

less privilege of shipping the masterpiece to the United States." When it is remembered that the nobility claim lawful right to a pampered existence at the cost of the nation because they are noble, this Lansdowne performance tempts one to ask if noble isn't as noble does. The untutored prairie mind might suspect the noble lord of being a horse trader incognito.

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APPROACHING A POLITICAL CLIMAX.

Some metropolitan newspapers do not require that their editors shall possess even ordinary intelligence. If they did, several men now engaged in befogging knowledge by writing editorials would be earning an honest living at manual labor. Nowhere is there displayed such crass ignorance of public sentiment as on the editorial pages of those New York newspapers which wear the greatest air of profound wisdom.

The foregoing paragraph is written with the New York Sun particularly in mind. It applies with equal force, however, to several other great journals of the most provincial city on the continent. Published as they are within the zone of crooked finance, and drawing both inspiration and sustenance from Big Business, these newspapers are apparently unaware of the existence of any voters outside the area of their own city, or of any public sentiment worth taking into account except that dictated by Wall street.

The best illustration of this utter provincialism is furnished by the present political attitude of those newspapers. They are laboring to bring about a condition whereby the progressives of both old parties shall be prevented from casting a progressive ballot in the Presidential election next year. They seem to believe that such a condition can be created. They assume that the reactionaries will be able to control the Republican party, and to bring about President Taft's renomination. Therefore their energies are being directed toward the capture of the Democratic party by the plunderbund for which they speak.

Their object, of course, is to nominate on the Democratic ticket a man like Judson Harmon, or some other candidate as satisfactory as President Taft to the forces of reaction. They believe, or seem to believe, that the progressive Democrats and the progressive Republicans, as in days of old, can be induced to align themselves on one side or the other in a sham battle between these twin candidates of Special Privilege and Vested Wrong.

Nobody can blame a flabby and swollen beneficiary of Privilege for entertaining the notion that the progressives can be disfranchised by the simple process of buying the two old party organizations. It is characteristic of the intellect which devotes itself exclusively to making money, that it believes unquestioningly in the omnipotence of the dollar, and is consequently unable to understand that anybody can be influenced by other than sordid motives. It is true, moreover, of the bourbon mind in every age of the world that it has been totally incapable of sensing public sentiment. But of trained newspaper men, whose mission in life it is to read and interpret public sentiment, something better is expected. They are looked to to produce a higher grade of intelligence than the fat-necked and dull-witted financier or tariff beneficiary whose pocket they serve.

In the case of several New York editors of distinction, however, it is painfully evident that they have sunk to the intellectual level of their employers. Hence they imagine that a double-barrelled scheme of political reaction can be worked out in American politics; that both parties can be brought to serve the Mammon of Unrighteousness, and that after the candidates are nominated predatory wealth may take its ease and view the result in November with stolid indifference.

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Now, if there is one thing in politics more certain than another, it is that the progressives are not going to be disfranchised. They will most surely find a way of expressing their opinions at the ballot box. If that opportunity be denied by both existing parties, a new party will be born—a party certain to receive millions of votes, and which, while it may not be immediately successful, will close one epoch in American politics and usher in a new one.

The immediate effect of the birth of such a party would be the disappearance of either the Republican or the Democratic party along the gloomy trail to limbo which the Whig party travelled over sixty years ago. Our national experience has proven that there is not room enough in this country for more than two chief political parties. When the slave interest captured both the Whig and the Democratic organizations, a new party was born almost in a day, and the Whig party vanished into the realm of things forgotten. History is bound to repeat itself if the reactionary leaders of this day force the progressives to form a new party.

Most of the reactionary press of the country just now is professing an ostentatious devotion

to the welfare of the Democratic party. It makes that pretense because of superficial indications that the Democratic party is to win the next Presidential election, and because its masters wish it to be on the ground floor. The real owners of these newspapers believe they can serve their purpose best by pretending to be Democratic. It would seem that the Democratic party had been afflicted sorely enough in the past few years without having to suffer the visitation of this latest scourge, but evidently it was not to be.

