

LEADING ARTICLES BY WORKING MEN.

LANDLORD, GOVERNMENT AND FARMER SUBSERVENCY.

The landlords still govern in free and happy and constitutional Britain, and the people humbly, timidly, and mildly submit and acquiesce. The "Upper Ten Thousand" yet rule and dominate over the kingdom, and the millions by whose industry the "Upper Ten" are fed and clothed yield implicit obedience. The whole structure of the Empire rests upon labor; and while the "upper storeys" of the edifice revel in idleness, arrogance, and wealth, the classes composing the "foundation" are satisfied to grovel on in chains, and the whiskey shops on the one side, and the grasping greed and clamant necessities of the aristocracy on the other! All this is a mystery to many, and an incomprehensible puzzle to not a few. What can it be called but slavery under another name, and absolute bondage, with the outside carefully and systematically white-washed? The system is the elaboration of ages, it possesses the authority and respectability of antiquity, and it rests upon a double-distilled lie—namely, that the earth was created for the inheritance of the few and designed by its great Constructor as a place of sufferance only to the multitude! Previous to 1832 the "upper ten thousand" were even more powerful than they are at the present time. In those happier days they had opportunities afforded them of confiscating, of appropriating, and of securing everything likely to be to the future benefit of their order, and on every side there is to be beheld evidence of the most unmistakable kind that these opportunities of feathering their nests and putting their houses in order at the expense of the people were not neglected. In these days it was that the "upper ten" acquired the right of primogeniture, the law of entail, the right of hypothecating the tenant's goods, and the privilege of preserving game upon his crops. Then it was that "the few" obtained the power of evicting the people from their homes and driving them out wanderers on the earth, of imposing rents, and of even racking these upon the cultivator until his means of paying properly for labor was crippled and to a large extent absorbed, and before the Reform revolution (if we may use the expression) of 1832 it was that the landowner through the legislation of his class received the authority to impose upon the tenant a penal lease, and to seize without compensation at the conclusion of that lease upon every shilling and shilling's worth of property created by the said tenant in the cultivation of and improvements to his farm.

Since 1832 the "upper ten" have been checked a little, and only a little. The means of checking them effectively have been obtained, especially by the concession of household suffrage, but hitherto these means have been disgracefully and pusillanimously neglected. The people have been armed by the franchise, and up to this they have refused to wield the power for the common good. They are so absorbed in unions for a different purpose—for that of promoting mutual taxation, and in order to prove the efficacy of raising themselves and their households in the social scale by the policy of "robbing Paul to pay Peter"—that they seemingly have neither the time nor the ability, far less the courage and the patriotism, to try "co-operation," not only for their advancement in a social and material sense, but also in the sense of routing and overthrowing that great and iniquitous feudal conspiracy which lies upon labor like nightmare, and which is represented by landlordism on the one hand and capital acquired by monopoly or trickery or villany in trade upon the other. But to the cowardice, we had almost said the treachery, of the tenant electors of Scotland and England it is more especially that the present power of the "upper ten" is due. It is to the farmers as a class that the present unsatisfactory condition of the Empire is to be attributed, for they have had the franchise since 1832, and during that long period they have used that franchise and the power which it gave them in supporting the aristocracy, in returning selfish and incapable members to the House of Commons only, and in thus upholding their taskmasters and oppressors in their misgovernment and in their insolence towards every class outside their own. We repeat it; but for the tenant farmers of Britain there would have been long ago reforms in the land, of the most beneficial tendency, and but for the backing up of the nominees of the landlords at every political crisis by the occupiers of the soil these landlords would have long ago had their wings clipped, and instead of being yet a rival power in the Empire to the power of the Constitution, and that of the Throne, they would have ere this been placed under equal laws, and compelled to

submit to live under legal conditions which would at least afford them no protection against the consequences of their own folly and extravagance. And pray, what is the reward which the farmers are now likely to reap in return for that long and constant support given to them by landlords? Mr. Arch and the laborers are either up for rising, a result to which there is not the shadow of a doubt but that landlords have largely contributed. They have contributed to it (1) by the rack-rents imposed, which disabled tenants from the ability to pay better for labor; (2) by their driving out the rural cottage and croft-holder from their homes; and (3) by their neglect, notwithstanding the tripling and quadrupling of their rents within the present century, to build a sufficiency of suitable and comfortable cottages for the agricultural working man. Another result is that the farm laborer is emigrating by the thousand, and a third that labor is rising, and likely to rise, to a pitch which will be found ruinous to employers holding under the present scale of rents, while even at the rise a sufficiency of hands will soon not be to be had. These are a few of the difficulties into which farmers have brought themselves by sympathizing with and supporting the landlords, and neglecting, on the other hand, their best friends and natural assistants, the laborers. The farmers cannot depend upon the landlords, they have to a very large extent alienated their servants, and now at the eleventh hour are beginning to see, in fact, that they have insanely placed themselves, by their selfishness and subservience, upon the horns of a dilemma, and that they have now only one of two choices before them—namely, either to stick to the landlords, to penal leases, game damages, confiscating of their improvements, high and yet higher rents, and to eviction, dog's wages, and ruin in the end, as hitherto; or to conciliate their laborers, to cast in their lot with the people (a people who will in future, it is to be hoped, do something more than merely waste their energies in taxing the consumer), and go with a great and rising Democracy for power, and for the effectual overthrow of that feudal and unconstitutional aristocracy who have hitherto made the interests of an empire—great because of its productive industry, and powerful in spite of the incapacity and misgovernment of its rulers—subservient to schemes of personal and class aggrandisement, and mulcted the wealth created by a toiling people for support of aristocratic pride, insolence, extravagance, and vice.—*English Exchange.*

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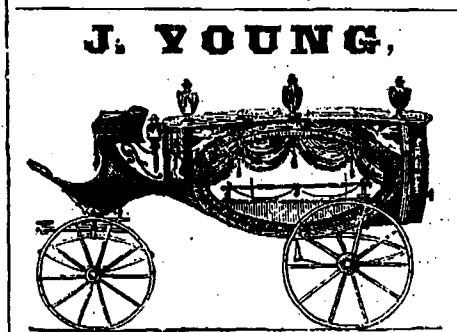
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