claring his office vacant and electing a successor. Direct legislation and the recall are features of the charter of Los Angeles, and the latter has been successfully tried—the first time in the United States if not in the world. A member of the City Council having been accused of grafting (vol. vii, p. 412), a petition for his recall was signed by the requisite number of voters and at the election he was ousted from office and a successor chosen. This case was taken to the Supreme Court of the State, which decided early in June last in favor of the grafter; and great pains were taken to notify the newspaper readers of the country that the court had held the recall to be an unconstitutional device. This proved to be a false statement. The court had not passed upon the constitutionality of the device at all. Its decision rested upon a technical defect in the recall petition. But in less than a month thereafter a judge at San Diego walked boldly in where his superior judges had feared to tread, and decided offhand that the direct legislation and recall clause of the San Diego charter (vol. vii, p. 713) is unconstitutional.

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This San Diego precedent is interesting, though neither authoritiative nor respectable. It was made without the aid of forensic argument or any appearance of judicial consideration, by Judge Torrance, who is said to have been once impeached and to have been saved from conviction by corporation influence. A petition had been filed calling for a special election to vote upon the establishment of the grade of a particular street. The city authorities refused to call the election, on the ground that the direct legislation clause of the charter applied only to matters of general municipal interest, and also because legislation as to streets was otherwise provided for in the charter. A mandamus was thereupon applied for, and to the petition for this writ the city authorities demurred. When the demurrer came up for argument before Judge Torrance, neither side argued on the constitutionality of the law. As the local newspaper report has it, "neither seemed to care to argue that the referendum clause was good law," but "one seemed to argue that whether it was good law or not it did not apply to the case in court, while the other contended that if it was good law in any case, it was in the one under consideration." It will be observed, therefore, that the constitutionality of the referendum was not argued at all. Probably both parties wished it killed. Possibly the proceedings in question, in no wise calculated to arouse general public interest, were instituted for that very purpose. At any rate Judge Torrance went out of his way to sustain the demurrer for constitutional reasons, notwithstanding that the question of constitutionality had not been raised. He said he had given the subject much consideration. But this must have been as a hostile partisan and not as an impartial judge; for he decided the case immediately at the close of arguments which did not touch the point. As a judge he had had no opportunity to consider the question; and his opinion indicates that he had given but little consideration to it even as a partisan. His main contention is that the people, when they elect a legislative body, are, under our system of government, not only bound by the acts of that body, but so effectually bound that they can neither direct nor veto legislation by it nor recall its members, although the law expressly provides this protection. Such a law is regarded by Judge Torrance as unconstitutional unless the constitution not merely allows it but permits it expressly. If the finger of the corporations did not direct that decision, it has never directed any. The referendum, which until recently seemed to corporations as "a jolly joke on the populace," has begun to impress them very seriously.

Majority rule in Texas.

The legislature of Texas has tried an experiment along the general lines of direct legislation which corporation judges may not be able to circumvent. Instead of operating upon office holders directly, it is intended to operate indirectly but effectually upon them through the nominating conventions of political parties. The originator of this reform is A. M. Kennedy, of Mart, who introduced the bill in the lower house of the last Texas legislature, of which he was a member. He writes of it that "three years from now it will be invoked against the delivery of the Texas Democrats to our friends Belmont, McCarren, et al." This bill, as enacted, provides that—

> whenever delegates are to be selected by any political party to any State or county convention by primary election or primary convention, or candidates are instructed for or nominated, it shall be the duty of the chairman of the county or precinct executive committee of said political party, upon the application of ten per cent. of the members of said party (who are legally qualified voters in said county or precinct), to submit at the time and place of selecting said delegates any proposition desired to be voted upon by said voters, and the delegates selected at that time shall be considered instructed for which ever proposition for which a majority of the votes are cast; provided, that the number of voters belonging to said political party shall be determined by the votes cast for the party nominee for governor at the preceding election; and provided further, that said application is filed with the county or precinct chairman at least five days before the tickets are to be printed, and the chairman may require a sworn statement that the names of said applicants are genuine; provided, further, that all additional expense of printing any proposition on the official primary ballot shall be paid for by the parties requesting the same.

