

ENGLISH SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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English Social Movements by Robert Archey Woods

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BY

ROBERT ARCHIE WOODS

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To

PROFESSOR WILLIAM JEWETT TUCKER

PREFACE

Six of the following chapters are nearly identical with the lectures given at Andover Seminary in the spring term under the Alumni Lectureship for the year 1890-91. The other, the chapter about University Extension, appeared first in *The Andover Review*, March, 1891, from which it is taken by permission. The whole material has been carefully revised, and in all significant details brought fully down to the time of publication,

The aim has been to present an ordered sketch of those movements in the life of the English people which are exerting the greatest influence at present. Little attention has been paid to any movement that has not shown some distinctive activity during the last ten years. Moreover, general statical conditions have not been touched upon except for the sake of making plain the operation of social forces.

I have not attempted to institute a running comparison between the English social situation and the American. Occasional mention of Amer-

ican matters has been in each case only in order to give a better understanding of the point in question. I may, however, express my increasing conviction of the substantial emptiness of the kind of criticism made upon the constitution of English society which is intended to be an indirect felicitation of ourselves over our own social conditions. The American aristocracy is more powerful and more dangerous than the English. Our class system is not less cruel for having its boundaries less clearly marked. And it can no longer be taken for granted that working men are better off in the United States than in England. The coal miners of the North of England have strong trade unions, work eight hours or less per day, support their co-operative stores, and in some places are organizing University Extension centres. The coal miners of western Pennsylvania, already low enough, are being forced lower by the competition of the latest Continental immigrants, with their unspeakably degraded standard of life. As to the crowded populations of cities, we are beginning to see that the problem of lower New York is in some respects even more serious than the problem of East London.

We do not, therefore, any longer need to go over the sea to learn about evil social conditions.

But, for the sake of a knowledge of what means may best be used toward remedying such conditions, as well as of an apprehension of the noble feeling by which men are impelled to take up their social and political duties, it will be of great importance that we watch closely the remarkable progress England is making in these ways.

The observations and conversations from which the account is in large part made up were had during a stay of six months in London at Toynbee Hall, and in short visits afterward to the other leading English and Scotch cities. Wherever I went I met kind friends, to whose assistance I am greatly indebted. My especial thanks are due to the Rev. Samuel A. Barnett, Warden of Toynbee Hall; to the residents of Toynbee Hall; to Mr. William Clarke, of the Fabian Society; and to Mr. Vaughn Nash, of the Co-operative Aid Association. I should be sorry, however, to have any person other than myself charged with mistakes of fact or opinion which I may have made. References to pamphlets and reports are seldom given; but so far as the recent literature of the subject is generally available, attention has been called to it.

ANDOVER, October, 1891.