

all records since the present improved methods of manufacture and distribution have been in use and agricultural operations were first begun on the present extensive scale with labor-saving machinery.

That has a prosperous sound. But as wages generally have not increased, it cannot indicate prosperity for the mass of wage workers; and as general opportunities for work are not plentiful, it indicates rather that the "prosperity" cry is all cry and no fodder. Are we mistaken in saying that opportunities for employment are not plentiful? Read this unconscious answer from the Buffalo Times of December 1:

The superintendent of the delivery department of the Western Union was seen by a reporter for the Times yesterday. "Yes, we are getting more men and fewer boys for our service," he said. "There are a great many men out of work at the present time, and as an energetic boy can earn about \$1.50 a day with us, which is more than some men earn, we saw no reason why we should not let the men have the chance. They are more reliable.

When work is so scarce that reliable men can be got to do boys' work at boys' wages, it is in order to ask embarrassing questions about that "prosperity which everybody shares."

#### PARALLELISM IN PARTY POLITICS.

There is always a certain amount of fascination in measuring our own progress by that of others, whether in political growth or any other; and the element of provincialism which as a people we have never outgrown in America leads us, perhaps, to be more prone than other nations to such comparisons. Of late years there has been a strong tendency among students of political life to determine just where we do stand, by an examination of the landmarks set in other climes and often under such totally varying conditions that the resemblance can at best be said to be fanciful. Most natural of all is the attempt to find common springs of action among that closely allied branch of the so-called Anglo-Saxon race which composes the government of Great Britain, an attempt for which more excuse than usual exists in the partly accidental coincidence of fundamental causes

to which British and American politics have been subject during the generation that is now on the scene of action in both countries.

Under the influence of these causes, the conclusion is often jumped at just now that the British Liberals have always been substantially identical with American Democrats, and governed by the same general impulses and tending in the same direction, which the conservative school of thought confidently predicts is now in the line of a rapid extinction of Liberalism, the broad principle taken as embodied by the respective parties in the two nations. A conspicuous instance of this reasoning appeared in a recent clever article in the Atlantic, which argued that Liberalism has passed through the cycle of natural law from beginning to decay, and is now doomed to disappear and be succeeded by a strenuous triumph of the imperialism of the day; which by a queer inversion of ideas and in defiance of all the patent facts of its genesis and nature is expected to bring about an equality of conditions on the denial of which it is essentially based; the secret to this contradictory conclusion lying in the half-concealed socialistic convictions of the author, which lead him to look for material gain to individuals only through their subjection to some powerful organization that can work out for them benefits which they are unable otherwise to obtain.

If indeed it is true that the work of Liberalism is over, it is a sad thing for civilization; for it is liberalism in one form or another which has been the motive force of all civilization, and progress without liberalism would be a contradiction of terms. That, so far as the forms of government are concerned, no great further advance is to be looked for is perhaps true; yet it is a law of nature that nothing can stand still, and that if we do not move forward we must more or less gradually fall back. The progress of the future must doubtless be more on economic than on purely political lines; and it is on such lines that British Liberalism has slowly evolved from the whiggism of Palmerston which was concerned chiefly with completing the work of securing political liberty

that had begun with the overthrow of the Stuarts, to the radicalism of Morley which is groping out toward the establishment of economic equality. For what we know as imperialism is at bottom an effort to intensify the inequality which already exists, by extending the power of the wealthy minority to whom the fruits of imperialism invariably accrue. As we glance back over British history of the past century, we can see how steadily the current of liberalism has set toward improving the condition of the masses of men, first as to political and then as to economic essentials. Steadily, in spite of its setbacks, and in the face of these, it is not hard to dream of the spirit of Gladstone, which in its experience has overlapped part of both the earlier and the later period, refreshing itself with the exhortation sung by our own poet:

Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.

With us the change from political to economic issues really began when the marvelous development took place of our natural resources that occurred in the late sixties. The opening up then of our coal and oil fields and forests, of gold and silver and iron and copper mines, first gave to some men a power of commanding the labor of others which has gone on since with ever cumulating force, until now as a nation we are enormously richer, while as individuals the vast majority of us are really poorer. Not that there has been any great increase of "saved capital," as is so often gratuitously assumed. To quote once more from Longfellow:

Nothing that is can pause or stay,

What now is bud must soon be leaf,  
What now is leaf will soon decay.

