

BENEVOLENT FEUDALISM

(Continued from Page 1.)

cajolery, as social customs and political institutions change, he has been made to produce the food by which the race lives, and the share of his product which he has been permitted to keep for himself has always been pitifully small. Whether Roman slave, Frankish serf, or English villein; whether the so-called "independent farmer" of a free democracy or the ryot of a Hindu prince, the general rule holds good. . . . In our day and in our land both force and cajolery conspire to keep the peasant farmer securely in his traces. He cannot break through the cordon which the trusts and the railroads put about him; and even if he could he would not, since the influences showered upon him are specifically directed to the end of keeping him passive and contented. Our statisticians assure him of his prosperity; our politicians and our moulders of opinion warn him of the pernicious influence of unions like the farmers' alliance, and further preach to him the comforting doctrine that by "raising more corn and less politics" he will ultimately work out a blissful salvation. Sometimes he must burn his corn for fuel; often he cannot sell his grain for the cost of production, even though many thousands of persons in the great cities may be hungering for it; frequently he cannot afford to send his children to school, and in a steadily increasing number of cases he is forced to abandon his farm and become a tenant or a wanderer. He is puzzled, no doubt, by these things; but they are all carefully and neatly explained to him from the writings and preachments of profound scholars, as "natural" and "inevitable" phenomena. His ethical sense may be somewhat disturbed by the explanations, but he learns that it is useless to protest, and he thereupon acquiesces."

"The American farmer," sententiously and truthfully remarks Professor Adams, 'does not hoard his cash.' He gives no reasons for the fact, and the determination must be left to the reader. 'The American farmer,' he further remarks, 'is, as a rule, his own landlord. This statement reveals a very serious misapprehension of the facts. Something more than every third farm in the United States, according to the recent census, is operated by a tenant. Moreover, the proportion of tenants is constantly rising. For the whole country, tenants operated 25.5 per cent of all farms in 1880; 28.4 per cent in 1890, and 35.3 per cent in 1900. Further, the tendency is not confined to particular sections, but is common to the whole country. . . . The recent census, out of its abundant optimism, does not segregate these facts, and makes no general comment other than that tenantry has increased and that salaried management is believed to be 'constantly increasing.' The bulletin on 'Agriculture: The United States,' does not even furnish a general classified summary of the data on tenantry. But the separate re-

ports give the statistics"—and out of them Mr. Ghent has compiled a table showing the increase of farm tenantry. For Nebraska the figures are:

1880—Per cent of tenants.....	18.
1890—Per cent of tenants.....	24.7
1900—Per cent of tenants.....	36.9

In other words, Nebraska has slightly more than the average percentage of tenants, and there are more than twice as many of them, in proportion to the number of farms, as there were in 1880. At this rate by 1910 about 55 per cent of Nebraska farms will be operated by tenants.

The book is so interesting, even if it is disheartening, that one might go on with many columns of comment and quotations—but space forbids. Get the book and read it carefully, is The Independent's advice to those who have been inclined to "keep on letting well enough alone." Chapter V. is entitled, "Our Makers of Law;" chapter VI., "Our Interpreters of Law"—giving facts regarding the acts of legislatures and courts, direct from the official sources, which ought to be enough to prevent any man from shucking corn on election day. Chapter VII., on "Our Moulders of Opinion," handles the plutocratic college professors, preachers and editors in a way which does The Independent's soul good. Chapter VIII., "General Social Changes," devotes considerable space to "Social Control," a recent volume by Professor Edward A. Ross of the Nebraska state university. And chapter IX., treats of "Transition and Fulfillment."

"The new order, says Mr. Ghent, 'will differ in no important respects from the present, except in the complete development of its more salient features. . . . From magnate to baron, from workman to villein, from publicist to court agent and retainer, will be changes of state and function so slight as to elude all but the keenest eyes. . . . Bondage to the land was the basis of villeinage in the old regime; bondage to the job will be the basis of villeinage in the new. . . . He will be a hardy and reckless industrial villein indeed who will dare incur the enmity of the Duke of the Oil Trust when he knows that his actions will be promptly communicated to the banded autocracy of dukes, earls, and marquises of the steel, coal, iron, window glass, lumber, and traffic industries. . . . The nobles will have attained to complete power, and the motive and operation of government will have become simply the registering and administering of their collective will. And yet the state will continue very much as now, just as the form and name of the Roman republic continued under Augustus. The present state machinery is admirably adapted for the subtle and extra-legal exertion of power by an autocracy; and while improvements to that end might unquestionably be made, the barons will hesitate to take action which will needlessly arouse popular suspicions. From petty constable to supreme court justice the officials will understand, or be made to understand, the golden mean of their duties; and except for an occasionally rascally Jacobin, whom it may for a time be difficult to suppress, they will

