per day. Now, he is able with some new invention to produce property worth forty-five dollars per day. Are his wages increased in due proportion, to fifteen dollars per day, or even to five dollars per day? Not at all. *Cunning* has stepped in and appropriated the benefit which his invention; it has bought it from him for a pittance; it secures a patent—a monopoly under the shelter of unwise laws. The workmen still get their $1 50 per day, and *Cunning* pockets the remainder. If one man now do the work of ten, then there are nine men thrown out of employment. But the nine men must live they want the one man's place; they are hungry; they will work for less; and down go wages, still more, to the lowest point to which the workmen can possibly live. Society has produced one millionaire and thousands of paupers. The most utterly useless, destructive and damnable crop a country ever grew is—millionaires. A community were to send to India and import a lot of man eating tigers and turn them loose on the streets, to prey on men woman and children, they would not inflict a tithe of the misery that is caused by a like number of millionaires."

"But what is your remedy?" asked Max

"Government," I replied; "government—national, state and municipal—is the key to the future of the human race.

"We have but to expand the powers of government to solve the enigma of the world. Man separated is man savage; man gregarious is man civilized. A higher development in society requires that this instrumentality of co-operation shall be heightened in its powers. There was a time when every man provided, at great cost, for the carriage of his own letters. Now the govern ent, for an infinitely small charge, takes the business off his hands. There was a time when each house had to provide itself with water. Now the municipality furnishes water to all. The same is true of light. At one time each family had to educate its own children; now the state educates them. Once every man went armed to protect himself. Now the city protects him by its armed police. These hints must be followed out. The city of the future must furnish doctors for all; lawyers for all; entertainments for all; business guidance for all. It will see to it that no man is plundered, and no man starved, who is willing to work."

"But," said Max, "if you do away with interest on money and thus scatter coagulated capital into innumerable small enterprises, how are you going to get along without the keen-brained masters of business, who labor gigantically for gigantic personal profits; but who, by their toil and their capital, bring the great body of producers into relation with the great body of consumers? Are these men not necessary to society?"

"There is much force in your argument," I replied, "and I do not think that society should discourage such adventurers. But the muscles of the many are as necessary to the man you describe as his intellect is to his muscles; and as they are all men together there should be some equity in the distribution of the profits. And remember, we have gotten into a way of thinking as if numbers and wealth were everything. It is better for a nation to contain thirty million people, prosperous, happy and patriotic, than one hundred millions, ignorant, and wretched.

"And here is another point: Men work at first for a competence—for enough to lift them above the reach of want. But, having reached that point, they go on toiling for vanity. The man who is worth $100,000 says to himself 'There is Jones; he is worth $500,000; he lives with a display and extravagance I cannot equal. I must increase my fortune to half a million.' Men are toiling not for themselves, but for their bank account. In the meantime these vast concentrations of capital are made at the expense of mankind. Accumulation in one place represents denudation elsewhere.

"And thus, under the stimulus of shallow vanity," I continued, "a rivalry of barouches and bonnets—an emulation of waste and extravagance, all the powers of the minds of men are turned—not to lift up the world, but to degrade it.

"And then the inexpressible servility of those below them. The fools would not recognize Socrates if they fell over him in the street; but they can perceive from a mile off; they can smell him a block away, and will abandon their vertebræ abasing themselves before him. It reminds one of the time of Louis XIV., in France, when millions of the people were in the extremest misery—even unto starvation—while great grandees thought it the sense of earthly bliss and honor to help put the king to bed, or take off his dirty socks. And if a commonman, by any chance, caught a glimpse of royalty changing its shirt, he felt as if he had looked into heaven and beheld the Divinity creating worlds. Oh, it is enough to make a man bathe his specs."

"Come, come," said Maximilian, "you grow bitter. Let us go to dinner before you abolish all the evils of the world, or I am disposed to quit New York and buy a corner lot in Utopia."

(To be Continued.)

New Popular Science Monthly, November, 1889, page 88.