Of course all the advice which the reactionary press gives to the Democratic party is bad advice. It cannot help being bad, because it is prompted not by a desire to conserve the party welfare, but by a desire to promote the financial interests of men who have no party. Followed, such advice would either wreck the party, or, in the event of a victory, would make that victory more costly than a defeat.

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Take the case of the New York Sun as an example. Here is a list of some of the things it has advocated since the Democratic success last fall, following which it edged itself over into the Democratic camp:

1. Election of W. F. Sheehan and "Jim" Smith as United States Senators from New York and New Jersey respectively.
2. Denial of Statehood to Arizona, because that State's Constitution provides for Direct Legislation and the Recall.
3. Elevation of Fitzgerald and other notorious Cannon Democrats to places of importance in the House organization.
4. Defeat of direct primary legislation in New York, New Jersey, and other States where the Democratic party for the first time in years is in control.
5. Nomination of a "conservative" Democrat for President in 1912.

These, of course, are mere details of a general program so reactionary that, if carried out, it would drive from the party ranks progressive Democrats by the millions. The program differs in no moral particular from the course followed by the standpat Republicans—the following of which caused the Republican party to be repudiated at the polls. It goes without saying that the man or the newspaper that advocates it knows nothing of and cares nothing for real democracy. An attempt to commit the Democratic party to it is inspired either by treachery, or by a belief that an extreme reactionary policy will win enough votes in the East and in the solid South to elect a President satisfactory to Big Business.

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It may be the result of deliberate calculation.

Possibly a reactionary Democrat might be elected in 1912 as a result of the formation of an independent progressive party. But even that is figuring on only one Presidential campaign, and takes no account of the future. The ultimate result of the formation of a progressive party is bound to be an alignment of all the voters in two parties—one reactionary and the other progressive,—and unless Big Business has gone mad it is not trying to bring about that result.

It is perfectly clear, however, that reactionary Democrats will make a desperate attempt to control the Democratic national convention. That effort will be backed by all the money needful for a campaign of corruption, intimidation and political debauchery. It will command the support of every reactionary Democratic politician in the United States, as well as the support of every timid Democratic business man, who, after all, would serve the Democratic party best by getting out of it.

These politicians and business men are in the Democratic party under false pretenses. To save their lives they could not intelligently differentiate themselves from standpat Republicans. They have bolted the Democratic ticket in three Presidential contests; they have no comprehension of what Democratic principles are; they simply sail under a black flag. But they are influential and powerful in the Democratic organizations of too many States, and they constitute a black menace to the success of progressive democracy working within Democratic party lines.

It is already apparent that, barring some political cataclysm, reactionaries will control the Republican party, and that President Taft will be renominated. Whatever the progressive leaders may do—whether they bolt or yield a nominal allegiance to the party nominee—the progressive rank and file will not vote for Mr. Taft.

These progressive Republicans can be attracted to the Democratic ticket if there is virtue enough left in the Democratic party to attract them. Much depends, of course, on the developments in the new Democratic Congress; but even more will depend upon the action which the Democratic party takes in its national convention, namely, the character of its nominees and the declarations of its platform.

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If the schemes now incubating in the financial centers of the country can be worked out, no effort will be made by the Democratic party to attract the independent and progressive vote. The plan is to nominate a reactionary in each party, and

firm in the delusion that the voters can be bamboozled forever, to let the election take care of itself.

In the light of what has happened in the past few years to awaken public sentiment and to enlighten public intelligence, is it possible that such a scheme can succeed—even at the next election?