For Nature's law prescribes that all things are constantly going through a process of transmutation; and our most permanent works begin to pass away as soon as created, while the great mass of our products have a life that is scarcely more than ephemeral. It is an old truism that mankind lives from hand to mouth, and if all men were suddenly to cease working, it would be startling to see how quickly they would starve. We do not store or

save capital, but we do store knowledge, and most effectively of all the knowledge of how to make other men work for our benefit; and when a few men, comparatively, laid hold of and opened up the sources from which new comforts and luxuries could be derived by human labor, new problems sprang into existence as to how these were to be distributed, or, rather, whether that power of the community which we style government was to be exercised in the direction of protecting the few in the chief usufruct of the sources of wealth or of making it easier for the many to gain access to them, on which to exert their labor for their own benefit. What with us has been of sudden growth, has been with our British cousins a long existing condition, this control of the sources of wealth by the few at the expense of the many; so long existing, in fact, that its beginning might be said to be prehistoric. Yet so much more palpable to the average mind is political oppression, that it was not until Englishmen attained in a substantial degree their political freedom, after centuries of painful effort, that they have seemed to think of bending their energies toward securing a greater measure of economic freedom. Or rather, perhaps, it was the end most easily accomplished which was first secured and it was in that fight that the weapons had to be won to wage the other. But, whatever the cause of sequence, certain it is that since parliamentary government was finally won, the nature of the contest between liberalism and entrenched privilege in Great Britain has changed to a striving for increased commercial and industrial liberty, in which material advances have been made, and to which purely political reforms have been for the most part incidental.

When we turn from a study of British Liberalism to a glance at the progress of the same spirit in this country, it is a far less consistent development that we discern, up to the immediate present at all events. The history of our organic politics thus far is a kaleidoscopic one, in which certain parties have risen and disappeared in the execution of specific tasks, while op-

posed to them has remained one persistent conservative force, rallied under the title of Democracy. It is partly the incident of nomenclature that has resulted in this condition, partly the accident of political as distinct from economic conditions, which have led our domestic evolution into channels where the flood tides of liberalism and the ebb tides of reaction were not really felt. It is by no means always, indeed, that it is the mass of people, the "demos," which is truly liberal, especially in the cruder stages of society. When these prevail and the myriad shades of middle classes are lacking, it is oftener that the richest and the poorest stand together to resist progress; and so it was for the most part in the earlier chapters of our political history. Except for the spirit of Jefferson's influence, most of what was vivifying in American political life came from the party for the time being against which the Democratic party stood aligned; and great as Jefferson was, the impression that he made in his own generation was but a transitory one, destined to pass on and bear its true fruit long after he was dead. He spoke great truths, of permanent significance; but men only half absorbed them, and except so far as they followed his personal leadership were not governed by them; for in his day, our politics were in a formative condition, dealing only with temporary emergencies and issues that had to be disposed of before permanent tendencies could be established. Thus arose the Federal and Whig and Republican parties, each to perform a specific work in turn, with the Democratic masses in steady opposition to the work of each, and to die in turn while the Democratic opposition lived on; for the Republican party of Lincoln is as dead to-day as the other organizations of progress which preceded it.

To-day the conditions are changed, and, with the differentiation of classes similar to that of other and older nations, that has grown up with us as the nation also grew older, seems to have come a more crystallized alignment of parties, based on liberalism as against conservative paternalism. State socialism and paternalism are only different names for the same thing, the rule of the few who are stronger over

the many who are individually weaker; and whether their strength is first derived through force of arms, as in the medieval period, through the power of wealth as in our commercial times, or through the ability to control political organization as in the hope of Marx and Gronland, the effect is the same. Because the later socialism aims also at equality, it is a common mistake to compare democracy with socialism; but in reality with us, thus far at least, it is the forces that have worked against democracy which have been socialistic.

The Republican party has always been socialistic in its tendency, except so far as the great work of abolishing slavery was concerned; and some of the motive impulse to that work even was socialistic in its origin, being born of the desire on the part of a conscience of a higher grade to regulate other men actuated by a lower grade of conscience. The tariff legislation which has been the chief purpose of Republican party energy for a generation past has had the state socialism spirit pure and simple; and even the distinction which is sometimes drawn between this and socialism, that one is in the interest of a favored class and the other for the mutual benefit of the entire community, cannot be taken as a real one, in considering the principles involved; since protectionism has always been advocated on the ostensible ground—and in great part honestly, however mistakenly—that it was for the benefit of the whole people and not a few only, that government was led to step in with artificial restrictions upon industry. As to the imperialism which has now become a prime article in the creed of the Republican party, its origin from and relation to the paternal government which is the very essence of state socialism, would seem to be hardly disputable.

