

TO THE PLAIN PEOPLES OF EUROPE.

By Charles Erskine Scott Wood.

Why are you killing each other? What is your quarrel? Why did you so suddenly hate each other? What have you against each other?—you plain peoples who do the working and the fighting, the paying and the dying? How much did you have to say about bringing on this world-conflagration in which you will be the destroyed? Yes, I know you are throwing up your hats for Kaiser and Czar, President, Emperor, King, and Fatherland—Patriotism.

There can be no folly without fools. You threw up your hats and died for Charles of England, the curled voluptuary—for Peter the Great and Napoleon. You have always died for your rulers, for God, and Fatherland. What God? The God of Christians? If Christ stood for Christianity, Christianity stands for Peace on earth, good will toward men—the universal brotherhood of man. But it has failed to deliver its promise: By their fruits ye shall know them. . . . If your God be Christ, He doesn't want you to fight for Him. He rebuked Peter for drawing the sword. What Fatherland are you fighting for? The soil where you happened to open your eyes: How much of it do you own? German peasant? Russian peasant? French peasant? English peasant? Austrian peasant? What is this thing you call Fatherland? Surely you are not fighting for dirt owned by others. What has this Fatherland done for you? Are you free? Are you happy, you and your children? Are there no privileged classes, no monopolies, no nobilities which are not noble, no aristocracies which are not aristocratic?

Is the Russian fatherland so much kinder and freer and finer than all other fatherlands that you must die for it? And so with all the other fatherlands. You migrated from one to another peacefully; you intermarried and made business partnerships. Why must you so suddenly kill each other? The Jews fighting for the Russian fatherland is very laughable. What is your quarrel? I know the quarrel of your rulers, but what is *your* quarrel, and when a mailed fist waves why do you yell and huzza and go out to die? Why did your fathers, the plain people, go out to die for Francis I. and Louis XIV. of France? And Socialism: What has become of its universal brotherhood? "Workers of the world, unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains, and the world to gain."

Socialism said every workman's home the world over was one common fatherland. The red flag of Socialism meant the red blood of all humanity in common brotherhood, but it seems it is no more controlling force than Christianity. It has become "Workers of France, unite to murder your brothers, the workers of Germany"; "Workers of

Russia, unite to cut the throats of the workers of Austria."

I repeat for the third time: Why are you doing it? What is your quarrel? I know your rulers' quarrel. The Austrian governing class who despise you plain peoples wanted the Balkan states; wanted to limit the power of the Russian ruling class. The Russian governing class felt the same about the Austrian ruling class. The brutally impossible demands of Austria upon Servia on the assassination of Prince Ferdinand were a pretext to force Austrian government upon the Balkans. The Balkan peoples were not consulted. Why should they be? The German ruling class, capitalistic and aristocratic, feared any increase in Russian power and a destruction of the balance of power. What have you common people to do with this balance of power? Do you wield it? adjust it? or arrange it? And the German government was tied to the Austrian government by treaty as well as policy. What have you to do with government? So the Russian rulers, those who can tap a wire and mobilize armies, mobilized; and the German rulers, who can tap a wire, mobilized. Who of you, my dear, plain peoples, can tap a wire? And France, with forty years of mourning wreaths on the statue of Alsace and Lorraine, forty years of cherished revenge, but above all with millions on millions of money loaned by French capitalists to Russia—France mobilized. The God of Peace must have been much confused by this time, for when Germany, as a war measure, a self-preservation measure (war knows none of the niceties of peace), violated the neutrality of Belgium and her own guaranty, England joined the Dance of Death.

This was a good honorable pretext for English rulers, but after all, it was only a pretext. . . . The English people were not as generous nor as docile as the Germans in paying the military budget. England, from motives of economy, and commercialism (not Christianity), sought to end the period of backbreaking armaments, but Germany would not agree.

It was everywhere a case of force against force, power against power, money against money. And if you, the burden-bearers, the driven cattle, can show me what interest you have in the game or why you should die for capitalistic rulers now any more than for warring dukes in the Middle Ages I will be glad to know. . . .

