

and is entitled: "Is It Our Duty to Go Back to Africa?"

Mr. Warren's brother, now attending the Booker T. Washington school, will assist in the work of colonization.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

The principle of proportional representation has been adopted by several widely separated countries, among them being Belgium, Denmark, Brazil and Tasmania. It is in Belgium that the most thorough trial of the system has been given. Five years ago a system of proportional voting known as the "free list" was adopted for municipal elections throughout the kingdom.

The system was applied in a partial and imperfect form by an opportunist ministry who wanted to stave off a full application of the principle. Notwithstanding this, the reform worked exceedingly well, and the general testimony is that it has promoted purity and efficiency of government, whilst markedly decreasing party bitterness and rancor. This success led to a further extension of the principle, and in December, 1899, an act was passed applying the free list system to the Belgian parliamentary elections, both for the senate and the chamber of deputies. In May last the general elections came on, when a million and a half of voters cast their ballots under the new system. It was a pronounced and remarkable success. There are three parties in Belgium—the clericals, the liberals and the socialists. At the previous election, under the old system, the clericals was grossly over-represented, chiefly at the expense of the liberals, but the new system set this right and had the effect of giving each party a fair and proportional representation in accordance with the numerical strength of each, thus proving its right to the name it bears. Party virulence was much lessened, because each party realized that the system was one which prevented any unfair advantage being taken.

We get these particulars direct from an able French book, "La Representation Proportionnelle en Belgique," written by Count d'Alviella, professor of the University of Brussels, and also an ex-senator. He gives a most interesting history of the struggle to obtain this great reform, which was finally carried by the help of the wiser heads amongst

the clericals, who realized that they were driving the liberals and socialists to combine against them.

Switzerland also uses the free list system. Several of the cantons (provinces) have used it for some years in their legislative elections, with great success.

Tasmania is the first English-speaking community that has adopted the proportional principle for legislative elections. In February, 1897, the two cities of Hobart and Launceston used the Hare-Spence system of proportional representation in electing ten members of parliament. In March last the same two cities again elected their ten members on the same proportional system. Tasmania is now a state in the new commonwealth of Australia, and will elect six senators and five representatives to the federal parliament. The house of assembly has just rejected a proposition to adopt the system of single-member electorates for the federal elections, and the whole island is to be one electorate, returning the senators and representatives on the Hare-Spence system of proportional representation.

The results of the last election in Belgium under the old system gave 112 clericals, 12 liberals and 28 socialists. The results of the first election under proportional representation gave 86 clericals, 33 liberals, 32 socialists and one independent.

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN BELGIUM.

Extracts from "La Representation Proportionnelle en Belgique," by Count d'Alviella, translated for The Public by Miss Kate L. Johnston, of Toronto.

The moment seems to have arrived for formulating the conclusions which are made clear by the first application of proportional representation to the legislative elections of Belgium.

The first result has been to awaken political life in numerous districts where for a long time it had seemed to be extinguished, especially in the Flemish provinces. In the heart of the two Flanders, notably, at Anvers and even at Limbourg, liberal associations have been born or revived in localities most devoted to the conservative Catholic party. At the time of the earlier elections, in 1896 and 1898, the liberals abstained in many districts from any serious struggle for representation in the chamber of deputies. As for the senate, the elections took place without a ballot in 25 districts out of 36. This time the seats were contested in all the divisions of the country, as well

for the senate as for the chamber, with but one exception. The socialists entered into the struggle wherever they could find candidates, and the Catholics raised their flag in districts in the Walloon country, where they had never succeeded in electing a candidate within the memory of man.

Among other indirect advantages, proportional representation has thus put an end to the perilous coincidence which tended to establish itself between political divisions and racial or linguistic divisions. (In Belgium, as in Canada, there are two distinct races, speaking different languages.) The Flemish liberals have to-day in the chamber of deputies members who know their country and speak their language; just as the Catholics of the industrial districts find other representatives of their interests than "Luxembourgeois" — country squires, or Flemish proprietors.

A second result has been to diminish the virulence of the electoral campaign. Candidates have been able to organize their propaganda without their adversaries trying to prevent them, or troubling their meetings. Fewer personal attacks are recorded in the press; and recourse was seldom had to those maneuvers of the last hour ("roorbacks") which were but lately the culminating point of all electoral strategy.

