

rior fighter, turns out to be a generous winner, for he does no boasting, and to have the spirit of a "good loser," for he is modestly patient in the face of racial bitterness among the whites. As to peaceable citizenship, the conduct of himself and his race at this crisis is certainly superior.

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Twentieth Century "Democracy."

"Perceiving that the people do not know what they want we will give them what we know will do them good—using no more force than necessary."

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"THE GRAVITY OF MERIT."

Every Fourth of July brings the usual crop of tory editorials. As Lincoln predicted, our American royalists still find the Declaration of Independence a hard nut to crack.

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One editor says that our Charter declared that all men were "created free and equal"; but—

Passing this error in quotation which the Tories are always making, let us come at once to the editor's difficulty.

"But," he says, "you cannot upset the gravity of merit!"

This solemn utterance, made in this connection, is calculated to convey the impression that John Hancock, and Benjamin Franklin, and Sam Adams and the rest of the immortal Fifty-six worked off on the world a monumental piece of demagoguery.

Of course we all supposed that the purpose of the Declaration was to upset the gravity of merit! How very good therefore of the Tories to rescue us from this Jacobin delusion!

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Thomas Jefferson was not writing an editorial for *The Outlook*. He was not splitting hairs in a Harvard class room.

In the white heat of a great crisis he forged a phrase that will live forever. As all right-minded men understand it, this phrase is the eternal truth.

No one finds it a stumbling block, save the Tories, and they quibble about the phrase because its spirit is not in their hearts.

But returning to our editorial, mark the vicious circle of its logic.

You cannot upset "the gravity of merit." Strength must inevitably surmount weakness. The Declaration of Independence has given us equality before the law. Therefore all the inequality that remains must be due to "the gravity

of merit," the inevitable surmounting of strength over weakness.

Of course this is Fourth of July rubbish, and our Fourth will never be quite sane until this kind of editorial becomes extinct with the fool and the firecracker.

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The Declaration of Independence has not given us equality before the law. It has given us the ideal, but the ideal has never been realized. The inequalities that remain cannot be cited as proof of "the gravity of merit," while the law still has its favorites.

The laborer in a mine is worthy of his hire. The man who invests real capital to build mills and sink shafts is entitled to his reward. But mine workers and operators must first pay royalties to mine owners.

There are individuals in Duluth whose Mesaba range royalties are estimated at a million a year. If these owners rendered any service no one would begrudge them a commensurate reward. But what do they do?

They perform no labor. They invest no real capital. The investment they make is not at all essential, but really a hindrance to the industry.

In the zinc mines of Missouri I found a miner working a lease-hold of about twenty square yards, upon which he paid a royalty to the owner of twenty-five per cent. What the miner had left for his labor amounted to from two to three dollars a day.

Of course royalty-fed children are larger and healthier and have a better start in life than the children of miners. Until the principle of the Declaration of Independence is applied to the economic relations of men, you can no more tell about "the gravity of merit" than you could tell the direction of the compass with a needle distraught and dancing in the field of a powerful magnet.

Nice arrangement, is it not? Have a law which takes from the labor of one man to feed the children of an idler. Half starve those who work, and give every advantage of nourished body and trained mind to the sons of Privilege. Then invent a comforting phrase to explain the differences that follow.

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"The gravity of merit."

The wise man who fools himself with this phrase warns us against the foolishness of the Declaration of Independence.

It will be soon enough to look into these phrases, when we have put an end to the inequalities that are plainly created by law. The Declaration of

Independence, like the Sermon on the Mount, has never been tried.

HERBERT S. BIGELOW.

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LAND CONSERVATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

We must turn to the British administration of Northern Nigeria for an example of systematic conservation of all natural resources by government; but popular impulses in the direction of this policy may be observed almost everywhere if we do not allow mere form to hide the substance from us. Although the policy assumes different forms in different localities, everywhere there is evidence of a growing appreciation of the substantial truth that "God made the land for the people."

Long lived and almost universal as the notion has been that monopolies of natural resources, whether by landlords under feudalistic survivals or by capitalists under perverted capitalism, are both useful and just and must be perpetuated, that notion is rapidly losing ground. In Northern Nigeria (p. 580) it is struck down quite candidly. In Great Britain (p. 507) it is the central issue of politics, as it is coming also to be in Denmark (p. 586). And both in Northern Nigeria and Great Britain, as well as in Germany (pp. 486, 497), Australia (pp. 411, 535), and Canada (p. 540), there is a distinct recognition of city sites as being among the natural resources to be conserved for the people, a recognition which is not less emphatic—even more so, we should say—than the recognition, as in that category, of forests, mines and soils. So also with methods of correction. The Canadian city of Vancouver, for instance (pp. 243, 252, 434, 444), by exempting improvements from taxation in order to encourage improvement, and taxing building sites *ad valorem* to the full (whether used or not), in order to weaken land monopoly, is conserving her natural resources.

In the United States but little progress has been made governmentally for the conservation of natural resources in any form. The Iawson Purdy tax regime in New York City (p. 34) has done something toward it by making the difference between site values and improvement values stand out so distinctly that one must be somewhat more stupid than a wayfaring fool if he does not see for himself that the latter represent commodities produced by workers, and the former privileges conferred by government. Cleveland also has made that difference distinct (pp. 604, 608) through the new tax board of Cuyahoga county,

of which four out of the five members were Tom L. Johnson men at their election and three of the four are disciples of Henry George. Other communities in the United States have also in one form or another, officially recognized the importance of conserving their natural resources for the common welfare and in the common right. But on the whole it is true that all forms of conservation in the United States are still in the agitational stage.

One of the conservation agencies in this country, however, impresses us as having exceptionally large possibilities. We refer to the National Conservation Association (p. 83), of which Gifford Pinchot is the president.

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This Association makes no extreme demands. It is very conservative in management, very superficial in its proposals. Any single tax convert, though newly made, could point out errors in its political economy and expose the insufficiency of its program. Any socialist could do the same from the socialist point of view, though in a way the program is rather socialistic than otherwise in its modes. But superficial as that program may be, it seems to us to give fair promise of soon becoming, with reference to progressive politics in the United States, what the Lloyd-George Budget has been to progressive politics in Great Britain.

The Budget was superficial in its proposals. It could not stand in the face of radical criticism. There wasn't a single taxer nor a socialist in the United Kingdom who didn't know how flimsy it was. The less wise among them were therefore only lukewarm supporters of the Budget; the lesser wise refused to take any part, and the least wise were inclined to fight it. But that superficial measure, besides securing an official valuation of all the land of Great Britain, now in progress, and laying the basis for a permanent policy of progressive land value taxation, tending toward the abolition of land monopoly, has turned all Great Britain into a debating society on the subject of the relations of the people of a country to the land of their country.

The Budget was more effective than a perfect measure might have been, because the perfect measure could hardly have secured a favorable hearing, whereas the imperfect one has secured a favorable hearing, and not only for its superficial proposals but in even greater degree for the fundamental principles which those proposals involve.

It is in some such way that the work of the National Conservation Association gives promise, in our view, of a great crusade for justice with