On the other hand, all genuine movement on the part of the newer Democracy has been in the direction of effort for greater freedom of the individual from "needless fetters imposed by the state," which Mr. Cozzani in the Atlantic article mentioned above implies might be one of the fruits of state socialism, although such fetters are in reality one of the primary conditions of socialism and

justified even by avowed socialists only by the claim that they would bring compensation in other ways; together with effort for the greater equality of opportunity which undoubtedly is desirable. True it is that the financial programme on which the Democracy has been so disastrously defeated in the two latest presidential elections, was itself socialistic in its essence, because it aimed to create a system of currency with an arbitrary basis of value. But there is every reason to believe that most of the ardent silver men failed to see the question from this standpoint, and thought rather that they were trying to restore an equilibrium that had been disturbed by what they considered as paternal legislation in behalf of the gold standard; and it is certain that Democratic leaders like Tom L. Johnson are anti-socialistic from every point of view, their advocacy of government ownership being limited absolutely to kinds of industry that are monopolistic by nature, and the only choice as to which therefore must be as between a public and a private monopoly.

Working along these lines, the Republican party has assumed a really closer parallelism to the historic Tory party of Great Britain than has ever been shown by any of our political organizations previously; evidenced, too, by the sympathy which it now openly avows for the toryism for which Chamberlain most conspicuously stands to-day. While the Democratic party, really changing front and at the same time to a considerable extent changing its personnel, has assumed much the same attitude as that held by the British Liberals toward such questions as have begun to present a more or less identical international significance. The truth would seem to be that our political and social evolution having been more rapid than that of our kin across the sea, we have yet just reached the status which has existed with them for some time back. For a century past, indeed, it has been social and economic questions, rather than purely political ones, which have occupied their attention, while with us the reverse has been the case up to the present generation. It is for this reason,

doubtless, that while their parties have been gradually modified and remolded so that their character has been utterly changed and yet their organic continuity maintained, new parties with us have risen and died and been recreated to embody the new issues as they arose; whereas now that we have a condition beginning to exist here that has long been seen abroad, we find in the Democratic ranks the same class of minds and to some extent the same individuals who founded the Republican party 45 years ago, the change having come about almost imperceptibly and without disturbing the organic continuity of the party, although its doctrine and its personnel have both been so thoroughly modified—just as the British Liberals have been evolved from a chrysalis of a hundred years ago that would be considered somewhat retrograde by the British Conservative of to-day. Until the past decade or two, it was always the Democratic party which stood for the conservation of existing institutions, and held itself in solid array against the new propositions brought forward by the Federalists, the Whigs and the Republicans; but now the positions are reversed and it is from the Democratic side that the fresh impulses are coming, with the not unnatural concomitant that until these have gained sufficient force, its ranks are disorganized and weakened, while the new aligning goes on. In this position they have just placed themselves on the same side of such questions as are international in their relations with the British Liberals; but up to the time that this transforming came about, it would be a great mistake to consider the two organizations as in any sense parallel.

Judging from the past, it is not unnatural that the prediction should be frequently made that our political organizations are on the eve of fresh dissolutions and reformations; but now that we have reached a parallelism with British parties which did not before exist, it is really their experience to which we should look for the basis of prediction. That experience would seem to point to a maintained continuity of organization that by no means implies a persistence of issues

or even of the same class of issues; nor yet a true continuity of personnel—the absorption by the liberal side of new thought and the minds in which new thought is awakened taking the place of the creation of new party organizations. The history of our own politics for the past generation and particularly of the Democratic party, would seem to indicate that we have reached this stage and that the lines of our political progress for the future must be entirely different from those of the more distant past; and that American like British liberalism will fit itself to take up the tasks which it must meet, by gradual modification through infusion of new blood expressing itself in new creeds. What those tasks will be is already beginning to be unfolded, and it is only one of the phases of the pending struggle that we must face the question whether the strong arm of government is to be invoked for the purpose of aiding the few to extend abroad in colonies their power to command the labor of others, or whether we are to confine our communal forces to the simple duty of protecting each citizen from the aggressions of either his fellow citizens or of foreigners, and leave all a free field and no favors. \* \* \*

## NEWS

Definite public action was taken in the United States this week to secure the neutrality of this nation, now being violated, with reference to the war in South Africa. The movement was set on foot on the 12th at a business meeting of the Chicago Branch of the American Transvaal league, held at Masonic Temple, Chicago. From the evidence presented at that meeting it appears that agents of the British army, stationed at New Orleans, have for a long time been buying mules and horses at that port for belligerent uses in South Africa; that they have shipped these animals upon British transports at the port of New Orleans to other agents of the British army, in South Africa; and that upon the arrival of the animals at South African ports they have been sent directly to the seat of war. This, it was argued at the meeting, is not commercial trading, but is a use by the British of American ports and waters for the renewal and augmentation of military