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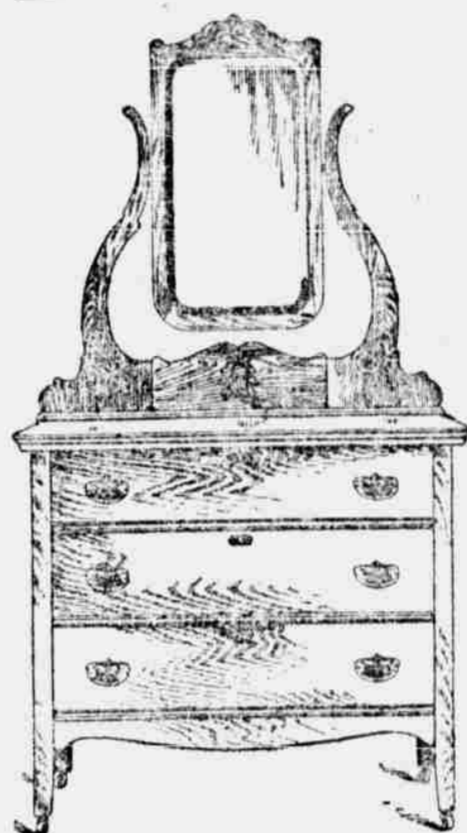
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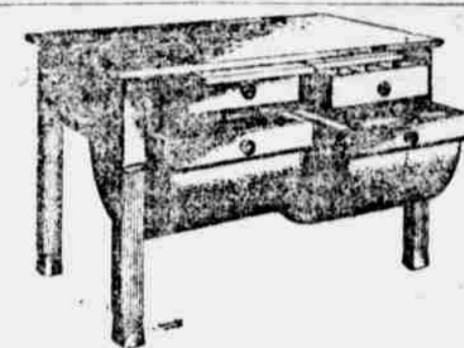
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be faithful and obey." As was said at the beginning, The Independent is unwilling to try to forecast the probable effect of Mr. Ghent's book. If it should arouse the popular mind to a proper realization of the importance of doing something—and doing it at once—then its influence will be for good. But it is possible that it may have the effect of discouraging many who, after many trials and failures, are about ready to submit, and thus simply hasten the coming of our benevolent feudalism. Yet in any event it must be said that Mr. Ghent's premises are sound and his conclusions irresistible—unless a wonderful popular uprising shall come in a very short time. Even then, who can tell what might happen?

CHARLES Q. DE FRANCE.

THAT SACRED TARIFF LAW

How Quay and Aldrich Tricked Moderate Republicans and Democrats—But Hanna Says all Must "Stand Pat"

That the Dingley rates are something almost sacred, that they were worked out after much labor, that they are in reality as nearly perfect as anything human can be, has been the slogan of all the republican leaders except the Cummins faction in Iowa. The fact is that it is the worst hotch-potch of a tariff bill that was ever enacted. Scores of items were put into it with no thought that they would ever become law and the way they did become law was one of the dirtiest tricks ever played upon confiding men.

Ex-Senator James L. Pugh of Alabama, who was in the senate when the Dingley bill was passed, made the following statement, with the declaration that he would, if necessary, support it by oath and that it would not be disputed by those in the senate cognizant of the conditions attending the passage of the Dingley act:

"Senator Quay came over to the democratic side of the senate during the consideration of this part of the bill (tariff on anthracite) and stated to democratic senators that he wanted this provision for a duty of 67 cents on foreign anthracite coal put into the bill by the senate in consideration of his interests in Pennsylvania, that it would not be adopted with a view of being enacted into a law, but with the distinct understanding that the senate would yield, and it would be stricken out in conference. He argued that it would be a thing to trade on in con-

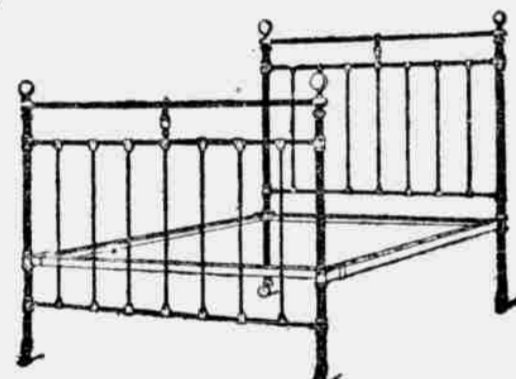
ference to induce the house conferees to yield some point to the senate, and, having been used in this way, would be stricken out of the bill. Senator Aldrich and Senator Quay both made propositions of this sort to the minority with reference to a number of things. The bill was loaded down with things in which the constituents of Mr. Aldrich were especially interested, the Rhode Island senator giving a distinct assurance that there was no purpose to retain them in the bill and that the senate conferees would yield to the house and have them stricken out of the measure as reported from conference.

"According to a statement of Mr. Dingley, the author of the bill, a similar scheme of putting into the bill excessively high duties or duties which ought not to be authorized at all, so that they might be traded on in conference and finally stricken from the bill, was adopted and put into practice by the republican managers of the house. Thus the measure was loaded down in both the house and senate with things which no one defended or even regarded as tolerable, all of which, by mutual understanding, were to be stricken out before the measure should be enacted into law. But the house adopted the senate amendments to the Dingley bill without action by conference, and all those things which it was declared were put into it only temporarily, to be stricken out by conference, became a part of the law. I very distinctly remember Mr. Quay's efforts to secure the temporary adoption of the anthracite coal duty and his assurance that it would not be allowed to remain in the bill when enacted into a law."

The law which the republicans declare is so perfect that it would be monstrous to amend it is thus replete with items in which the duties are of such a character that there never was and could not be an attempt to defend them, even by the men at whose instance they were "temporarily" put into the bill.

The bill that was put through congress by such fraud and trickery and under which the trusts have been able to charge American citizens 50 per cent more for goods than they sold the same goods for to foreigners, will stand as long as the republicans hold power.

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