

hearts and then seek opportunities in the wilds of new countries, although leagues and leagues of land need them at home.

And lastly it explains why one of the "disemployed," as reported recently in the San Francisco press, footsore and discouraged, ashamed of going home night after night and telling his wife that no work could be found, took a revolver and went out to Golden Gate Park.

ARTHUR H. DODGE.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, AND THE BRITISH ELECTORAL SYSTEM.

London, January 18, 1910.

It would be presumptuous in a foreigner, at this stage of the Parliamentary voting in England, to venture a prediction as to final results; but now that 178 seats out of 670 have been voted for, the current opinion appears to be that the Liberals will return to power with a working majority of their own over the Tories, and with the Labor and the Irish parties (with both of which they have been by the present Parliamentary elections and the preceding circumstances drawn into close relations on the principal issues), an overwhelming majority.

Neither the Liberal majority, nor the majority of Liberal, Labor and Irish in conjunction, will be as large as in the Parliament which was officially dissolved on the 10th; for that was immense. The Liberals had 376, to 157 Tories; and Liberals, Labor and Irish together had 513 to 157. It was a "record majority" as they call it here—due to special and temporary circumstances surrounding the elections of 1906. All expectation of a return of so large a majority at the present elections has been disclaimed by the Liberals throughout the campaign. But they are now claiming a larger majority than they hoped for last week, before the early elections were held.

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For purposes of estimate and prophecy, these early elections are to the British politician what early returns are to the American politician. But with a tremendous difference. Whereas the American can calculate only upon what the other results already recorded may turn out to be when reported, the Briton may calculate upon them in advance of their being cast.

Elections here drag along from the fifth day after election writs are issued, to the fifteenth day or there about. And so it has happened that elections were held in some constituencies on the 15th of January and in others on the 17th. More are to be held today, while the final ones of importance will not come off until the 25th, though many others will intervene.

It is to be said, however, that notwithstanding the opportunities which would be afforded our politicians by such excellent vehicles of advance information as early elections, the early elections do furnish a "probability" clue to the results at the later ones:

So true is it that there is some kind of psychological rhythm to which humanity in the mass responds.

Yet one would hardly look for "probabilities" in the election returns here, whether with reference to results already recorded but not yet known, or to results yet to be secured. The election laws would seem to knock averages into a cocked hat. Some constituencies with 30,000 voters or more, return a solitary member to the House of Commons, while others, with only 5,000 or 10,000 voters or less, may return two or three members. To base probabilities therefore, upon returns of members, without a comparison of the popular vote of the past with that of the present in each district, would seem to be a poor method of calculation. Yet this is the common method, and apparently it works out.

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But questions of calculation and estimate are minor ones with reference to the British election laws. Those laws are an abomination in many ways; and as they invariably tell against the common voter and common rights and in favor of the privileged, the aristocratic classes—through the Tory party—stand in the way of electoral reform just as those classes stood in the way of the reform of the "rotten borough" system eighty years ago, and for similar reasons. Not only are the common voters overwhelmed with heavy Parliamentary representation from small constituencies, where they are as a rule not in the majority, and left in the lurch with light representation from large constituencies, where they are in a majority, but the voting right is hedged in with restrictions which bother the poor but not the rich. In addition there is the absurd and antiquated plural vote. T. P. O'Connor is not far wrong when he says that it is easier for one rich man in this country to cast 20 votes than for 20 poor men to cast 1 vote. The same thing is true, of course, in our own country; but there the employer does it through economic coercion, whereas here it is done by law.

Nominally equal, the registration laws here are in fact unequal. No one can vote unless he is registered by a court of magistrates who pass upon his qualifications. Not infrequently the applicant must be represented by a lawyer, and lawyers in England seldom if ever "volunteer" professional services. To get upon the registry the applicant must prove that he has resided one year in the particular constituency where he wants to vote, and they are numbered by the hundred and are near together. As his application can be made only at a stated sitting of the court, which may be months after his year's residence is complete, he may actually have to reside in the constituency fifteen or twenty months or longer before he gets upon the voting list. Meanwhile, between the completion of his year's residence and his registration, an election may intervene. For elections here are not at set times as with us. They come off whenever Parliament happens to dissolve, and may occur a couple of months apart, or a couple of years apart, or seven years apart, and at any time of the year. With such a registration law it is evident that the "latch-key vote" (roomers whose rooms are worth \$50 a year or more, unfurnished), and the householder vote (tenants whose holdings are worth \$50 a year or more), must be disfran-

chised in large numbers. On the other hand, men of easy fortune, well known and well-fixed in the several constituencies in which they own or rent real estate, are put upon the voting list in all those constituencies almost as matter of course, without trouble and without expense. Would it be strange if one rich voter could get 20 votes easier than 20 poor ones get one?

