

# The People.

VOL. X.—NO. 8.

HENRY KUHN, NAT'L SEC'Y, S.L.P.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 20, 1900

PRICE 2 CENTS.

SECOND EDITORIAL

## CAPITALIST “NOBILITY.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**N**obility” is a title that to the common mind implies personal merit. In point of fact, merit is not an element that enters into the composition of “The Nobility.” The essential, the controlling element in the term is something wholly different: it is power to rule by virtue of the ownership of things without which a living cannot be made. There is more in this point than may appear at first blush.

The other day there died in England a “Nobleman,” whose long list of titles rested on the following long list of belongings:

“K.G., K.T., Privy Councillor, the owner of 170,000 acres of land in Scotland, Duke, Marquis, and Earl, of Argyll; Marquis of Lorne and Kintyre, Earl of Campbell and Cowal, Viscount Lochow and Glenilla, Lord of Inverary, Mull, Morvern, and Tiry; Baron of Sundridge, Lord of Hamilton, Hereditary Master of the Queen’s Household in Scotland, Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland, Admiral of the Western Isles, Keeper of Dunoon Castle, and of Dunstaffnage and Carrick, Lord Lieutenant of County Argyll and MacCailean Mhor.”

The owner of so many acres, head of so many places, cannot possibly run them all. The work needed to yield the vast revenues from so many sources is not work that can even be superintended by one head. The long list of functions, all grounded on property, above enumerated had to be “farmed.” All the work had to be done by others: all that the titular head did was to take profits and, together therewith, the honors. The power, conferred by the wealth thus raised and appropriated, and upon which the titles are but bare grafts, had its source wholly in the ownership of the essentials for a livelihood. The “nobility” in the case began and ended there.

In this country, feudal filigree has been swept aside. Such titles do not exist here and their absence is, to the superficial minds, a source of much satisfaction,

upon which the conclusion is based that we are here free from, and not dominated by, a “Nobility.” The conclusion will be found to be baseless just as soon as the term “The Nobility” is stripped of its misleading trappings. So stripped, it will be found that we are here cursed with a “Nobility” as grinding as, if not more so than, the people of “effete monarchies.”

The other day, there died here of apoplexy a gentleman whose list of titles—meaning thereby whose list of power-conveying holdings—was longer than that of the above-named K.G., K.T. Read by intelligent eyes, the list spelled out like this:

“K.G., K.T., of the New York and Michigan Central Railroad; owner of 170,000 square miles of river basins; Duke, Marquis and Earl of Coal Mines in Pennsylvania; Marquis of Railroads in Virginia and Florida; Viscount of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad; Earl of Timberland in Wisconsin; Hereditary Master of 400,000 wage-slaves; Keeper of the Great Seal of the State of New York; Admiral of a fleet of 5,000 merchant vessels.”

The approaching Social Revolution has on its programme a task much more important than that performed here by the Revolution of 1776. That Revolution, as all others in its ancestral line, did not ABOLISH “Nobility”, it simply did away with one form of the article and opened the door for the entrance of the next form in the line of succession. The approaching Social Revolution is to uproot “Nobility,” and along with it the false pretences that clothe it. Its task is to establish true nobility, the nobility that is not buoyed and kept up by artificial social corks, but that is the direct issue of services rendered, work performed.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded May 2005