

program taken seriously by the American press. It is as if Dean Swift's satire on malthusianism (which, let us remind explorers of biographical dictionaries, antedates Malthus longer than Swift does), were charged up to Swift as evidence of his inhumanity. For Shaw goes so far in his grimly witty assault upon the eugenic program, as to say that "eugenic politics would land us in the extensive use of the lethal chamber," making it "necessary to revise our views of the sacredness of human life," and committing us "to the killing of a great many people," some of whom "would have to be removed simply because it wastes other people's time to look after them." Does not Mr. Shaw clearly enough imply that he detests this sort of thing, and is using against it his own best weapon—the Irish wit that Swift leveled at the British exploitation of Ireland? Yet an obtuse American press, oblivious to Shaw's blunt satire, roundly criticises Shaw as if he were advising murder!

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#### The Ship Subsidy.

Why should private interests receive gifts from the public treasury to carry on their own business? When the farmers wanted government aid in their business, a great hue and cry went up against it. But now Mr. Taft has called on farmers to help him give government aid to ship owners, and in the name of the flag. The flag has been used to hide dirt enough in the past thirty years, but the ship subsidy dirt is perhaps the dirtiest dirt of all. When a set of men march toward the public treasury carrying an American flag, and singing "My country, 'tis of thee," it is "dollars to doughnuts" that they are after "something for nothing" for themselves. Is it very important that sea-going vessels should be American vessels? Is it so important that we must have the government pay a subsidy to the owners of those vessels sufficient to cover their losses? Then let the government build and navigate its own vessels. What the government pays for, the government ought to control and manage. Why should the government pay for keeping up private property?

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#### Ship Subsidy Graft.

Most devoutly is it to be hoped that the petition of the ship subsidy league of Cleveland for an investigation, will be granted and the investigation be drastic. Hardly can an intelligent person read the literature of this League without reading "graft," "graft," "graft" between the lines. Nothing has saved it from grave sus-

picion but the supreme respectability of its promoters; and respectability is no longer a trustworthy guarantee against big grafting. Now, however, specific accusations are made, and unless the investigation is smothered the American people may learn something worth while about this league for the maintenance of private business at public expense. Congressman Steenerson of Minnesota is the official "muckraker" in the case. Mr. Steenerson makes specific accusations of blackmailing tactics by the league against intractable members of Congress; and he asks an investigation of the league along this line of inquiry:

Whether a conspiracy exists for the purpose of promoting legislation in Congress and unduly influencing members of Congress. What funds have been raised for political agitation and for payment to political organizations. What funds have been used to influence newspapers or create public sentiment in behalf of subsidy legislation. Whether threats of libelous or scandalous articles or other intimidations have been used against members of Congress. Whether improper means have been used either to promote or defeat subsidy legislation.

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#### Mr. Taft's Mr. Ballinger.

Congressman Isaac R. Sherwood of Ohio is quoted as authority for the shocking statement that "it is a notorious fact" in Washington that President Taft "appointed Ballinger Secretary of the Interior at the request or demand of the Guggenheim interests because he had to, in order to pay the Guggenheim syndicate for money and influence in carrying the Rocky Mountain States in 1908." This statement, though shocking, is not improbable. That Mr. Taft is the political beneficiary of corruption of various kinds at the election of 1908 is known to pretty much everybody but himself, and it may have leaked out to him. That Mr. Ballinger is in favor with the great interests that corrupted the election in 1908, and they with him, is as plain as if it were labeled in large letters on the back of his outer garment. And that Mr. Taft was willing to protect Mr. Ballinger—even to the extent of being judicially unjust in his behalf—is evident from his decision for Ballinger and against Glavis without giving Glavis an opportunity to be heard in reply to Ballinger.

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#### Progressive Sentiment in Great Britain.

