

as the Scotch term is for the thing smaller than a village or hamlet—just half a dozen scattered houses and an old wooden church. The country people were standing at their doors, and for once the "man with the hoe" lifted his head to apprehend something of the nature mystery about him. An old woman with a hard face seemed transfixed as she stood gazing upward at the sun—reclaiming her birth-right.

To the unskilled observer, peering through smoked glass, the first sign of the unusual phenomenon appeared in the sun's upper right-hand corner, if the term is allowable in reference to a circle. Here the perfect circle of the sun's disc seemed to have been eaten into as if by some celestial caterpillar. After this process had gone on for some 40 minutes there was an appreciable change in the daylight. There was a softness, and even now a certain strangeness in the quality of it—prelude of the weird darkness to follow.

Now the sun appears like a crescent, with horns sharp and clear. Presently, as the eclipse proceeds, the horns are blunted. Finally they disappear till only an exclamation mark of light is left.

Now the birds seek the trees with apprehensive twitterings, shadows fall and the morning night is upon us—a Goetterdaemmerung, a twilight of the gods indeed. Suddenly by some majestic legerdemain the sun is the sun no longer—blotted out! But to the north and south of the inky disc feathery streamers of light, most beautiful to behold.

Not far from the sun shone one bright star, and in other parts of the firmament others came out, glinting red and blue and gold. Away on the northern horizon gleams of yellow light like early dawn. Over all a mysterious stillness and a chill as of night air.

Once more, suddenly and far too soon, the sunbeams danced over the green grass and through the leaves; not indeed making the customary "little suns," but dearest "little crescents." One smiled as he saw them. They were the humorous fanciful side of the affair—God's playthings!

And humanity, what happened to it? All were touched, and for brief seconds men and women were themselves, while the children gave up to joy quite naturally as they always do when they are pleased. Of the "grown-ups" some were merry and some were grave; but that the marvelous beauty of the spectacle had opened eyes that see not there could be no question.

And now it is day once more. Earth "has resumed her reign." But the memory of the event will be deeply graven on many souls.

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THE FARCE OF DEMOCRACY.

For The Public.

Fletcher, of Saltoun, a celebrated Scotchman, once said that if he only had the ballads of a nation, he did not care who made the laws. For ballads in those days led to insurrections, and insurrections overcame laws, so that whoever could command the political spell that stirred the national feeling, held the key of the situation. We, however, live in duller times. Either we are not to be moved by ballads, or there are no ballads to move us with. Stand, therefore, the laws where they did. But it will be found that almost all insurrections and wars, when stripped of the heroic glamour with which enthusiastic partisanship has invested them, had, for object and result, the transfer of real estate from one set of hands to another. That was the material fact that underlay the clash of opposing sentiments. The field belonged to those who won it, and the cessation of warfare left their descendants in undisputed possession. The modern version of old Fletcher's saying should, therefore, read: "Give us the land, and let who will make the laws."

Property implies exclusion, except as regards the individual who owns it. The idea of property shuts out the law itself. The more things are private property, the more contracted is the sphere of the law. To say, therefore, that in a particular country the people make the laws is not to give any definite idea of the real power of the people, unless we know how much of all that goes to make up rational comfort and happiness is excluded from the operation of these laws. Now if we apply this test to the case of the United States we shall find that private ownership covers not only the land of the country, but nearly all the industries which minister to human convenience and comfort, that, in fact, as regards the supply of nearly all the necessities of life, it is not law or public opinion that rules, but the humors and caprices of a small number of individual men. It is for such men as J. W. Gates and Andrew Carnegie to say in what quantities, at what times, and at what prices the American people shall have the necessities of life, for can they not do what they like with their own? If this be so—if so much of American life

be reserved for the sway of capitalist despotism, how much of it remains over for democracy to control? And when the answer to that question has been obtained, we must still make a large allowance for the extent to which the votes of senators and instruments of government are, equally with land, coal and petroleum, the property of organized capitalists.

If we look all those facts squarely in the face, is it not time to ask to what end should the people of the United States go periodically through the ordeal of electing men to send to Washington? The real owners of the United States have already determined, according to their commercial code, in what degree of comfort the people shall live, and how much they shall pay, and the only questions left over for congress to adjust are in what kind of currency the tribute shall be paid, what shall be the design and color of its instruments, and matters of like importance. Is it worth while that the nation should every few years work itself into a fit of fury to determine what particular individuals shall be sent to perform these minor offices and formal acts of government—to pick up, so to speak, the few crumbs of legislation which remain after capitalism has dined? It is no doubt pleasant and self-satisfying to think that we are legislating, when we are being legislated for, just as it is pleasant to feel that we are swimming, when we are only drifting, and that we are leading the horse, when we are only dragging the halter. It is pleasant to see a president act as a conjurer, pouring out of the same bottle wine for the Americans, water for the Porto Ricans and vinegar for the Filipinos. All this is very interesting, no doubt. But it is not government by the people, for the people. It is plutocracy, thinly disguised with democratic varnish.

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HOW FIGURES LIE.

"I do not believe in theories; I believe in facts and figures," says the practical man. Here is an individual who can be made to believe anything. Suppose he should say: "I do not believe in logical processes that lead to conclusions, but I do believe in facts that may be misrepresented and figures that can be juggled," you would say: "The man is a fool." And he is.

Let this individual open part three of the census of 1890. He will find that there are 79,032 more married males in the United States than married females! As the widowed are separately