Those facts about the voting franchise are especially important at elections in which, like the present ones, the privileges of the privileged classes are drawn in question. They give so great an advantage to the privileged that one wonders how the progressive elements can make any headway at the ballot box. Probably they could make none, if it were not for the co-operation in leadership and campaigning of men who, big enough to rise above their accidents of birth and fortune, raise the flag of common rights and moral principle in place of the ensign of privilege.

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This co-operation of all the progressives is especially notable in these elections, and altogether encouraging. The Labor party was unable to carry it out on their part as completely as could have been desired, owing to local stubbornness here and there and to the pertinacity of the impossibilist element among Socialists. Consequently several constituencies which normally belong to the Liberals by moderate majorities, and where the Liberals are stronger than the Labors, are contested by Labor candidates. The resulting three cornered fights have already given some of these, and will doubtless give some more, to the party of Privilege, against the Progressives of the other three parties—Liberal, Irish and Labor—by sending to the House of Commons a partisan of modern protectionism and ancient feudalism.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman is distinctly responsible for one of these results. But Ben Tillett, who has faced two three-cornered contests has fortunately failed to help out the House of Lords by his narrow partisanship as Mr. Hyndman, to the extent of one member of the Commons they are not entitled to by the sentiment of the constituency, has helped out by his.

The fairness and good faith of the Liberals in avoiding triangular contests has been in gratifying contrast with the course of impossibilists in British socialism. They have yielded some of their own best men to bring all the progressive forces together. In Manchester, for instance, one of the best political organizers in Great Britain, a single tax Liberal as we might call him, who had long been regarded as a candidate for one of the constituencies, withdrew in favor of the Labor candidate rather than make a three-cornered fight. The local Labor party were as public spirited, for they withdrew their candidate in another Manchester district. Both districts were consequently carried—one for a progressive Liberal and the other for the Labor candidate in whose favor Mr. Zimmermann (the single tax Liberal) had withdrawn.

To what extent Socialists have "scratched" Liberal candidates where there was no socialist candidate, and whig Liberals have scratched Labor candidates where there was no Liberal, it is of course impossible to say. We only know that in the districts where triangular contests were avoided by pre-ar-

angement, the Labor leaders and speakers have worked for the Liberal and the Liberal leaders and speakers have worked for the Labor.

In Halifax, for instance, where the election occurred on the 15th, there is a double-headed constituency; that is, the borough elects two members by general vote. It is a Liberal and a Labor town; but a split among the progressives would have jeopardized both seats, and an arrangement was made under which the Liberals and the Labors each made only one nomination. In a scrutiny of the vote, the only evidence of lack of co-operation was, on one side, 20 ballots marked "socialism," and thereby "spoiled," indicating socialist impossibilism, and a falling of the Labor candidate behind the Liberal by about 400 votes, indicating Liberal whiggism.

The campaign, however, while separately made, was co-operative in spirit. The leaders and speakers on both sides—Labor and Liberal—advised and urged their followers to vote for both candidates; and both were elected by majorities exceeding that of the record vote of 1906. The feeling between progressive Liberals and progressive Labors in Halifax is reciprocally friendly, and this election is likely to enhance that co-operative sentiment.

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The Halifax Liberal who was re-elected along with the Halifax Labor candidate, is J. H. Whitley.* He is second Liberal "whip" in the House of Commons.

