

## Tolstoy Bears Testimony

"BUT now he saw it plainly enough. It was just as the people had always said, the landowners were responsible for their poverty—those landowners who had deprived them of the land which was their sole means of support.

"Nobody could deny that infants and old people died for want of milk; the reason they had no milk was because they had no pastures for their cattle, no land for raising bread-stuffs, no hay-fields. It is perfectly plain that all the people's misery, or at least the greater part of it, arises from the fact that they do not own the land which ought to support them, this same land being in the hands of men who take advantage of their ownership to exact the utmost amount of labor from the tillers of the soil. The peasants, reduced to the depths of poverty, actually dying for want of enough land to support them, go on toiling in order that the land owners may have crops to sell in foreign lands." . . . . .

"In Scientific Societies, government institutions, and in the newspapers we are always discussing the cause of poverty and the means for its amelioration, but we neglect the only sure remedy for the uplifting of the masses which is to return to them the land which has been taken from them and which they so much need."

. . . . . "He would not repeat here what he had done at Kuzminskow, and in his mind he sketched a plan for renting the land to the peasants and from the moneys received, establishing a fund which was to be used for their public needs. It was not the Single Tax System, but the nearest approach to it that would be practicable under existing circumstances. The main thing was that he renounced his right to hold land property for a personal benefit."

—*Resurrection, Chap. VI.*

## BOOK REVIEWS

### BOLTON HALL'S "LIVING BIBLE" \*

One of the near-miracles in connection with the Scriptures is the King James Version. When it appeared the English language was yet in its formation. The first English dictionary appeared in 1615, followed in the next year by one which contained 5000 words and two centuries later amplified by Dr. Johnson, first of the really great dictionary makers, into a volume of over 50,000 words.

We need to appreciate the labors of the extraordinary group of scholars who gave us the King James version of the Bible. It will help us therefore if we realize the comparative poverty of the quarries from which was hewn the magnificent and enduring marble of the edifice.

Any attempt to improve upon the English of the King James version would be regarded rightly as foolish temerity. Such has not been Mr. Hall's purpose. His task has been rather the work of elimination; the pruning, so to speak, of the excrescences and superfluities which were retained in the original with the object of the King James writers of furnishing a literal transcript.

In this connection Mr. Hall, in a letter to the editor of *LAND AND FREEDOM*, says: "What I have tried to do for the Scriptures is to give a clear view of the whole contents in its very own words. The few words that are changed, even though it be only as to their order, are marked in brackets."

Reduced to one third of the bulk of the original, or King James version, repetitions, ceremonials, and most of the genealogies and land boundaries are omitted. But everything is here, as Mr. Hall explains in his admirably written Preface, that has ever been of significance to the reader of Scriptures, the stirring narratives of the patriarchs, the histories of the kings, the visions and invectives of the prophets, major and minor; the parables of Jesus and the poetry of the Psalms—those notable phrases that have had for three hundred years a way of ringing unforgettably in the inner ear of him who has once heard them—all kept in their integrity, to the last syllable of their immortal rhythm."

We quote further from the letter to which we are indebted for the extract already given:

"No one can be called educated who is not familiar with the Bible. It contains every model of literary form, or Dramatic and Narrative style, and the spirit of countless poems.

"There are only two books with which a plain person can educate himself, the King James Version of the Bible and Progress and Poverty.

"Each of these has the same object, which is to justify the ways of God to Man—and the message of each is delivered in clear and majestic English—each is crammed full of the land question and true democracy; but in the King James Bible these are overlaid and almost buried in the mass of repetition and detail."

The work has taken many years of careful preparation. It is a noble task, nobly executed.

J. D. M.

\*The Living Bible, Being the whole Bible in its Fewest Words. Edited from the King James Version by Bolton Hall. Cloth bound, 422 pages. Price \$6. Alfred A. Knopf New York City.

### A NEW BOOK BY A DANISH NOVELIST \*

We have been to Sandhaven. It is a little fishing village on the Danish coast, just a cluster of houses on a hillside overlooking the sea. It has a lighthouse.

We have been to Sandhaven. Jacob Paludan, a Danish story-teller, has been our guide there and in spirit has made us see it. We are familiar with what is known as "glamour;" Mr. Paludan has it. It is the secret of clothing the picture the artist paints for us with a certain magic that brings it before us.

A little vague it is, perhaps, a little remote—"out of sight, out of time"—and visible only to the eye of the spirit, silhouetted in dark, desolate outline, and again a mirage-like impression.

Mr. Paludan is an artist. Every now and then little descriptive touches flash out at us as we read. He has lived close to earth and sea. Nothing can surpass his intimacy with the small details of nature, like Hudson, like White's Selbourne, with a vein of poetry intermingled that is Mr. Paludan's own.

Maybe the novel has no serious purpose that the casual reader, interested merely in the story, will discover. But the real theme symbolized in the title the more discriminating reader, especially if he be a Single Taxer, will readily discern. For the land question runs all through it. The ruin that overtakes more than one of the characters is directly attributable to the passion of seeking something for nothing, the human forsaking of honest, creative productive toil for greedy speculation in the toil of others. The harbor is coming—and if the prospect of its coming had not aroused this passion in their hearts, if it had not stirred the desire to forestall, the history of Sandhaven, as well as the lives of its inhabitants, would have been differently written. Men might have lived in Sandhaven with natures unwarped, and pure unsullied lives, untainted with the ferocity of land speculation, might even here, in this desolate fishing town, have learned the lesson of fraternity and

\*Birds Around the Light, by Jacob Paludan. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.