If it had not been for the courage and wisdom of Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan our young fools would be fighting in Mexico today and next year, at the behest of our Government, for such splendid patriots as William Randolph Hearst and Harrison Gray Otis.

I have laughed at this cry for "civilized warfare" and the protest against dum-dum bullets. There is no such thing as civilized warfare, and if

you engage in wholesale human butchery why be nice about just how much you rip a man up? . . .

I know things that even on the march the censor will suppress—hasty executions of innocent men; men overdriven on the march lying down to vomit from exhaustion and kicked into their places again. War is brutal and begets brutality. Young, soft lads of nineteen or twenty killed on the march or, if not killed, brutalized forever. "Civilized warfare"—why not "Christian" warfare? . . .

You German working man, did you know until you were told that your right to live was in danger? Did you know it, you Russians? You English and French workers? Do you know it now? How in danger? Why in danger? From whom? The domains, powers and privileges of your rulers may have been in danger from the ambitions of rivals, but why could not these things have gone on as they were till you overthrew the governing classes? Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains, and if you really do believe you are brothers the world over and have the courage to die for that instead of for a government by aristocracy or plutocracy you will gain the world and your own souls.



WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

For The Public.

They've called us down from the mountains;

They've called us in from the sea;

They've called to us on the prairies;

Where most of us ought to be.

They're calling, calling, calling,

To come and muster out;

We'll come, but still we would ask them,

What is it all about?

They stick us into the khakis;

They thrust the guns in our hands;

They give us a taste of drilling;

They ship us to foreign lands;

They say we are all brave fellows;

We know it beyond a doubt.

But still we would ask the question:

What is it all about?

They line us up for the battle;

They show us the foe to fight;

They smile when we beat the beggars;

They curse when we take to flight.

They bury our dead in the trenches;

They patch up the ones who drop out.

But say, will nobody answer:

What is it all about?

ROBERT TODD.



There can be no liberty which does not accord equality to all mankind. Liberty is the opposite of charity, and justice has nothing to do with philanthropy. Charity stultifies. Liberty develops.—The Mediator.

BOOKS

INFORMATION FOR INVESTORS.

What Every Investor Should Know. An inquiry into the economic and political tendencies of the times and their effect on investment securities. By Walter M. Van Riper. Published by American Trust Co., St. Louis. Price, 50 cents net.

The writer maintains that governmental regulation, whether beneficial or detrimental to the public interest, tends to the destruction of the value of securities based on railroads and public utilities and such other corporations as may be subjects of public regulation and control.

Some of this legislation is hurtful to corporations but without any benefit whatever to the public. The legislation of Texas and Arizona are given as illustrations. Texas passed a law making it a criminal offense for a train to be late. Arizona requires high power electric headlights on all locomotives—headlights which are so dazzlingly brilliant that four of the states recognizing their dangerous character have forbidden their use on double-track roads. He says that generally "government regulation seeks only to cut rates. It inevitably reduces net earnings, injures the credit and depreciates the securities of the industries subject to regulation."

Whilst desiring his readers to discriminate between their interests as investors and their interests as citizens, he disclaims any discussion of the morals or the economics of government regulation, but in accepting the facts he seeks to discover their effects on investment securities.

The singletax in its relation to investments is fully discussed. He concedes the strength of the movement in England, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, whilst in the United States so rapid is the increase of its adherents that he regards its triumph as a certainty, but modified in practice so that no more taxes will be collected than shall be sufficient to pay the necessary expenses of government. The singletax, thus modified he believes will be beneficial to the holders of a large class of securities.

Nevertheless he points out the fallacy of assuming that "railroads, street car lines, gas and electric light plants, water works, telegraph companies" and other public utilities would be benefited, because although the singletax exempts from taxes all the improvements of these corporations it will tax their franchises, which are easements in land.

His conclusion is that: "however great a good the singletax system might be for humanity as a whole—and indeed with those who urge this reform it is raised almost to the dignity of a religion, for they believe that it will abolish poverty,