At Brussels the public "assisted" at the curious spectacle of "La League" and "L'Association," both hard at work, without attacking each other in their meetings or in their journals. In a great number of divisions the socialists have openly adopted the candidature of liberals who were running for the senate, although the two parties were presenting opposing lists for the lower house. Even between Catholics and liberals the struggle has not reached the pitch which characterized it under the old system. This is, say the advocates of the old regime, because the real battle will be waged henceforth within the parties themselves. But is it not rather because the powerlessness to crush adversaries will be felt henceforth, and that it will be indeed necessary to recognize their right to existence? However that may be, it is an amelioration as notable as necessary in our political methods; and it will be fortunate should this amelioration be felt in parliament also. "We have in Belgium," confessed (after the elections) Hon. Jan Van Ryswyck to an editor of *La Metropole*, "the habit of exaggerating everything. It is a detestable method of reasoning. Exaggeration has invaded all our po-

litical life, our journals, our clubs, our administrations, our parliament. Proportional representation, instead of exaggeration, promotes calm consideration and thought; it tends to wisdom and pacification."

What has become of the reproach that proportional representation tended toward the disintegration of parties? The event has shown that it is not the parties which are parceled out—at least, it is not the parties having, as Monsieur the Minister Van den Henvel, says "cohesion, discipline, a programme truly conciliatory of great interests;" it is, on the contrary, eccentric groups, undecided shades, isolated candidates, that have been absorbed, or put "hors de combat."

The moral of the last legislative election is that Belgium has room for three parties, but only for three. Even in the city of Brussels, which was one large constituency, returning 18 members, so that to carry a seat less than one-eighteenth of the votes cast was required, the lists of the commercials, of the industrial commercials and of the P. O. L. obtained with difficulty some thousands of votes; but further, neither the independents, in spite of the personal influence of M. Theodor, nor the Christian democrats, in spite of the intense propaganda of Abbe Daens, have succeeded in reaching the electoral quotient which gives a seat. Except the one follower of Abbe Daens elected at Alost, not a dissident has entered either the chamber or the senate. The three parties are certainly more homogeneous to-day than they were under the last parliament.

On the other hand, proportional representation has put an end to the heterogenous coalitions which have tended for some years to be introduced into our politics, and which end in reciprocal disappointments. Everywhere the radicals, who generally form the mainspring of anticlerical combinations, have had to resign themselves to go with the moderate liberals or to struggle alone. At Brussels, the independents have been constrained to break with the Catholics, and thus is terminated an equivocal alliance which had monopolized for 14 years the "representation" of the district. Each party, freed from the care of seeking at any price allies which it hoped to dupe on the morrow, has been able to present itself with an integral and homogeneous programme which, for the first time, perhaps, in an electoral contest, was

distinguished for clearness and sincerity.

A superficial observer would be tempted to conclude that the disappearance of electoral coalitions must above all profit the Catholics, since it is against this party that these combinations were directed. In reality, it seems that the liberal party will gain still more by it; not only because it can henceforth take again its place openly, without passing under the caudine forks of the socialist party, but, further, because its new independence has had for consequence the drawing together of its two divisions—the progressives and the moderates. On the one side the progressives, being no longer constrained to handle socialism tenderly, have caused to disappear one of the chief reasons of the distrust of the moderates. On the other side, these latter, having no longer to occupy themselves in retaining at any price the support of certain elements, have been able to make a step forward, notably in the electoral question and in the labor question. So well has all this been done that the two sections of the liberal party have succeeded in meeting each other on a ground which represents the integral application of their common principles.

No one to-day would dare to still reproach the new system with complexity. Proportionalists themselves were not without uneasiness in this respect, in view of the novelty of the system, the use of two ballots, one for the chamber of deputies, the other for the senate; and finally the considerable masses of voters, too often illiterate or nearly so, whose votes had to be collected and counted. Take, for example, the district of Brussels. Divided among 517 polling places, nearly 170,000 voters each received there from one to six ballot papers, the pink for the senate, the white for the chamber. Each ballot paper contained the names of either of 25 senatorial candidates or of 167 candidates for the chamber. In each case the candidates were divided into lists under party headings. After having entered the isolated compartment where he marks his ballot with the stroke of a crayon, each voter comes back to deposit his white ballot paper in one urn, his pink ballot paper in another. All this part of the operations, which was carried out in perfect order, terminated at one o'clock in the afternoon. At two o'clock the 177 scrutineers' offices were in possession of the ballot pa-

pers. Everywhere the scrutiny, commenced at about three o'clock, was finished between eight and ten o'clock in the evening; that is to say, all the operations were carried out with as much precision and more rapidity than under the old system. The central office of the district met, conformably to the law, the next day at midday, to add up the votes of each list, establish the common divisor and proclaim the names of those elected. Although it could not finish its task until Tuesday night, it was because among the 177 presidents of scrutineers' offices there were one or two unequal to the task. One of them had replaced by a blank sheet of paper his official report, which was not found again until the next day.

