

# The Independent.

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## BENEVOLENT FEUDALISM

Mr. Corbin's Tribute to This Remarkable Book—Sends a Hundred Subscriptions to The Independent

Editor Independent: Your change of form is excellent. It enables me to bind and preserve a complete file for frequent reference, for The Independent is not exhausted by one reading. I value it highly and among a quite extended list of papers which I take it stands second to none.

Acting upon your suggestion in a late issue, I bought a dozen copies of Ghent's "Benevolent Feudalism" for free distribution among men who can think. It is a remarkable book—the best of the year.

The impression seems to prevail in your section that the reorganizers have overturned democratic sentiment in the east—that sentiment which recorded six and a half million votes twice in the last six years in favor of a regenerated democracy. I see no change in the rank and file whatever here. The party machinery in all the eastern states has long been in the hands of that element which offered Palmer and Buckner to public execution and democratic crucifixion. That machinery is all the reorganizers have now. But while the people are faithful to the best interests of the country, it remains true that there is less outspoken objection to the reorganizing element. The ordinary citizen has settled down into a state of apathy and dejection.

The mass of voters in all parties blindly follow the self-constituted and blatant leader and never more so than now, counting only those who go to the polls. We boast of our enlightenment, but the fact is voters as a whole were never so ignorant of affairs as now. The press is in the hands of plutocracy and is being worked in both old parties to extol millionaire benefactions, trust protection to the producer and corporate love for the workman. The voter is kept in the densest ignorance of the liberties he has already lost and the dangers which beset those which he still maintains. Benevolent feudalism is an accomplished fact in considerable degree already, and how few are sensible of it!

I notice your announcement of Ashby's forthcoming work. This is my sixty-second birthday and I do not know as I can signalize it better than by ordering 100 copies of The Independent to be sent to those in political darkness and monitory bewilderment. I do this more, however, on account of the general excellence of the paper than from any special promises. So long as the present management remains in control of the paper, and I hope that may be many years, it will not fail to warn the people against the autocracy which threatens. My check is enclosed and a list of 100 names.

There are fifteen million voters in this nation. One-third of them think; the balance let others think for them. If that one-third could read The Independent for a year, the problem of decent government would be solved. One vote in four is bought by corporate funds. But there are enough honest voters to vastly outnumber both buyer and bought if they could be gathered into one party. That party must be populist in essence, though under a new name. I see no way to redeem the nation from the dominance of greed but for the thinking men of all parties who are untainted by the virulent villainy of republicanism to unite. Let those in position make the call for a national convention.

J. S. CORBIN.

Gouverneur, N. Y.

## English Plutocracy

A traveler just returned from England writes to the Springfield Republican as follows:

"The education bill means nothing to this problem. Indeed, it is probably worse than nothing. It checks rather than promotes the education of the last man. It tends to continue the distinctions of class privilege and to leave the lowest where he is. And you may well imagine that the lowest buys only enough to keep him alive. He has been taught by his church to be content with his present condition.

What we believe in as a divine discontent he would think to be blasphemy.

"The South African war leaves a heavy burden here. Thousands of the returned troops have no work. The London Times concedes that 30 per cent, nearly one-third, of London's great population is underfed. That means that a million or more human bodies in the greatest city of the Christian world are today slowly starving. The stock market did not revive last June when peace was declared. I was in the house of commons and heard Balfour make the solemn announcement of the terms of peace, but it did not quicken the market—nor has it revived since. How could the market revive when the consumers don't consume? The consumers won't consume until the people are educated to know how to break down the barriers which shut them out from

the chance to earn their share of the world's prosperity. Ignorance will go to the shearers and end in the shambles."

If socialists would be a little more argumentative, and a little less inclined to depend so much upon prophecy, upon what will happen "under socialism," and especially upon statistical information without giving citations, they might convince more people. Assuming to foretell what will be "under socialism"—except in a very general way—is about as dangerous an undertaking as the mid-road populists' back-scion prophecies about what might have been "without fusion." Mr. Barnard assumes to tell to the fraction of a minute the labor-time consumed in producing a bushel of wheat. Does he know? Does anybody know?

