

prise. A periodical whose policy is genuinely inimical to special interests, one which is loyal to the masses of the people, as the *Arena's* has been, knocks with every issue at the door of the bankruptcy court. It is not very different from an abolition magazine in a slave community, except that the publisher runs less risk of lynching. But the *Arena* has lived through many years of struggle; since it was wrecked by the deposition of Mr. Flower; and as it has become in every way a better magazine under his resumed editorship than in its most prosperous days, the present reorganization may prove to be the beginning of a new and vital career both for Mr. Flower and for the *Arena*.



### The Paine Centennial.

The year that brought Abraham Lincoln into the world took out of it a man to whom, more perhaps than to any other, the world is indebted for the possibilities of character and patriotism that were realized in Abraham Lincoln, and this man was Thomas Paine. For Lincoln was a veritable successor of Thomas Jefferson in other respects than as President, and Jeffersonianism had its most thorough exponent in Paine. This may be denied by the ignorant and narrow among the Lincoln hero worshippers; but no one would deny it or be otherwise than proud of Lincoln's indebtedness to Paine, had it not been for the slanders with which religious and political bigotry have associated the name of that great religious and patriotic pamphleteer. When William Cobbett took Paine's body to England from the grave on his farm at New Rochelle, the bitterness which his pamphlets against idolatry in religion and aristocracy in government had excited, was quite appropriately versified by Byron in four lines that were once to be found in Byron's works:

In bringing back the bones of Paine,  
Will Cobbett, you've done well.  
He visits you on earth again;  
You'll visit him in hell.



It is one of the testimonials to Paine's goodness and greatness that he in his life time, and his name for a century afterwards, should have been enshrined by the type of Christian who, as Swinburne puts it, "spits on Christ," and the kind of patriot who hates democracy. Knowing neither Christianity nor patriotism in their essentials, these calumniators of Paine could no more understand him than the chief priests of old could understand the lowly Nazarene. To do good was Thomas Paine's religion, and

all mankind were his countrymen. He believed in one God, and hoped for life beyond the grave. He was a great writer, if great writing is that which stirs the heart to love and the mind to think. In one pamphlet he lifted the Revolutionary impulse in the colonies, from the level of anger at British taxation to the heights of aspiration for American independence. In another, when the days had come which tried men's souls, he re-inspired the American heart with the noblest passions of that long struggle. Washington thanked and honored him. Jefferson numbered him among his friends. Congress thanked him for his services, and gave him the farm from which Cobbett afterwards took his body. He served the people of France when they fought for liberty, for the French also were his countrymen. He would have saved them the political mistake and the moral ignominy of taking the life of the man whose dethronement he had democratically approved. In all his career, he was a true friend, a wise friend, a courageous and plain spoken friend of the plain people, even as Lincoln learned to be; and for that he has been covered with contumely by the ignorant and the bigoted, by the powerful and the idolatrous. To him as to many another like him, Lowell's lines apply; for of him, too, even—

. . . the men he agonized for  
Cast the contumelious stone.



### TRIVIAL OBJECTIONS TO DIRECT LEGISLATION.

The president of the New Hampshire Bar Association, in speaking before that body at its annual meeting for 1909, made some remarkable criticisms of the Initiative and Referendum. They ought not to pass without public challenge. These were his words, as reported by the Manchester Union of May 11:

Socialism in its various forms is making its attacks upon our institutions of government and society. For instance, the Initiative and Referendum are being urged to the end that the making of laws shall be taken from the representatives of the people, supposedly chosen because of some superior fitness, and given over to the direct action of the majority of the voters. This of course means the overturn of representative government, the probable end of republican institutions. The majority, when actuated by passion or prejudice, may repeal good laws, enact bad ones, or prevent the execution of wise but unpopular ones. If there is virtue in the system created by our national and State constitutions, that system ought not to be subjected to these violent changes simply because some representatives have been recreant to

their trust. Rather should the people be led to show greater care in the selection of their representatives, that the old landmarks may be preserved and the Republic be permitted to work out the high destiny planned by its founders.

These statements are quite at variance with the generally understood meaning of direct legislation. Yet they are so much in harmony with the usual methods of attack that they may well serve as the basis for an exposition of its character and tendency.

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We are first assured that "socialism in its various forms is making its attacks upon our institutions of government and society," and the Initiative and Referendum are specified as among these various forms of socialism.

While I presume that many socialists uphold the principles of the Initiative and Referendum, this reform is not essentially socialistic; and many people who are not socialists support direct legislation. At the last election in Oregon, where it is in effect, there were cast for the socialist candidates for Congress, 8,204 votes; at the same election, on nineteen referred measures, the average vote cast was 86,534. It was enacted by popular vote in 1902; the result standing 62,024 for, to 5,668 against. Evidently the socialists are a small fraction of those who enacted it, and a smaller portion of those who use it. Perhaps the president of the New Hampshire Bar Association used the word "socialism" as many other people do, referring to anything different from the established order.

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"That the making of the laws shall be taken from the representatives of the people, supposedly chosen because of some superior fitness, and given over to the direct action of the majority of the voters," is stated as the object of direct legislation.

But the Initiative and Referendum do not contemplate taking away one bit of the power of representatives to make laws, so long as those representatives act in accordance with the desires of the majority of the voters. These are the rulers, according to our "old landmarks;" and if the representatives do not do as a majority of the voters wish, ought not their power to be in justice taken from them?

In the beginning, representatives were probably chosen because of some superior fitness; but are they chosen for that reason now? Are they not chosen for the most part either because it is their "turn," or else because they have been faithful

workers for a party? Already we have forsaken the original idea of superior fitness. We already choose our law-makers for other reasons.

