can be neat, and if she lives in the country can have a bit of flower or some green thing in the center. The man can tidy himself for dinner and speak in gracious tone to wife and children without taking a nickel from his daily wage. All this is art.

Some years ago I was on an early local train going west from Lynchburg. My seat companion was a workingman with an uncommonly fine, strong face, and I soon found him to be a man of thought and information. I have rarely enjoyed a more interesting traveling companion. The train stopped ten minutes for breakfast and we went together to the station eating-room. Now the way in which my friend did his eating and drinking brought to mind the thought of the pity that he should spoil any of his fineness by his slovenly ways. He shoveled the food into his mouth, dropping crumbs and gravy on the cloth and on his clothes, and he drank his tea with as much noise as Dr. Johnson.

One trouble is that so many people have never given a thought to the art side, the aesthetic side, of life, and they have no conception how very important this side is both for our own increase of happiness and for the pleasure and satisfaction we can give to others.

Furthermore, that those who have given some thought to the matter should affect to despise and neglect external things is a silly philosophy, because external things, apart from the good in themselves, have an inevitable reaction upon character. Very good and earnest people sometimes cultivate this affectation. I knew a man who had over his desk a sentence from Cicero, *Rerum externarum despicientia,* the despisal of external things. Had he known Cicero better he would have known that the great orator was only talking, and that nobody cared more than he about the artistic way of doing things and about external things in general.

❁

What I said about picture galleries for the people was without thought of underrating the fine influence of such institutions. Every city should have its municipal gallery of beautiful pictures, free at all times to all the people. There is no doubt that the constant view of beautiful pictures will go a long way toward cultivating the art spirit which we so greatly need in all our doings. We need tremendously in America the spread of this spirit. Art is not something to be preempted by aristocracy. We want democracy to be beautiful.

J. H. DILLARD.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

DEMOCRACY AT THE SEAT OF HARVARD.

Cambridge, Mass.

The story of the proposed new charter for Cambridge has its features of interest for fundamental democrats the country over, for it is the story of a completely modern and completely democratic city charter in one of the oldest and supposedly most conservative communities of this country.

❁

The fact that the charter was defeated by so small a margin on Nov. 7 last, its first submission to the voters (the vote standing 6,073 no to 5,272 yes, with 1,546 blanks and 3,500 stay-at-homes) leads its supporters to hope confidently for its adoption at no distant date. The campaign of education, known to be quite incomplete when the vote was taken, is going right on under circumstances improved by the fact that the election demolished some of the most formidable of the allegations of its opponents.

This charter is of the most up-to-date type of the so-called commission form—involving the Initiative, Referendum and Recall with workable percentages, abolition of the party label, election to specific offices, and particularly the substitution of the Preferential Ballot and single election for the older but probably short-lived system of double elections of Des Moines, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

❁

At the time the charter came full-fledged before the people of Cambridge there was no perceptible public demand whatever for a new charter. There was the customary run of grumbling about inefficiency and high taxes, but no sign whatever of a move for a change in the charter. Individual citizens, however, had become impressed with the value of the commission form of government, and when the Grand Junction Charter appeared with its plan of preferential voting as a substitute for the double-election, it seemed to some of us who read The Public and thus get news of such things, that the cap-sheaf had at last been placed on government by commission. We were persuaded that Senator Bucklin and his Grand Junction friends had developed a simple, workable way of attracting and electing the right kind of men to office, with less opportunity for domination by machine or special interests than anything before proposed. The preferential ballot gained friends and admirers as fast as it was explained. The question naturally arose, Why not have it in Cambridge? and—while we are about it—Why not have as much else of the latest and best of the commission form ideas as we can under the limitations of our Massachusetts laws? A small self-appointed committee accordingly took upon itself the work of preparing a model charter for the people to consider, in the faith that the people would take to it as they came to understand it. We realized that the charter would be full of novelties, some of them unheard of in this neighborhood, and that selfish in-

terests of all kinds would be against it. But we thought it worth while to try.

The committee consisted of five citizens, one Harvard instructor in the science of government, a lawyer, a journalist, and two Harvard instructors in civil engineering. Apart from the fact that the journalist was then a representative in the State legislature, the committee had no official, political or organized backing. Three of the committee were without personal experience in public office or aspiration thereto. These men by picking and culling from the latest American practice, and guided by the single aim for simplicity, ease, and certainty of maintaining the supremacy of the public will, prepared the first draft, and submitted it to the State legislature of 1910. It contained a provision that even if the legislature approved it, it should go into effect only upon a petition by 1,000 Cambridge citizens and its adoption by a majority of Cambridge citizens at the polls.