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This Texas law is described by Geo. H. Shibley, writing in behalf of the People's Sovereignty League (Bliss Building, Washington), as "a veritable Gibraltar against the ruling few." He regards the Democratic voters of Texas as now the ruling power in the State, "if they care to exert themselves," and asks: "Why shouldn't the Texas system be installed in every Democratic State?" In furtherance of the

suggestion he proposes a plan of organization for State leagues to secure the enactment, by pledging legislative candidates, of the Texas law in every State of the Union. The referendum has proved so useful in Chicago, though only advisory, that movements for its extension in mandatory form to party organizations as well as to legislatures, deserve all possible encouragement. If party conventions were brought in this manner under the direct control of the party membership, and legislatures under the direct control of the body of the people, the grafter would be out of business. Grafters know this, even if the people they despoil have yet to learn it.

Promotion of the single tax idea.

Under the efficient management of Frederick H. Monroe, "the Henry George Lecture Association" (with headquarters at 610 Steinway Hall, Chicago), which is conducted in behalf of the single tax idea, has grown within the past three years into an institution of national importance, and its influence has more than kept pace with its geographical development. Its first lecturer, John Z. White, is now concluding a tour of the Pacific coast and the Rocky Mountain region, after having spent two years in the most exacting kind of lecture work from the Mississippi to the Atlantic coast; and Herbert S. Bigelow, who has done occasional lecturing under the same auspices, is to join Mr. White as a general lecturer, as are Ernest Crosby, Jerry Simpson and John W. Bengough, all under Mr. Monroe's management, for the coming lecture year. As Mr. Monroe describes the work, it is a campaign of education before established associations—commercial, social, educational, labor, political and religious. The craving for creating new political parties, so common with men of reform ideas, is not fostered by Mr. Monroe and his associates. He declares that they have "no desire whatever to organize a political party." Doubtless he might have added that they have no desire, either, to agitate or organize along class lines. It is one of the virtues of the single tax idea that what it offers is for men, simply as men. It appeals to no class instinct, if there be such a thing, but to the human sense of equal rights and reciprocal duties.

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Another movement in behalf of the same cause, but more explicitly for the purpose of getting the ear of people who are commonly distinguished as "the working classes," has been undertaken by John Weiler and L. P. Straube, both of whom are active and well known labor unionists in the printing trades. They have organized "The People's Single Tax Propaganda Movement," (headquarters at 508 Schiller Building, Chicago), with a view to distributing literature and holding meetings in populous residence districts, the meetings to be made attractive by entertainments and then to be utilized for explanatory talks. The first tract issued for this movement is peculiarly well adapted for its purpose. Written by Mr. Weiler, its argument is addressed to labor unionists,—most effectively, we should suppose, and certainly with irrefutable truth. The question propounded is whether the single tax would prove a better remedy for labor's ills than labor unions, and the answer is a brief elaboration of this succinct statement: "The price of land determines the price of labor. When land is cheap, labor is dear, and vice versa. Dear land causes a surplus in the supply of labor, and thus depresses wages; cheap land causes a scarcity in the supply of labor, and thus raises wages." As the single tax would make land cheap, Mr. Weiler truly argues that "wages would go sky-high, not at the expense of consumers, but at the expense of land rent. What land would lose in value, labor would gain. The cities would be deserted by large numbers who preferred working on their own hook upon the land abandoned by speculative dogs in the manger. This would cause a scarcity in the supply of wage slaves. The wage slave would become valuable. His services would then command a high price. He would be enabled to dictate what hours he preferred to work. He would have money to burn. He could lay off whenever he pleased without fear—in a word, it would make him free in reality as well as in name. The young men growing up would find things easier. It would no longer be necessary for labor unions to place restrictions upon them. The young man who wanted to learn a trade or profession would then have all the opportunity he wanted. Labor would, under the single tax, be so scarce and hard to get that no new hand would displace an old one, as is often the case now, but every newcomer would fill a want for help."

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These are only some among many instances of effective work in promotion of principles which, without flourish of trumpets, or display of organization, or muster roll of converts, are influencing the common thought of English-speaking countries to a degree little suspected by observers who estimate the progress of a cause by its statistics. There are prophecies in plenty that social forces are lining up for a battle royal between socialism and plutocracy; but if we were to venture an utterance prophetic, we should say that the battle royal will be in different array. Plutocracy is too decadent for any battle royal. Aristocracy might fight a prolonged battle, but plutocracy never. And aristocracy is effete. When the battle royal comes it will not be between socialism on one side and either plutocracy or aristocracy on the other. It will be between the principles of the socialist and those of the single taxer; not necessarily or probably under their names or banners, but certainly over their issues. And in that battle royal the principles of the socialist will go down. For while socialism readily appeals to the materialist and the paternalist, to the man who believes that human rights and duties and liberties are only names without substance, that moral right and moral wrong are