"Whips" are those officials of a party whose duty it is to keep the members of their party in the House informed as to when their attendance is desired. If a member wishes to be away, he gets permission of the "whip;" if his vote is needed the party "whip" warns him. If a "division" is to occur and every vote is needed either to make a majority or to make a showing, the "whip" whips up the members and gets them into the voting lobby. Of course a "division" is simply a vote, but here, instead of being got by roll call or "ayes" and "noes," it is got by turning the "ayes" out of the chamber and into one lobby and the "noes" out of the chamber and into another lobby. As they withdraw they are counted by the "whips" on each side.

Mr. Whitley has been one of these "whips" of the Liberals, and owing to his prominent position in the party the yellow press (protectionist) assailed him viciously and without warrant. This attack excited great indignation in Halifax, and although Mr. Whitley was in Italy with his sick wife throughout the campaign, his neighbors piled up an increased vote for him.

Single tax readers of *The Public* will be interested to know that Mr. Whitley is what we call a single taxer or disciple of Henry George; and that it is his devotion to that cause, and this motive alone, that has brought him into politics and keeps him there.

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It was in Mr. Whitley's town, Halifax, that I personally observed the British method of conducting elections. Through the courtesy of C. H. Smithson, a town councillor who, like Mr. Whitley, is in politics only because of his devotion to the cause that Henry George set agoing, and who was elected to the Council last summer unopposed because the sitting mem-

*Election noted in *Public*, January 21, p. 58.

ber withdrew from the contest when Mr. Smithson entered it, I was shown the entire machinery in actual operation, part of which is visible only as matter of favor.

The preliminary work is highly systematic. The Liberal party (for instance, for it is the same with all) holds one ward meeting a year. It is a mass meeting, and everybody attending may participate provided he declares his affiliation with the party. These meetings elect what we should call the central committee, consisting of leaders and workers, and numbering for Halifax nearly 500. It is called "the Four Hundred."

Under salaried employment by the committee is an "agent," who is charged with responsibility for all the executive work of the party, and who must be an acute politician and a thorough specialist in the complicated and highly technical election laws.

As an example of the technical character of these laws, the use of a hired vehicle to take voters to or from the polls is illegal, although owners may lend their vehicles freely; and the carrying of one voter in a hired vehicle to or from the polls, however innocently done (as if the worker using the vehicle honestly and reasonably thought it there as a loan from the owner and not on hire), would nullify, not only the one vote nor even the whole vote of the ward, but the entire election in that city.

Coming back to the party "agent," one of his duties is to have the registry list canvassed by volunteer workers, to get "promises" of votes for the Liberal candidates. The workers get the names and addresses on cards, on which they report, a "promise" if they get it, or "doubtful," or other appropriate remark if the "promise" is refused. As a rule no attention is thereafter paid to any but those who "promise"; but the cards identifying these "promises" are so pigeon-holed as to show, by card index and instantly upon reference at any minute up to the closing of the poll, just who among them has not voted.

All the paraphernalia of the workers is kept in an open room in the ward club house of the party, and there nearly all the workers are assembled. Some workers are stationed outside of the poll not far away, and these send messages to the club house announcing the name of each voter as he votes. At the club house the whole printed registry list is conveniently arranged for reference, and as reports of voters having voted come in a red line is drawn across the name. Then the pigeon hole of promises is searched for that name. If a card bearing it be found there, this voter is of no further present interest to the worker and they destroy the card.

Constantly during the day the remaining "promise" cards are now and then examined, and if some "promiser" appears to be slow his card is turned over to an election day worker, often a woman, who calls upon the voter and reports on the card whatever the fact may be regarding him: He has gone to the poll, he went to the poll long ago, he will go at such an hour, he refuses to go unless motored, he is too feeble to walk, etc., etc. According to these reports further action is taken; and as before, whenever the man is reported as having voted, his card is destroyed. Toward the end of the day, the pigeon holes of "promise" cards are pretty well emptied, but if any are left a hustle is made for the dilatory voters.

How well this method works may be inferred from the fact that out of a total voting population of 15,000 in Halifax, the Liberals had 9,419 "promises" and their candidate, Mr. Whitley, polled 9,504 votes. The extra votes were probably from "doubtfuls," who for business reasons did not wish to have their votes identified.