Liberal gains at the first by-election to fill a vacancy in the new Parliament, together with the result of the London County Council elections, indicate the strengthening of Progressive opinion in England. There is a steadiness about it all

which suggests growth instead of the hysterics to which a political sweep usually testifies. Three years ago the Progressives were swept out of the London County Council by the "Municipal Reformers"—that name being a euphemism for the plutocrats who also call themselves "Moderates"; but last week the Progressives regained enough of their old position to show that a current against "municipal reform" of the plutocratic variety has set in. And this inference is confirmed by the kind of campaign the Progressives made. One of their effective posters reads in this wise: "Why should the occupier pay (either through rates or rent) and the owner of the land escape? The Moderates (or 'Municipal Reformers') support the land owner; the Progressives would *tax him* and relieve *you*." More effective even than that was an election poster which addressed itself to the condition of unemployment that London working men along with those of all Great Britain feel. With striking examples, in figures and pictures, of the abundance of unused and untaxed but valuable land in London, these posters spread abroad the slogan of "Idle Land Makes Idle Men." Parallel with those evidences of a further strengthening of Progressive sentiment in Great Britain is the fact, the news of which is now beginning to reach us on the American side, that the Tories in Parliament dread nothing so much as the possibility of early general elections. The land question has created a formidable solidarity among the Progressives of all parties; and democracy in Great Britain—political and social—is consequently marching on.

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#### A Little Object Lesson.

Reports recently appeared in the real estate columns of the Chicago newspapers, of a sale of vacant lots in Chicago for \$300 a front foot—about \$52,500 in all; and this was over and above expense for street improvement. Less than two years ago the same lots had been bought for \$80 a front foot, or \$14,000 in all. Here was a clear profit, then, in less than two years—"unearned increment," as John Stuart Mill called that kind of thing—of \$38,500, on an investment of hardly a third as much. The owner did nothing to make that increase. It was a product of the growth of the city, and under the Lloyd George plan for Great Britain, if it were adopted here, the city of Chicago would get 20 per cent of that \$38,500. Why not? Isn't the argument—moral, civic, and commonsensical—stronger for taking the whole \$38,500 for public use, than it is for not taking \$9,625 of it?

#### Big Business and Taxes.

Whoever the literary fellow of the Cleveland Citizens Savings and Trust Company may be, he is what Artemas Ward might have called a "komikal kuss." In a statement he has prepared for his company for submission to the quadrennial appraisers in Cleveland, he makes it say that increased taxes on vacant land will necessitate increased rentals! At all events the Cleveland News describes the statement as asking "that the Board keep values on a conservative basis, especially on vacant property," and earnestly requesting that values be not fixed which will "necessitate such increased rental as to become burdensome." The "komical" thing about this "komikal kuss's" earnest prayer, is its implication that rents would be increased by taxes tending to glut the real estate market with vacant lots for building purposes. But there is a serious feature about it; and that is the fact that an institution for the savings of the thrifty poor should petition for "conservative" valuations especially on vacant lots. "Conservative" means either fair or fraudulent. If it means fair, the suggestion is that it be so especially only as to vacant land. If it means fraudulent, the suggestion is that vacant land owners be especially favored. But if there is to be any discrimination, ought it not to be in favor of homes instead of forestalled spots for homes?

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#### Prosperity That Doesn't Prosper.

Speaking of prosperity—last year's prosperity, on which the business papers harped so constantly throughout the year, and so jubilantly—here is what one of the charity organizations says about it:

The significant feature of the past year's work was the continuance of the hard times of the previous year. While the actual number of different cases dealt with was somewhat less, the intensity of need was even greater than during the winter of 1907-08. The return of prosperity has been slow, and need has increased with the protraction of the period of unemployment.

That candid statement is from the report for 1909 of the superintendent of the Bureau of Associated Charities of Newark, N. J. It is much more closely in accord with the impressions one may derive from general observation than are the "jollies" that emanate from business circles.

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#### Evolution and Insurance.

In the material world we see evolution mainly as a result. In the social world we see evolution as a growth and in the growing. In the matter of