## American Institute of Civics

Comparatively few citizens of Nebraska—or of the United States, for that matter—are aware of the existence of the American Institute of Civics, or, knowing of its existence, understand its aims. Nevertheless, there are few who have not seen some of the results of its work. For example, citizens generally will recollect how the Australian ballot captured the country in the early nineties; yet not many know that it is not too much to say that the success of ballot reform is, more than to any other cause due to the quiet, persistent, well-directed efforts of the institute.

Perhaps it may be well to define the word, "civics." It is a new word introduced into use by Dr. H. R. Waite in 1884, in an address before an assembly of representatives of American colleges, delivered at the Academy of Music in New York city, and was adopted as a distinguishing title because regarded as a suitable designation for the body of knowledge, or science, which concerns itself solely with the interests and reciprocal relations of the citizen and the state. (See Standard Dictionary.) Civics includes civil ethics, civil polity, civil jurisprudence, economics, and civil history.

Dr. Henry Randall Waite directed the collection of educational statistics of the tenth census (1880), and one of the surprising facts disclosed was that no regular and systematic attention was given to instruction in civics in any except a small fraction of the 130,000 public schools of the country and of the various higher institutions of learning. This led him to take the steps which finally (in 1885) led to the organization of the American Institute of Civics.

"The purposes of this institution, briefly stated, are to promote the integrity, intelligence, patriotism, vigilance and other qualities in citizenship which are essential to the common weal under the rule of the people. To this end it seeks to bring into effective co-operation home influences, educational efficiencies, the platform, the public press, and all other available agencies, irrespective of parties, sects or classes.

"The trustees constitute its governing body. The faculty is an advisory body which co-operates with the president and directors of departments in the immediate direction of the institute's activities. It has departments devoted to—

1. Popular work.
2. Educational work.
3. Publications.

4. The securing of the legislation and the enforcement of the laws necessary to the purity of the suffrage, and to integrity and efficiency in the public service.

"The membership includes citizens in every state whose high character, commanding influence, and subordination of selfish consideration to the public good, qualify them for the high services in which the institute seeks to enlist them. These citizens constitute what is known as the institute's national body of councilors. Applications for membership in this body may be addressed to the president (Henry Randall Waite, Ph. D., Fulton Chambers, 102 Fulton st., New York city.)

"Funds for the defrayal of expenses

are derived from annual dues (\$3.00) paid by members, and from voluntary contributions. The publications of the institute are sent to contributing members free of charge."

Rev. E. B. Andrews, chancellor of the University of Nebraska, at the head of Brown university in 1885, was one of the founders of the institute, and is at present one of the advisory faculty. In addition to him, Jay Amos Barrett, librarian of the Nebraska state historical society, Lincoln; Rev. David B. Perry, president Doane college, Crete; and M. B. C. True, lawyer, Tecumseh, are listed in the institute's national corps of lecturers—that being Nebraska's representation in a body of some 275 persons scattered over the whole union, and ready to deliver lectures on good government.

The associate members of faculty include one or more members of the board of instruction in something over 200 colleges and universities of the United States. Doane college, Crete; Gates college, Neligh; University of Nebraska, Lincoln; and University of Omaha, Bellevue, are represented in this list.

The register of the national body of councilors includes about 1,600 names.

The following paragraphs, quoted from "The Patriot's Creed," abbreviated from an article in the February (1895) number of the American Magazine of Civics, will give our readers some insight into the aims of this institution. However, The Independent would advise all interested persons to write the president for full particulars.

"I believe that in all of its stages preparation for citizenship is also incomplete and inadequate, if it fails to include special and sufficient instruction as to the principles and methods of popular government, the significance and importance of citizenship privileges, and the necessity and nobility of wise, unselfish, and faithful efforts, by each, for the promotion of the highest good of all.