While that work is going on openly and busily in the party club of the ward—and in Halifax the Liberal party has a fine club house of its own, with billiard hall and table, skating rink, committee rooms, assembly rooms, etc., in every ward—the voting is taking place in a "board" school room.

The "board" school in England is our "public" school, the "public" school here being a pay school not restricted to children of the upper classes.

In one of the large rooms of the school house, the entire voting for that ward is done. But not with one ballot box nor one set of booths. Several tables appear, with a ballot box on each, and ten feet or so in front of it a row of uncurtained booths. There are as many of these tables as there are arbitrary divisions of the ward with reference to number of voters. About 500 voters are assigned to each of the divisions, and when a voter appears he is asked where he lives and is conducted to the table for that division.

Here he gets a ballot, torn from a perforated book of ballots, and carries it into one of the booths in front of the table. As he marks his ballot in the booth his whole back is exposed, and not merely his legs or none of him as with us.

Our voters would not think that this was secret. The Englishman does, and he is probably right.

Having marked his ballot, a sheet about four or five inches by three or four, he folds it and returns it to the clerk at the table, who puts it into the ballot box.

There is no glass about the ballot box here, as with us. It is a japanned tin box with a slit in the top and resembles a large bread box for the pantry.

At 8 o'clock in the evening, after 14 hours, the polls are closed, and the ballot box is carried to the town hall. This is Halifax, however, where the voting is at large. In a division I suppose it would be carried to a convenient official point, but the proceeding would be the same.

At the town hall, the number of ballots is first ascertained to correspond with the number of electors who have voted. This is the only opportunity for scrutinizing the ballots unfairly, and it is availed of. In agricultural regions the landlords' agent watches closely, for the officials may turn the ballots face up if they choose. In that way the landlord gets to know how many anti-Tory votes are recorded in his little voting place, and the rest may be matter of guess work and shrewd questioning, but the tenant or farm hand who falls under suspicion is likely to have a "rocky" time.

Having verified the number of ballots in each box, the officials dump all the boxes upon a table, throwing the ballots for the entire constituency into one heap indiscriminately. All possibility of distinguishing one from another then disappears; but wouldn't it make the mouth of any of our ward "heelers" water to see such a chance for "counting in" or "counting out" go to waste?

Other features of the British elections would make

our experts water at the mouth, but there is a sort of automatic honesty in politics over here (within conventional limits) which the American manipulator of elections could no more understand than the average Englishman can understand our automatic dishonesty in such matters.

When the great pile of ballots are counted—there were nearly 15,000 in Halifax, but there were only four names on each and in many places there are only two—the result is officially proclaimed, and the telegraph does the rest.

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It has been my good fortune to fall in with Henry George, Jr., over here and to campaign with him, upon the earnest requisition of Liberal managers and in spite of our protests that there would be danger in bringing forward foreigners when war scares and protection humbug were being exploited by the other side. But there seems to be no such prejudice against foreigners over here. The audiences really did seem to wish to hear what we had to say about the United States as a protected country.

For the protectionists here have been asserting that wages in the United States are high and there is no unemployment there among them. This protection red herring is probably the only thing that has prevented a Liberal sweep like that of four years ago. Working men of narrow insular experience, have been caught up with the false statements that protection makes high wages, cheap food, cheap rent, steady employment, and no foreigner can take his job away. Workingmen who have been to the United States and Germany know better; but they cannot get the ear of all the rest.

It was upon these points, therefore, that Mr. George and I dwelt,—plus considerable emphasis on the land question, since all the meetings were joyfully singing, "God made the land for the people," to the air of "Marching Through Georgia."

Our first meeting was at Newcastle-under-Lyme, (near Stoke-on-Trent) where Josiah C. Wedgwood, one of the Liberal government's best supporters in the last House on the Budget, was running for re-election. We had an audience of close to 2,500, packed solid in the town hall, with no aisles except at the sides, and they and the door-ways and corridors were crowded with standers.

Whoever imagines that an English audience is stolid let him charge it up to the fact that he has had nothing to tell them that they cared to hear. More enthusiastic audiences I have never seen—not enthusiastic merely for a candidate's name, nor in the "whooperup" style, nothing like applauding and cheering to see how long you can do it,—but hearty and intelligent appreciation of points in controversy. They are "hair trigger" audiences.

