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EDITORIAL

SAMSON AGONISTES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

NONE would impute Samsonian qualities to the physical, mental and moral degenerate who figures to-day as Tsar of all the Russias. And yet, in a way, the puny Nicholas is performing, however unwittingly, a Samsonian task—the task of tearing down the pillars of sanctimony that uphold the superstructure of “Vested Rights”. The latest utterance of the Russian “Samson” is a proclamation to the peasants—that “Property is Sacred and the severest punishment will be meted out to whomsoever raises his hand against it”. It should need nothing more in order to illumine the claims of “Sanctity” in behalf of “Property” than to have the Tsar stand out prominently as its incarnation. The “Sanctity of Property” throws light upon him, he throws light upon it; the oneness of the two can not escape.

The peasants of Russia watered the fields with the sweat of their brow, fructified the land with the marrow of their bones. Whatever value the land has is the fruit of their labor. They are seeking to take and hold their product. In doing so they are guided by the idea that “the laborer is worthy of his hire”. “Not so!” shout Vested Rights. “We have taken and held these many years. How? Never mind that! Time cures all defects and creates a new right—Vested Rights. By these rights the land is the property of the original robber. The property becomes vested in them. It thereby becomes Sacred. Hands off!” But the peasants are too dull to appreciate so much wisdom; they keep on. Thereupon Vested Rights turn to the Tsar and say: “You are assailed by every blow that assails us. Our Vested Rights are only fractions of one great Vested Right—yourself. Allow the fractions to be broken down and the whole will crumble. Help!” And the Tsar answers: “Ye speak truly. If ye have no Vested Rights I have none. I am by the grace of whatever it be the incarnation on earth of Vested Right. Mine is the duty to come to your aid”, and he does.

Things invisible to the naked eye are seen in all their fullness through the microscope. The Tsar acts as a microscope. Through him Vested Rights may be appreciated in all their bearings. Being appreciated how can they survive?

Every ukase by the Tsar on the “Sacredness of Private Property” is a Samsonian shake given to the pillars on which Vested Rights rest, the world over. Our own American capitalists—the Rogerses, Hydes, Shiffs, etc.,—are compared to him, but obscure Samsons engaged at the same work. Infinitely more powerful are the shakes from the throne of a Tsar. Nothing will become these Samsons so well as their taking off, crushed under the debris of the structure of Vested Rights. This sorry Tsar may yet become immortal as the Samson of the capitalist Philistine Temple.

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