

ties when they discovered that they had caught a rich woman in the net they had spread for a poor one (p. 1133), was a revelation to many an honest-minded woman of wealth. It has had the effect, too, of intensifying the equal suffrage movement by lifting it high above the level of a feminine fad and making it an obvious civic necessity.

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The importance of the direct influence of women in civic affairs could not have been better demonstrated than it has been in the course of that shirt-waist makers' strike. Not only has this strike exposed the police authorities as in collusion with employers who, because "business is business," mercilessly degrade working women, but its police court incidents have exposed the inhumanity that prevails in those "poor man's" courts—a wretched inhumanity of which well-to-do men have long been cognizant but of which well-to-do women have until now been decently—oh, so very decently—ignorant.

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One of the notable occurrences of the strike in this respect is the awful revelation it has made to Mrs. Belmont, to say nothing of the agreeable revelation it is making of her. Interested in the cause of overworked and underpaid and police-hounded working girls in this strike, Mrs. Belmont went to a police court between night and dawn to become bail for such working girls as had been arrested for "picketing," and there, while waiting six hours for the hopper to grind out its grist of misery, she saw sights that may well have made her blood run cold with horror and hot with indignation. This is what she has said about it:

During the six hours spent in that police court I saw enough to convince me and all who were with me beyond the smallest doubt of the absolute necessity for woman's suffrage—for the direct influence of women over judges, jury and policemen, over everything and everybody connected with the so-called courts of justice. A hundredfold was it impressed upon me in the cases of the women of the streets who were brought before the judge. Every woman who sits complacently amidst the comforts of her home, or who moves with perfect freedom and independence in her own protected social circle, and says, "I have all the rights I want," should spend one night in the Jefferson Market court. She would then know that there are other women who have no rights which man or law or society recognizes. The necessary publicity cannot be obtained through the newspapers. They do not find it profitable to give space to experiences affecting the strata of society to which the majority of the people who come here belong. There can be no doubt that our police courts are a disgrace to the city. It is the

duty of the women to take up this burden, as well as it is the duty of the men to permit the women to share such responsibilities. The men of this country have become so absorbed with business matters and money-getting that they have permitted the social laws to drift into a state that will, sooner or later, become intolerable. The entire social structure is wrong from the foundation.

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Another woman of the privileged classes whose sympathies have been aroused through the shirt-waist makers' strike is Anne Morgan, a daughter of Pierpont Morgan. What she is reported as saying and doing since her awakening to the misery in the midst of which she lives in luxury is indicative of a serious purpose, which cannot as a rule but be questioned when the rich set out to help the working poor. Her interest is apparently not of the charity-ball order. Charity ball sympathizers with the working poor do not become strike leaders, as both Miss Morgan and Mrs. Belmont have done. This is the hopeful sign for them. From that point of vantage they must soon begin to ask why it is that manufacturers fight their employes over pitiful questions of wages—not merely the superficial why, but the profound why,—and when that question challenges them, the seriousness of their purpose will be put to a supreme test.

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Charity Balls.

Dancing luxuriously for the relief through our alms of those we impoverish by our privileges, may be an agreeable kind of penance; but isn't it somewhat suggestive of those follies of the predatory rich of France which provoked the excesses of the Revolution?

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Maintaining International Peace.

In a certain church organ we read that "it stands to reason that we cannot tolerate forever these disturbances in Uncle Sam's back yard," referring to the disturbances in Nicaragua. But when did the Central American countries become our "back yard?" Is Canada our front yard?

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BRITISH DEMOCRACY.

Americans are given to boasting of the superiority of our form of government. Yet it is in fact inferior to the British form, in all the essentials of a mechanism for government by the people.

They do have a life tenure king in Great Britain, but he is shorn of all monarchic power. Even the executive veto upon legislation, which

our Presidents frequently use, has been driven into such complete disuse in Great Britain that no king could revive it. The King of Great Britain is hardly more than a personage in whose name the representatives of the people administer their affairs themselves.

They also have a House of Lords in Great Britain, which is composed for the most part of persons who inherit their seats and represent aristocracy, and which controls the legislation of Parliament to a limited extent. But in a democratic sense is this any worse except in name than our Senate, which is composed for the most part of persons who buy their seats and represent plutocracy, and which controls the legislation of Congress to an unlimited extent?

And consider the strengthening of popular government which results from the absence of a bench of judges with a veto power upon legislation. Great Britain has that advantage and we haven't. When the people command with us, even though they elect Congressmen and Senators who formulate their mandate into law, and a President who approves it, there is a Supreme Court composed of nine judges appointed by a by-gone President, which sits above all—President, Congress and people—with power to veto the popular mandate. This is because we have a written Constitution. Upon the theory of adjudicating private rights under this highest law, our Supreme Court has practically usurped the function of putting a veto upon political policies. Without amending their Constitution, the people of the United States cannot legislate for themselves if the Supreme Court says "Veto!" The British system is free of any such anomaly. The British Constitution is no written document, but an unwritten custom grounded in and amendable by public opinion. Parliament, the legislative organ of public opinion, is supreme.

Nor is the supremacy of Parliament absolute. It is continually dependent upon popular support. The responsibility of its members to the people awaits no expiration of official terms. So automatic is the whole Parliamentary system that any pronounced deviation by the majority of the Commons from public opinion on a public policy almost inevitably brings about a governmental situation which necessitates immediate dissolution. And when dissolution comes, the elections follow immediately, so that the new House of Commons, which organizes immediately, springs at once out of the heart of public opinion. Its members come together charged with a specific popular mandate.