At Tunstall, in the same constituency (Tunstall the birthplace of primitive Methodism) I spoke at a similar meeting which Mr. George's engagements prevented his attending. There were about 1,500 there, but this was because the hall was much smaller, for our overflow meeting crowded another hall with 1,000 more.

When I came into the overflow meeting, Mr. Wedgwood was making to an intensely interested audience a simple exposition of the land question. Its character may be inferred from the fact that he is a thorough going disciple of Henry George, and has

been for many years. This is his reason, too, for being in politics. Descendant of a great Radical, he is himself a Radical—a democratic Liberal. The original Josiah Wedgwood, founder of the Wedgwood potteries, friend of Priestley and Franklin, and radical to the core, is four removes back from this Liberal leader. The latter is the great great grandson of that original potter in whose establishment he has inherited an interest, where he is also a manager, and whose democracy as well as an interest in the potteries he has inherited. Mr. Wedgwood was re-elected by 5,613 to 4,245.* The constituency went Tory in 1900 by 3,750 to 3,658, and Wedgwood carried it in 1906, the "record" year, by 5,155 to 2,948.

Another place in which Mr. George and I have spoken together was Halifax, and we are about to leave for Stockport in England and Glasgow in Scotland, where we are to keep several speaking engagements.

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As the returns came in from the first day's pollings on Saturday night, they indicated some falling off from the vote of 1906, and notwithstanding the known impossibility of getting so great a result, they had an unmistakably dampening effect. But consideration of the localities modified this, for most if not all the changes back to Tory were in constituencies that were Tory normally. This reviving influence was justified by the returns of Monday's pollings.

The number of constituencies in which elections were held on Saturday, January 15, the first polling day, was 12 in London and 54 outside. Some had two seats. The Liberals had expected a crushing defeat in London, which in politics is largely of the penniless plute cockney type, but they saved 9 seats out of the 12. The net result of the two days, including unopposed seats and doublets (unopposed seats being those for which no contestant appears within the statutory time and which are therefore awarded to the only candidate, without an election) was as follows:

	Liberal	Tory	Labor	Irish	Gain	Loss
Jan. 15.....	37	43	6	5	Liberal, 3 Labor, 2 Tory, 18 Irish, 0	Liberal, 18 Labor, 2 Tory, 3 Irish, 0
Jan. 17.....	42	49	8	8	Liberal, 5 Labor, 1 Tory, 19	Liberal, 16 Labor, 4 Tory, 5
Totals.....	79	92	14	13	Liberal, 8 Labor, 3 Tory, 37	Liberal, 34 Labor, 6 Tory, 8

Some explanation of these changes may be of interest.

At Burnley on the 15th there were three candidates for one seat—Tory, Labor and Socialist, the latter being Mr. Hyndman. Following was the vote:

Arbuthnot (Tory)	5,776
Maddison (Lab.)	5,681
Hyndman (Soc.)	4,948

Tory plurality

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In 1906, the Labor plurality was 324, the vote being 5,288 Labor, 4,964 Tory, and 4,932 Socialist.

At Derby, on the 15th, where two seats were contested, the Liberals won one without Labor opposi-

*Election noted in Public of January 21, page 58.

tion by 10,343, and the Labor candidate won the other without Liberal opposition by 10,189; the Tory candidates received respectively 8,038 and 7,953.

In one Division of Manchester on the 15th the Tory won by a plurality of 107 in a triangular contest in which the Tory got 3,111, the Liberal 3,004, and the Labor only 1,218, thereby changing the representation in the House of Commons from anti-Lords to Lords. In another division of Manchester the Liberals did not oppose the Labor candidates, and he was elected, taking a Liberal seat but counting against the Lords as before.

At Shoreditch on the 17th the Liberal was elected to a Tory seat by 3,041 to 2,585 for the Tory and 701 for a Socialist, although the Tory had carried the seat at a by election two years ago by 2,867 to 1,724 for the Liberal and 986 for the Socialist.

At Blackburn on the 17th a Liberal and a Labor—the latter being Philip Snowden—were elected by 12,065 and 11,896 respectively, to 9,307 and 9,111 for the Tories, there being no Socialist opposition to the Liberal and no Liberal opposition to Snowden. These two seats were Tory and Labor (the latter being Snowden) in the last Parliament.