A representative form was necessary when our government was founded, owing to difficulties of communication; but now, with the daily and weekly press in a highly developed state, there is no reason why important measures should not be referred to the people, and be decided by a majority of those who have opinions, rather than by a body of men who only "supposedly" represent the people, but often do not.

Again, many things come up in a legislative session, on which the representatives, however honest, cannot possibly know the wishes of their constituents, because the matters were not under consideration at the time of the election. How can they act representatively on such matters, if they have no way of learning the wishes of their constituents?

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Direct legislation "means the overturn of representative government, the probable end of republican institutions"!

How can any one come to that conclusion? The Initiative is the whip, the Referendum the curb, of legislators; and as the horse feels neither whip nor curb so long as he obeys his master's will, so the legislator, as long as he acts as a majority of the people wish, would feel neither the lash of the Initiative nor the check of the Referendum. And in the "will of the majority" is the very essence of republican institutions.

If it were said that "the overturn of government by privilege, the end of corporation domination," are involved, one could be in entire accord with the sentiment, for this is what direct legislation would do.

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"The majority when actuated by passion or prejudice may repeal good laws, enact bad ones, or prevent the execution of wise but unpopular ones." They might. But does anyone honestly believe that the *majority* would do these things? He who does believe it has lost faith in popular government and might as well say so. When the majority goes wrong, and cannot right itself, it is time for a monarch to order all things for us so that we cannot go wrong.

But what are the results of direct legislation where it has been tried? They show that fears for the safety of the Republic in this respect are groundless.

The results in Switzerland show that republican institutions have been strengthened. The chief

complaints in that country have been from radicals who think the people too conservative.

In our own Oregon the measures passed under direct legislation have not been especially radical. The only measures adopted in Oregon that could be called radical are these: Popular nomination of Senators with instructions to the legislature to vote for the popular choice (and we can hardly blame them for wishing some new way of choosing Senators when we study the history of their elections previous to the adoption of the amendment); and proportional representation, which is an experiment and may be repealed if not satisfactory.

"Violent changes" do not seem to have taken place anywhere under direct legislation.

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Of course "the people should be led to show greater care in the selection of their representatives." No one interested in good government denies that. But there is nothing in direct legislation which contravenes it. Rather the opposite. Almost always, when two or more candidates are in the field, one is brighter or of better character than the others; but perhaps the one in whom the majority have the most confidence personally, or the one they feel is better qualified in many respects, does not represent the same policy or policies they desire to have enacted into law. Under direct legislation they would be free to vote for the best man, feeling sure that if he, or some other representative, did not secure the desired legislation, they could have the measure submitted by means of the Initiative, directly to the people for their consideration.

It seems to me that many who oppose direct legislation do so because they do not understand it. Any one who clearly understands its principles and their relation to the fundamental principles of our Republic ought not to object to it on the ground of danger to republican institutions. Our government was certainly founded on the "consent of the governed," and the nearer our laws approach the desire of a majority of the governed, the surer shall we be that "the old landmarks will be preserved and the Republic be permitted to work out the high destiny planned by its founders."

GEORGE H. DUNCAN.

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Say nothing more to thyself than what the first appearances report. Suppose that it has been reported to thee that a certain person speaks ill of thee. This has been reported, but that thou hast been injured, that has not been reported.—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GREAT BRITAIN.

London, June 2nd, 1909.

"The Finance Bill consists of 74 clauses, and of these no fewer than 28 relate to land taxation. This fact is most significant."—The Times, May 29.

The above extract from The Times should suffice to show that at last the great political struggle foreshadowed and championed by the late Sir Henry Campbell has begun in Great Britain. The great budget of 1909 clearly draws the line of demarcation which in the political struggles of the future will separate the sheep from the goats, the true Progressives from the Reactionaries, no matter by what high-sounding name they may call themselves.

The secret enemies of our movement, those who under all manner of pretenses would have the great Liberal Party deal with any and every question save the Land Question, must necessarily soon be driven out of the Liberal ranks, or remaining there will sink into impotence. Old-fashioned Whig politicians, like Lord Welby (see "The Contemporary Review" for June) may loudly argue that "the super-tax on incomes is undoubtedly the most important proposal in the Budget," but the facts cry out more loudly still that, not the super-tax, but the land taxation proposals are the most important proposals, and are the main cause of the vituperative bitterness with which the budget has been greeted by all upholders of privilege and monopoly, masquerading as "property."

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Mr. Lloyd George, who is a past-master of the art of coining phrases which stick and tell, closed his long budget speech with the words: "This is a war budget! It is a budget for waging implacable war against poverty!" And, whatever its shortcomings, there can be little doubt that its innovations have been made possible by the growing discontent with the persistence and deepening of poverty amidst a superabundance of wealth, which haunts the mind of every thoughtful man.

For almost the first time in the history of the British Parliament it has been laid down there, practically unchallenged, that property in land differs both in its genesis, its properties, and its moral justification from property in products, or even from property in those monuments of past misgovernment, national debts. For the first time the value of land, which for over three centuries has formed the main source of the unearned wealth of the great aristocracy of the country, has been declared to be in a special sense a fit and proper source whence public revenues can equitably be derived. Yes, it is the commencement of a long and implacable war against privilege and poverty, and Lloyd George has had the honor of leading the first attack.

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As you have already realized, the attitude of the British land reformers is a somewhat reserved one. It may perhaps best be compared with the attitude of the man who at a concert appealed to the audi-