"I believe that citizenship is trusteeship; and that no citizen can neglect or forbear the constant and faithful discharge of his sacred duties as a trustee of human rights and the welfare of his fellow-men, living and unborn, without dishonor to himself and treason to his country and humanity.

"I believe that the only valid purpose of national political parties in the machinery of popular government is to represent and give effect to the intelligence and honest convictions of the majority of its citizens as to what principles and methods shall be applied in the conduct of national affairs. I believe that the devotion of parties to policies which have relation wholly to questions of national concern, gives them no right, solely as a matter of party advantage, to imperil the highest public interest in affairs of local government, by insistence on partisan divisions when every consideration of duty and patriotism demands that all good citizens shall act in union; and that when any party thus or otherwise lends itself to the accomplishment of unworthy ends, its claim on the allegiance of good citizens is forfeited."

## ABSTRACT NO. 31

Mr. Van Vorhis Analyzes the Comptroller's Abstract of the Condition of National Banks

Editor Independent: The relation which the national banks sustain to the money volume, the assistance they have been receiving from the treasury department, and their present condition calls to mind the description with which Henry George began one of his books—a bull tied to a stake in the yard, eating grass round and round and winding himself up until no room was left for him to move.

I have frequently called attention to the way in which government funds have been used to assist these banks to expand credits, and to keep up the stock gambling in Wall street, and to the obvious fact that the time is not far off when the secretary of the treasury would not be able to continue such assistance.

The comptroller's abstract of the condition of national banks (No. 31) shows conclusively that the limit of ability to assist these banks, either by buying bonds or by depositing government money, has been about reached. Unless some other method is devised to give these institutions more money or to release a part of the reserves, the expansion of loans and discounts must cease, to be followed quickly by an effort to reduce the amount of them.

This abstract shows the expansion of bank credits between September 15 and November 25, to have been considerably less than one-half what it was between July 16 and September 15, the time covered by abstract No. 30. During the same time, in order to hold up the hands of the stock gamblers in Wall street, Secretary Shaw deposited in national banks more than three times as much government money as he had deposited during the time covered by any one of the abstracts since June 1, 1900, to-wit, \$22,974,610. The government deposit has, month by month, been increased until, on November 25, it had reached the enormous sum of \$146,818,414, and left less than \$60,000,000 of available funds in the treasury. It must not be supposed that the deposit is available, for it is not. Secretary Shaw dare not draw this out of the banks. It would take \$42,100,393 out of the 46 New York city banks, and would cause a panic at once. The New England and eastern states together have 1,708 banks. The 1,662 of these banks outside of New York city hold a government deposit of \$36,275,296, or only about six-sevenths as much as held by the 46 New York city banks.

The entire amount of cash held on November 25 last by the 4,666 national banks was less than \$534,000,000. This amount is the basic support of almost \$3,500,000,000 of national bank credits, with an individual deposit of over \$3-150,000,000. This is exclusive of nearly \$147,000,000 of government deposits and nearly \$512,000,000 due state banks, trust companies and savings banks. The whole national bank system is a rotten, ram-shackle structure held up and held together by government credit and government funds. It would go to pieces in a week except for the money and the credit of the nation. It must continue to have government support or it will bring disaster. There must now be legislation that will enable these banks to issue their own notes at any time, and in any quantity they please, with a government guarantee to make them good.

Any one, who has any knowledge of financial economics, knows that the money that Secretary Shaw now has on deposit in these banks is a forced loan to them without interest, and that he dare not withdraw it. To do so would precipitate a panic, the consequences of which can hardly be imagined.

With this condition staring us in the face, we are told by the administration officials, by republican leaders, and the batch of hypocritical, reorganizing democratic echoes of republican assertions that the financial question is settled; that the money question is a dead issue.

This abstract, like many preceding it, shows the shortage in the reserve required by law to be kept in these banks to be quite general and large. In connection with this, think of the fact—for it is a fact—that the comp-