A triangular contest at Gateshead was won by the Liberal by 6,800, to 6,323 for the Tory, and 3,572 for the Labor. The seat had been held in the last Parliament by Labor because the Liberals did not contest the Labors. On the same day at Portsmouth two progressive seats were lost in a triangular contest though not for that reason. The Tories got 16,777 and 15,592 respectively, to 12,397 for one Liberal, 9,965 for another and 3,529 for Labor.

A Labor gain at Wigan was due to the Liberals making no contest and giving the Labor candidate their vote. The vote was Labor 4,803 and Tory 4,293.

The only Wales (the country of Lloyd-George) constituency that has voted yet, Swansea Town, gives the Liberal 6,020 to 5,535 in 1906, the Tory 4,375 to 4,081 in 1906, and Labor (Ben Tillett) 1,451.

L. F. P.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

THE ALASKA COAL LANDS.

Concord, N. H., January 26, 1910.

Why at this time cannot a popular movement of such magnitude be organized that the United States government will neither lease nor sell its priceless coal fields in Alaska but will retain them entire to be ultimately worked by the nation for the equal benefit of the whole people? No other method of conservation as applied to them conserves. Coal is being rapidly exhausted; its value is certain to rise by leaps as the supply diminishes; the methods of private mining are cruelly and criminally wasteful, utterly neglectful of the next and after generations; nothing is gained by parting with these rich deposits, while the tragic popular loss from the operation is that it will pass over more power to the rich who are already more than threatening the nation's life. If these lands are retained by the people the popular gain through the act will not be merely the huge wealth which they contain, but will be the power

conferred by their possession to curb the piratical plans of other combines.

Now is the time to act. To-day's Washington (D. C.) dispatches state: "John E. Ballaine of Seattle, said to be the largest individual property owner in Alaska, to-day made a proposition in writing to the Senate Committee of Territories, of which Senator Beveridge of Indiana is chairman, offering to the government a royalty of 50 cents a ton for coal mined, for the lease of 5,000 acres of some of the choicest coal lands in Alaska, in the Katalla and Matanuska districts. Such a tonnage-royalty would net to the government, Mr. Ballaine claimed, as much as \$2,000,000 per 100 acres." Why should not the people have not only this sum but the tremendous additional amount that Mr. Ballaine will place in his pockets in excess of it?

Another proposition from the old line capitalists who want to get everything for absolutely nothing, is "embodied in a bill which has been prepared, but not yet introduced, designed to permit the sale or lease of such lands at a rate of \$10 per acre."

Can something be done? By acting quickly these people's possessions can be saved from alienation by Congress, and if not saved such a protest can be registered as will amount to a popular referendum rendering their cession to private parties on any terms morally void and making them recoverable by the next Congress. Senator Beveridge is standing with the people and showers of private letters and signed petitions sent to him will have their effect. The same work done to every man's congressman and senators will increase that effect, while clubs, meetings and papers taking the matter up can spread the agitation far.

We have reached the psychological moment, for this private monopoly of public resources is a vital factor in the high prices of necessaries against which the people are revolting in their great meat boycott. And let us not forget the lessons of the last coal strike, the hardships of the miners disclosed, the greedy inhumanity of the coal barons, the sufferings of the people for want of fuel, and the powerlessness of the whole nation and its government to do anything against those mighty lords of coal. All would have been changed if there had been mines publicly owned ready for use. The same situation will recur—should we not be prepared? We have such mines in Alaska, let the people issue their mandate to keep them.

MORRISON I. SWIFT.

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When wilt thou save the people?

O God of mercy! when?

Not kings and lords, but nations!

Not thrones and crowns, but men!

—The Corn-law Rhymer.

* * *

Twenty thousand thieves landed at Hastings. These founders of the House of Lords were greedy and ferocious dragoons, sons of greedy and ferocious pirates. Such, however, is the illusion of antiquity and wealth, that decent and dignified men now existing, actually boast their descent from these filthy thieves.—Ralph Waldo Emerson, in "English Traits."