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EDITORIAL

BULLETIN NO. 2.

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THE Agricultural Department of the State of New York has just issued its Bulletin No. 2—a 239-page book containing a “List of farms, occupied and unoccupied,” but all for sale. There are 2,372 farms, country and village property, listed. No doubt, a number of these are listed on the same principle that their owners would advertise them in some paper with flaming praises of “unrivaled locality,” etc. In most instances the notices bear evidence of truthfulness. In sight of 2,372 farms and country property, most of which are unoccupied, and all of which their owners “for various reasons are desirous of selling,” as the Bulletin announces, the question comes, How’s that?

The first answer points to the general overthrow of the Single Tax theory by that social evolution, all the separate sections of which converge towards Socialism. If the ownership of land is the thing that it is cracked up to be by the Single Tax, none but lunatics would let go. Every sane man would cling to it like grim death. It goes without saying that the 2,372 owners of farm land anxious to sell are no lunatics. They are driven thereto as by a prairie fire. What is that prairie fire?—Capitalism.

The fate of the land-holding class, as a class, is full of instruction.

A time there was when he who held land was safe—as safe as the times allowed. Language ever is a barometer of the stage of development at a given time. The term “land poor” did not exist of old. A hundred years ago it was not thought of, could not be thought of. He who held land was not poor, could not be poor. The rise of the term “land poor,” a well known term to-day, indicates a deep-going economic change between now and then. Something gradually rose between man and land, or Man and Nature. That thing was the tool, or machinery of production, which, owned privately, assumes the name and the tyrant-power of CAPITAL. In the measure

that capital grew, Nature became less and less accessible to Man without the aid of capital. Capital, being the privately owned necessary with which to carve wealth out of Nature, the capital-holder holds the key to Nature and to her bounties. At first, the tool for dispossession from Nature was the sword, which drove the peasants off the soil, now the weapon is more subtle. It is so subtle that the peasant rushes himself forward, anxious to rid himself of his hold on Nature, a hold that, without capital, acts like a millstone around his neck. In the State of New York, according to Bulletin No. 2, no less than 2,000 of these men are listed in the Agricultural Department only.

Capital is a wily tyrant. The Negro slave never was so happy as when he managed to run away from his feudal master; that same being, to-day, a "free man," but capitalless, is, the same as his fellow white wage earners, never happy unless he has a master, and will walk off his legs in search of one. In the same way with the capitalless landholder. Once so tenacious of his holding that it required a sharp sword to tear him loose, to-day he will spend money to announce his readiness to let go.

Bulletin No. 2 is a Socialist propaganda and campaign document.

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