



FOR THE READING-ALoud ·
HILARY 1901

A Narrator's Address

Being a Plain Account, for the Reading-Aloud, of the Office's Findings upon the Palantyr Concern of San Francisco — suitable for cylinder, lantern, or such modern apparatus of recitation as the Subject prefers

HILARY REVISION · ANNO REGNI 1901 · SERIES HR-1901-NA
COMPANION TO BULLETIN №1, FIELD REPORT №2, AND THE SCHEDULE OF PETITIONS FOR
REMEDY

I. UPON A CONCERN LATELY RISEN IN CALIFORNIA

Read in the manner of a Ministerial address: unhurried, grave, with a half-smile reserved for the Latin tags.

Subjects of the Realm, friends of the Office, attend.

There has lately risen, in the Californian Republic, a Concern that styles itself the Palantyr — from the old word for a stone of distant seeing — and which has presented to the world a Manifesto of considerable confidence. The Concern, the Manifesto explains, is the heir of the cathedrals and the universities, the modern Cicero, the public-spirited citizen who has stepped forward to defend civilisation in its hour of need. The Concern, accordingly, builds Engines: Engines that read, at speed, the great registers of populations, and advise the war-offices and constabularies of allied Realms upon whom to investigate, whom to detain, whom to bomb, and whom to leave alone.

The Office, having read the Manifesto with care and the Concern's accounts with rather more, sets down its plain reading.

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II. OF THE TWIN TRADES

The Concern conducts two trades, and the trades are not separable.

It gathers Vapors — the records, the movements, the associations, the silences of populations both within the Realm and beyond it — and it sells, to the war-offices, the means of acting upon what is gathered. The gathering finances the supplying; the supplying enlarges the gathering. The Office has named this *the Loop of Apparatus and Armament*, and considers it the most lucrative loop the present generation has contrived.

The reader will observe that this is not new. The Honourable East India Company conducted the same trade, in different uniforms, for the better part of two centuries. The constabularies of Bentham's design rehearsed it on a smaller scale. The census-machines of the late Empires perfected its mathematics. The Palantyr Concern has not invented the apparatus; it has consolidated it, given it a literary name, and presented it as the gift of antiquity.

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III. OF THE TOGA

The Manifesto presses Cicero into a livery for which Cicero does not fit. Cicero held no patents; he traded in no Engines; in his last and best moments he declined the protection of a tyrant and was, accordingly, killed for it. The Concern, by contrast, declines very little, and is presently flourishing.

The Office, consulting its Latin Master, suggests that the apter model is not Cicero but Crassus — the wealthy supplier of the legions, of whom Plutarch is unsparing — or, in the older Latin, the *mercator sapiens*: the merchant in the toga. The Romans, in their honest moments, considered the figure ridiculous. The Office concurs.

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IV. OF THE REFUSENIK

The Office reminds the Subject that to refuse the Engine is not, in this present arrangement, to escape it.

The Refusenik's Index, established in the Trinity Revision, records the Subject's refusal as itself a Vapor of value. In foreign parts the principle is the same and the consequences are sharper: the populations of certain occupied lands, the encamped peoples of the Northern

plains who have stood against pipelines, the citizens of cities whose constabularies have purchased the Stone for the prediction of crimes not yet committed — these Subjects find that their refusal is logged with their compliance, and that the foreign Refusenik enjoys none of the protections of the domestic Abstainer, who at least has the post-box and the garden-shed.

The Office records this with regret, and proceeds.

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V. OF THE REMEDY

The Office, having catalogued the apparatus, has set down four Petitions for Remedy. They are these.

First: that the great registers of populations be vested in Trusts held in common, and not in foreign Concerns.

Second: that the Engines of war and policing be the subject of a Convention, in the manner of the Convention upon Aerial Bombs.

Third: that the children of the Realm who are taught to build Engines be also taught the histories of *earlier such apparatus*, and by the elders of communities who have been the subject of those apparatus and have not forgotten.

Fourth: that the public moneys of the Realm be directed away from the Concerns of the Palantyr's kind and toward the co-operative apparatus, the open registers, the freely-published Engines whose instruction-sets any Subject may read.

None of the four is sufficient on its own. All four, applied together, are sufficient.

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VI. CLOSING

The Office wishes to leave the Subject with this.

The Concern presents itself in two postures, and the postures are incompatible. In one, it is a free statesman, the heir of the cathedrals, defending civilisation by its own choosing. In the

other, it is the irresistible apparatus, the inevitability before which the unconvinced must make their peace. A free statesman cannot also be an inevitability. The Concern, in the Office's reading, has merely told upon itself.

The apparatus is neither civilisational nor inevitable. It is a product, manufactured by gentlemen still living, sold for known sums, and capable of being declined, regulated, broken up, and replaced. The work is large; the Subject's part is small but indispensable.

The post-box stands at the corner. The garden-shed stands in the yard. The Office, in Westminster, with its registers open, stands on the Subject's side.

. . . end of address . . .

Drafted, for the reading-aloud, under our hand,

LADY LOVELACE CARMICHAEL

Wardress of the Pneumatic Tubes

THE HEAD ARCHIVIST

Central Scrutinizer of Personal Vapors

Hilary Term, the Sixth Day, Anno Regni 1901

OFFICE OF THE WARDRESS · OFFICE OF THE CENTRAL SCRUTINIZER · WESTMINSTER · HILARY TERM, 1901
SERIES HR-1901-NA · FOR THE USE OF THE RECITER, THE LANTERNIST, AND THE OPERATOR OF MODERN APPARATUS