Then the city of Cambridge became aware that a brand new, full-fledged charter was coming their way and was to be had for the mere taking. Its main features were, as expected, unheard of novelties to most citizens and explanations were in demand. We began to receive invitations from all sorts of organizations to come and explain the strange instrument—and the campaign of education was on just as expected and hoped. At each meeting we held a mock election with the preferential ballot as an object lesson, counting the ballots and announcing the results then and there. This feature made a great hit and supporters for the charter accumulated rapidly. The charter was seen to be simple, democratic in the highest degree, and the work of entirely disinterested men.

The legislature of 1910 properly referred it to the 1911 session. In the interim the charter in all its essential features received the endorsement—after full consideration and by practically unanimous votes—of such representative Cambridge bodies as the Cambridge Economy Club—mainly young business and professional men, including some of the livest young political leaders in the State—and the Cambridge Board of Trade. Support for it became so strong that a number of such organizations delegated committees to confer with the originators of the instrument and to go over it carefuly in detail and secure a more certainly acceptable result. This joint committee included about thirty-five representative citizens—including some of the men most experienced in city affairs. It went over the charter section by section. Many meetings of the joint committee and of its sub-committees were held. Details were finally adjusted to the satisfaction of the majority and the measure was passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor, this bill differing in no essential feature from the original draft. By this time, the City Hall politicians were in full cry—and fighting hard. The city government had unexpectedly fallen completely into the hands of the so-called "Democratic" party and its leaders felt particularly injured to have their control threatened with a nip in the bud by a new charter after only a few months' enjoyment of full power over the city's business. These men and their sympathizers naturally put in their utmost efforts. They were aided vigorously and effectively, though more quietly, by the Republican machine supporters. These two influences made it very difficult for us to reach a certain large portion of the citizens by so prejudicing them against the charter by the kinds of appeal of which they were masters, that hundreds and probably thousands of citizens and many organizations never gave a hearing to any but opponents of the charter. The advocates of the charter did what they could to meet this situation by mailing to each voter of the city from two to four months before election, the full text of the charter with carefully prepared explanations. Additional matter was mailed to each voter just before the election.

Cambridge, though a city of 105,000 inhabitants and largely industrial, is so near Boston (six to eight minutes' ride by new subway) and so suburban in character that it has only weekly newspapers of limited circulation, unless an anti-charter daily started only a few weeks before election be counted. These papers, though granting us space for our communications, were with only one exception editorially lukewarm or opposed to the charter. The Boston dailies gave it little attention, though the Transcript, for one, gave it some strong editorial support just before election, and the Boston Common (a progressive weekly) of course aided loyally.

The opponents of the charter were helped by the fact that we made no allegations of gross graft or scandal—but contented ourselves with opposition to the spoils system and chronic inefficiency suffered by Cambride in common with other cities under the generally discredited, two-chamber, party system.

The charter supporters were and are working on the principle that Cambridge will sooner or later get in line with modern methods by sheer preference for obviously better things, even though they are novel. There is every reason to suppose it will soon do so. The defeat of the charter above referred to indicates only that the vote was taken before the campaign of education could be completed.

We believe that the votes against the charter on account of any or all of its more novel features were of minor importance. Talk was made against some of them, but rarely by any who were not bitterly opposed at present to the destruction of party rule in Cambridge. This threatened destruction, unwelcome to many in any case, was the more distasteful because the dominant party was the only one with any prestige left to lose by the change. To the party-minded member of the dominant party, of course, this seemed intolerable.

The charter had the support, however, of practically all the non-politician leaders of local public sentiment, and the open opposition of none whose standpat or doctrinaire bias had not been previously well established. The officers and teachers of Harvard University gradually lined up behind it, so far as is known, in entire unanimity, though of course with different degrees of enthusiasm. So also did the overwhelming majority of leading merchants, manufacturers, and professional men—so much so in fact that the politicians made a handle of the fact to excite prejudice among a certain portion of their following. They used it to give color to their claim

that the charter was a "high-brow" affair and hostile to the "poor man." Appeals of this kind to blind class and party feeling undoubtedly had great effect and no doubt deterred hundreds of voters of the type customarily imposed on by the politicians, from giving the charter any open-minded consideration whatever. These voters are now beginning to see their mistake and when the tide turns we believe it will run far and fast our way. The support for the charter by Ex-President Eliot of Harvard is worth noting and, needless to say, was most gratifying to its framers.