Advocates of proportional representation have frequently affirmed that this system would lead parties to choose the best possible candidates. Now some people are artlessly manifesting their disappointment that the newly elected Belgian parliament is not peopled with "national illustrations." It is certain that in this regard some of the choices of the electors have left something to be desired, and that "parish politics" as well as "vested rights" have kept too great a place. However, the improvement is marked—the progress is incontestable. One could hardly dream of a parliament inferior to the last legislature which the old system of voting produced. To convince oneself of this, it is sufficient to read the funeral orations which the journals of all parties pronounced over its tomb. The new parliament represents, as yet, a transition from one system to another; representation based on the subdivisions of territory giving place to representation based on the groupings of opinions. Nor should we demand from institutions more than they are able to give. Parties will never represent themselves except by politicians; and all that ought to be wished, for the sincerity of the representative system, is that parties will elect their true chiefs. Now in this respect one must recognize

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that proportional representation has sent into parliament the best representatives of our three great parties. More than one newcomer among the liberals and the Catholics will contribute to raise the level of debates. As for the socialists, we do not know the value of their recruits; but it is incontestably a merit of proportional representation that it has permitted MM. Vander Velde and Bertrand to take their natural place among the representatives of Brussels, M. Anseele among those of Gand and M. Terwagne among those of Anvers.

SOLDIER, OR PRESIDENT?

For The Public.

We met outside of Manila,
He with his stalwart son;
I was a man of Nebraska,
And he was of North Luzon.

Our rifles cracked in the silence,
And the youth lay dead at his feet,
Dead in the morn of his manhood,
And life to the young is sweet.

The father knelt beside him,
As I ran and shouted the word
That bade the man surrender,
But he neither saw nor heard.

The rifle untouched beside him,
(Would God I could hide the sight!)
And the still face gazing upward—
(It comes to me in the night!)

That the flag of his young republic
Might wave o'er the eastern seas
He gave his life—and a shudder
Rose till it shook my knees.

But, God! I had done my duty,
The duty I owe to slay,
For mine is a trade of slaughter
For the regulation pay.

Yet I knew when I aimed my rifle
He had never done me harm,
But my rulers had made me kill him,
And the president held my arm.

Oh, statesmen, who sit in council,
And fearfully work your will,
I think your hearts might falter
Were yours the trade to kill.

And yet the stain is upon you
Of this young blood that was spilt,
And if God is God, you shall answer
As much as I for the guilt.

It was your hands aimed the rifle,
By yours the ball was sent;
And God shall punish the guilty,
Soldier or President.

But the sight of the father bending
Above his boy that day,
Till death my soul shall summon
I may not put away.

I shall see the bronzed dead lying
Full in my startled view—
Open your eyes, ye rulers,
That ye may see it, too!

JOSEPH DANA MILLER.

The Boer—I understand that the steamer Alabama was built in England, and that the English people permit-

ted it to leave their territory and destroy property of a neutral nation?

The Mc—Yes.

The Boer—And that the neutral nation, because of this breach of international courtesy, was enabled to collect indemnity for the damage that had been done?

The Mc—Yes; what of it?

The Boer—Why, I was thinking of the chances we had of collecting indemnity from the United States for having permitted to be built on its territory, and to leave same to damage us, the American mule.

G. T. E.

The politician's wife was startled by a sound below stairs.

"John," she cried, "there's a robber in the house!"

"The house," replied John. "What's the matter with the senate? That's worse."—Philadelphia Press.

Rep.—I am surprised that such a violent opposer of the administration as you are went to Washington to attend the inauguration of Mr. McKinley!

Dem.—I didn't go there to attend his inauguration. I went to celebrate his first term's finish.

G. T. E.

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