Little wonder is it then, that the "initiative,"

the "referendum" and the "recall" are not especially welcome in Great Britain. In the necessity which forces Parliaments to go directly and promptly to the people on every important issue, some of the best possibilities of "direct legislation" are already served; and as to the "recall," all subordinate offices are professions, uninfluenced by changes of political parties, and all responsible officers are "recalled" when Parliament dissolves.

It is no mere sentiment of "mud" patriotism that makes the Englishman, the Canadian and the Australian prefer their form of government to ours. It is because theirs is so much more directly and immediately responsible to the people.

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At this moment the people of Great Britain are in the midst of a revolution (p. 1181) which puts the superiority of their form of government to a supreme test.

In this country any contest of similar moment and magnitude with reference to the relations of the people to their government, would be hopelessly hampered by all sorts of obstructions, serving no use in the scheme of popular government to which our orators so proudly profess allegiance.

We should have to elect to the lower House of Congress a majority favorable to the popular purpose. If we did not at the same time also elect a favorable President, our new Congress would be unable to meet for thirteen months after the election; and if we did elect a favorable President to call them together in special session, neither the President nor the Congress could get down to work in less than four months after the election. Meanwhile the adversaries of the popular mandate would have absolute power to perpetuate the old regime. Even then their power would continue unless a favorable majority in the Senate had been secured, which would by no means be likely. If President, Senate and lower House were secured, all at the same time—which would probably result only after several elections, at each of which all the obstructive and discouraging influences that the beneficiaries of vested interests command would be busy—the resulting law would still be at the mercy of a Supreme Court composed in all probability of friends of the old regime.

To avoid the latter snag, a Constitutional amendment would be necessary, and this would require practical impossibilities if it were opposed as it undoubtedly would be.

Observe the requirements for a Constitutional amendment: (1) Two-thirds of House and of Senate may propose amendments, or

(2) the legislatures of two-thirds of the States may call a convention for proposing amendments; but amendments proposed in either way would not be valid until they had been subsequently ratified by legislatures or conventions of three-fourths of the States.

No better scheme could be devised for centralizing absolute control of government in the hands of a privileged class. Given to a few a sufficient pecuniary or class interest to put them on the defensive, and under our form of government the little finger of those few is stronger than the loins of the people.

That no such indefensible obstructions to popular sovereignty are possible under the British constitution may be readily seen from a consideration of the political struggle already referred to as now in progress over there.

The Liberal party was in the majority in the House of Commons. They formulated a plan for raising public revenues, which the House of Lords refused to approve. Immediately upon this refusal the leaders of the majority in the Commons asked the King to dissolve Parliament and call elections, so that the people might pass judgment on the questions at issue by the election of a new House of Commons. If the King had not wished to do this, he would nevertheless have been compelled to; for the present majority would not authorize the collection of any revenue for the government except under the Budget bill which the House of Lords refused to sanction. All this culminated in the last days of November, and before January is gone it will have been settled by the vote of the people, at elections in every Parliamentary district in Great Britain.

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And what of the outcome? If the Liberals are defeated so badly that the reactionaries in the Commons are in a majority over the Liberal and the Irish and the Labor parties, when the new Parliament assembles in the latter days of January, the probabilities are that taxes will be imposed upon the food of the people instead of the land values of the aristocracy and the plutocracy.

If the majority of the three parties against the reactionaries should be small, no one can possibly predict the outcome. The only prediction reasonably certain in that case is that the new Parliament would not last long. But the ultimate result might be either more progressive or more reactionary, and no one can foretell which.

If, however, the Liberals come back with a decisive majority, it may be predicted safely, not only

that the Budget will be insisted upon, but that the House of Lords will be constrained to acknowledge by formal statute that any measure passed by the Commons and vetoed by the Lords, shall be law if the Commons passes it a second time. In other words, the common purpose of the three progressive parties of Great Britain now contesting the elections there—Liberal, Irish, and Labor—is to substitute a suspensory for the plenary veto, as the sole legislative function of the House of Lords. The House of Lords might thereafter advise on legislation, but its power to defy the popular and responsible legislative chamber would be at an end.

Of course a future House of Commons might repeal this act, but no majority would dare do it unless elected for that express purpose.

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How could this abrogation of the legislative powers of the House of Lords be accomplished against their will? The explanation is written in British history. It is another and may be a long-story.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE BRITISH FIGHT FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION.

Birkenhead, England, December 9.

The long-looked-for day is drawing near when the landless peoples of the British Isles will engage in a stand-up fight with the land-grabbers in the House of Lords.

In 1904, in a Tory House of Commons, a bill for the taxation of land values was carried on second reading by a majority of 67. As the measure was promoted in Parliament by a private member, it was impossible to proceed further without adoption of the measure by the Government. We had to begin again.

In 1905 the second reading was again carried—this time by a majority of 90—but it was blocked once more.

Then came the general election, and a sweeping victory for the Liberal party. The bill was again introduced by a private member, supported as before by municipalities to the number of 600, and was carried on second reading by a majority of 258 in a House of 380 members. This was on March 23, 1906.

The Liberal Government then adopted the measure, and on April 24, 1906, sent it to a select committee of fifteen, with Alexander Ure as chairman. On December 13, 1906, this committee recommended that (1) the bill referred to the committee be not further proceeded with, but (2) that a measure be introduced making provision for a valuation of land in the burghs and counties of Scotland, apart from the buildings and improvements upon it, and that no as-