D. K. L.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE NEW PITTSBURGH.

Two years ago John Z. White came to Pittsburgh, under the auspices of "The Henry George Lecture Association", and delivered a series of lectures on Direct Legislation. Perhaps not more than two dozen—and they were single taxers—were interested in hearing those lectures; but they worked hard to induce influential men to hear Mr. White, and now note one of the results. Last Tuesday a special train took 240 citizens, representing every civic body in the city, every board of trade, the church, and organized labor, to Harrisburg for the purpose of demanding from the legislature direct legislation as part of the new "Pittsburgh plan" of city government.*

Briefly, the "Pittsburgh plan" provides for a council of only 9 and elected at large, instead of 67, as at present, elected from wards; the Initiative, the Referendum and the Recall; a non-partisan ballot, and nominations by petition. This plan has been discussed for over a year. It has the indorsement of every one of the seventeen civic organizations in the city. It is approved by the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce without a dissenting vote. In advocacy of it 203 meetings, aggregating 20,000 people, have been addressed; and 35,000 Pittsburghers have sent communications to the legislators at Harrisburg petitioning for it. The hearing at Harrisburg was before the Senate committee of municipal affairs and the House committee of municipal corporations.

A Pennsylvania Railroad official remarked to a member of the delegation: "This is the largest and most representative body that our road has ever carried from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg." A delegation of 120 came from Scranton and joined the Pittsburghers on their arrival. Headed by a brass band, both delegations, bearing numerous banners, moved on the Capitol.

For four hours the legislators listened to a veritable fusillade of oratory in behalf of direct legislation for cities of the second class. G. W. Wallace of Pittsburgh, the first speaker, asking for the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, said: "Certain men in Pennsylvania, who are either ignorant themselves or rely upon the ignorance of the public, are condemning these measures on the ground that they are novel, revolutionary, untried and a product of the States which produce alfalfa and long whiskers. Nothing could be farther from the truth. While the particular forms are adapted to modern conditions, the principle involved, namely, the direct vote of the

people on questions of importance, is as old as Anglo-Saxon institutions. . . . This great inheritance of our fathers we have to some extent lost in this country, and we have suffered for it. We are suffering for it now. In advocating it we are not advocating anything new or untried. Surely if the people of the city of Pittsburgh have brains and character enough to elect their public officials, they ought to have brains and character enough to determine when those public officials have betrayed their trust and should be retired from public service."

Every speaker, both from Pittsburgh and Scranton, talked in terms that could not be misunderstood. For example: "When you were candidates for office you promised to serve us, now we give you the opportunity"; "If you don't serve us now, others will hear us in the next legislature"; "This time we present a request, next time it will be a demand"; "You are our servants, why do you refuse to give us what we want?" "If we err in our request, we, not you, will shoulder the responsibility." Such words, coming from ex-Mayor Guthrie, from the President of the Chamber of Commerce (once termed "the white-vested millionaires of Pittsburgh"), from the President of the Amalgamated Association of Labor, from Bishop Whitehead and from Rabbi Levi, made it clear that they were spokesmen for an aroused people determined to rule their own city.

When John Z. White is again in Pittsburgh he will marvel at the changed attitude of its people toward the principles he advocated here two years ago. Instead of a few dozen advocates he will find a populace explaining, discussing and demanding direct legislation. They no longer call it the "doctrine from the West"; it has become a part of them. And this in the East, in Pennsylvania, in wealthy, boss-ridden, machine-ruled Pittsburgh.

BERNARD B. MCGINNIS.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

LETTERS FROM CHINA—III.

Peking, Jan. 25, 1911.

The Tzucheng Yuan.

I went a little while ago, before its adjournment, to see the National Assembly* in session. It is, as I have said, not the full parliament, but only the upper house of the future parliament.

In the deliberation I understood one word—rather two words, taking them together. I knew beforehand what subjects were to be discussed, but this did not help me much. One of the Imperial Princes presided. The Minister of Education spoke. The most striking objects in the hall were the ink-wells—quite large blue boxes (4 or 5 inches long)—one on each member's desk. They give a general indigo effect to the whole scene. But the costumes of the members were almost equally striking; they were dressed, some of them, in brilliant silks that would do very well for ladies on parade at a great social function. My small nephews will be able to tell their children fifty years from now that their uncle was present at a scene as impressive in the history

*See The Public, vol. xiii, p. 794.

*See last week's Public, page 295.