The fortunate acceptance of commission charters by voters of Lowell and Lawrence on the same day of the narrow defeat of the Cambridge charter, should not be considered as in any way reflecting on the relative merits of the latter. The far more glaring evils in those two cities—they had become a notorious State-wide scandal in Lawrence—had demonstrated the need of a radical change, while in Cambridge conditions were still such that the cry of "Let well enough alone" could be used effectively. This alone would account for the more prompt acceptance of commission government in those cities than in Cambridge.

Observant Progressives find great encouragement in the fact that a charter of such an advanced democratic type could in the course of nineteen months be brought in a city like Cambridge to a point where a change of 400 votes in a total of over 11,000 cast, would have caused its adoption. The encouragement increases steadily when one considers the line-up of the local press, politicians, and stand-patters the charter had to face; the ease with which the charter could be misrepresented and ridiculed among the uninformed; the fact that there was no public demand whatever for a new charter when it appeared; the fact that the summer vacation habit kept the bulk of the charter support out of town for a large portion of the most valuable part of the campaign season; the fact that all the work of drafting the charter, arranging and addressing meetings, of conducting the compaign, the preparation and issuance of campaign literature, the getting of 1,000 signatures to get the measure on the ballot was entirely the work of a few unpaid unofficial volunteers. The funds for the campaign, some $2,700, were raised by private subscription in response mainly to solicitations by mail, about one hundred and fifty citizens contributing. On the whole, the result for the cause of progress in Cambridge must be regarded as wonderfully good. It means to many of us that Massachusetts is really as "insurgent" as California or Wisconsin—that Massachusetts only awaits the appearance of a leader appealing to the old Massachusetts love of candor, public spirit, dignity and ability, to resume her former place of leadership for freedom and democracy.

Here should be recorded a recognition of the fine public-spirited work for Cambridge of Ex-City Solicitor Nichols of Haverhill, Messrs. James A. O'Keefe, R. F. Bergengren, Charles T. Murray and L. M. Ranger of Lynn, all leaders in the work which established similar new charters in their home cities. These men gave most cheerfully and generously of their time and fine abilities to help us here—in speaking and otherwise—as willing volunteers in support of the common good. Without their help we should have made no such progress.

Other non-residents who rendered us strikingly valuable help are ex-Senator J. W. Bucklin of Grand Junction, Colo., Mayor (then City Solicitor) N. D. Baker of Cleveland, Prof. A. R. Hatton of Western Reserve University (Lecturer on Municipal Government at Harvard last semester), Ex-Mayor Head of Nashville, Tenn., U. S. Senator Owen of Oklahoma, George Fred Williams of Boston, U. S. Senator La Follette, and last but by no means least, Mr. John E. Blair and Commissioners Coates and Fassett of Spokane.

In closing it should, in justice to Senator Bucklin's brilliant work in Grand Junction, be repeated that his preferential system of voting has been a main cause for the enthusiasm and devotion of the most influential leaders and workers for the Cambridge charter—including some of the most experienced political leaders of the State and city,—and interest in it is rapidly developing in neighboring cities and throughout Massachusetts. It appeals at once to the disinterested voter as a simple and attractive means of escape not only in city elections, but in direct primaries and elsewhere, from the distressing choice between the raw plurality system, or the crude and clumsy plan of double elections.

LEWIS J. JOHNSON.

THE SINGLETAX IN SOUTH AFRICA.*

Johannesburg, So. Africa.

Young Lucas, the lawyer, set it going. He is a Singletaxer. Some of his Singletax friends advised him against joining the Labor party here, so far as Singletax is concerned. But he doesn't carry his brains in his boots.

Before Lucas joined the local Labor party, they were bitterly opposed to Singletax. After he joined, his enthusiasm conquered them and they took it as part of their program. The municipal election followed. It came off last October.

As soon as the canvass began, the Singletax part of the Labor party program was seized upon by the Opposition as a vulnerable point for attack. They worked it for all they thought it worth, and so forced it to the front as practically the one issue of the election. Lucas was in his element, and the Labor party, nothing loth, backed him to the finish. The whole town rang with Singletax.

Then the gods helped us further. They tempted the directors of land companies here into making speeches against the Singletax. This was the one thing needed to "tip the beam," and it tipped. When these land monopolists entered the field against us our battle was won.

The result at the election was wonderful. There were 15 Labor party candidates for the City Council and 11 were elected. Of those who lost, one failed by only 4 votes and another by only 14.

As several independents in the Council are pledged to Singletax, there is a clear Singletax majority in that body, and the Council will petition the legislature for powers to put the Singletax in force for

*See The Public of November 17, 1911, page 1170.