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TRUTHS. BY AN AMERICAN.

CHAPTER II.

LET us go back to the Middle Ages and look at the times in a secular light. After the long night, the break of dawn brings in feudalism; and later morning, chivalry. Feudalism arose in the ninth and tenth centuries. It was a necessity of that age, and had its advantages. It resulted in a more peaceful state of society. The peasant could cultivate his land free from molestation, though he was bound to render services in war. He was not led on distant expeditions. He was not exposed to the ambition of military leaders. For war on a large scale was impossible under the Feudal system. They were not subject to rigid discipline. They were simply an armed rabble, like the forces in our civil war.

In the intervals of war the peasant enjoyed the rude pleasures of his home. He grew up with strong attachments, loyalty to his master and to his country. He became honest, industrious, and frugal. He was contented with rural fetes and village holidays. He had no luxuries and no craving for them. Measured by our time he led a very unambitious life.

We should think that excitement, pleasure and knowledge would make people happy, since they stimulate the intellectual powers, but, on the contrary, they seem to produce unrest and cravings which are never satisfied.

It is to be doubted whether the daughters of the obscure poor are any happier with their piano, cheap literature, and smatterings of science learned in Normal Schools, since they have learned to despise their unlettered parents and surroundings, with aspirations that can never be realized, than were the Feudal peasants.

Civilization would often seem a bitter mockery, stimulating the cravings of the soul, but not satisfying them. It is this that gives rise to nihilism and communism. It is not the laboring poor that are the instigators and leaders in their dreadful outrages; but was bred and born in the continental universities of Europe.

Among the restless and ambitious spirits that are envious of those in power, and under the cloak of patriotism and liberty, are always seeking to overthrow the powers that be,

in order to realize their own visions of elevation. The charge, the slaughter, the cries of the wounded, the ruin of cities, the misery they contain, are nothing to these blood-hounds, who would lap up the blood to reach the goal of their ambitions.

Overturning a government never benefits the poor; it is only the principal actors who are the gainers. It is not the poor who complain or use violence were it not for these fiends.

Under the influence of Feudalism arose chivalry; and though it may have been sentimental, it was civilizing. It gave rise to new virtues, that took a coloring from Christianity; and would have been well for us had it descended to this matter of fact age.

Chivalry bound together the barons of Europe, those armed and mailed warriors, who fought on horseback. Hence the name "Cheval," (French for horse). These knights learned to treat each other with courtesy and generosity in battle or misfortune, for they all belonged to the superior order of knights. There was no higher distinction than that of a gentleman. The poorest knight was as highly honored as the richest. Gallantry and an unblemished reputation were the conditions of social rank.

The great patrimony of a knight was his horse, his armor and his valor. He was bound to succor the defenceless. He was required to abstain from all mean pursuits; his word was seldom broken, and his promises were held sacred.

If pride of rank was generated among these gentlemen, so was scorn of lies and baseness. If chivalry condemned anything it was selfishness, treachery and hypocrisy. Under the influence of chivalry, the rude baron was transformed into a courteous gentleman.

But the greatest glory of chivalry was its respect for woman. Nothing better attests this than their devotion to woman in a Feudal castle, where she exercised a proper restraint. She was the presiding genius of the castle; she was made regent of kingdoms, heir of crowns, manager of vast estates. She had the supreme management of her household, and was consulted in every matter of importance. She did not have to assert her rights as women do now