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EDITORIAL

The Norwegian Secession.

A great lesson in democratic government is probable from Norway and Sweden. All the hopeful lessons in government throughout history seem to have come, as this one promises, from the "little peoples." The "big peoples" have rushed the world along into the darkness and despair of imperialism and centralized power; only the "little peoples" have set the world examples of democracy triumphant. In ancient times it was little Rome that planted the seeds of liberty, and imperial Rome that brought on the blight of the dark ages; in more modern times it is little England that has lighted this darkness with inspiring examples of

democracy, and the British empire swaggering up and down the earth that has tried to snuff them out. If Sweden adopts the advice of her king and his ministry, then little Norway and little Sweden will have set an example in dissolving their imperial bonds, which, at this particular time, when the bigness and power of empire has not ceased to inflame the imagination, will be one of the best lessons in government the world has ever had.

Had the United States but set this good example half a century ago, American history would have been different and better. There would have been no fratricidal war with its horrors of destruction and its burden of debt. Slavery would have passed away, for it was already becoming unprofitable and would long ago have been economically impossible; but it would have passed away as it has in South American republics, where it was abolished by consent instead of conquest, and without leaving an inheritance of race hostility behind it. Imperialism would never have raised its head. Centralization of power would have been avoided. And yet all the advantages of union, plus the element of friendship, could have been secured by treaty federation. Of this outcome of a wiser course between our Northern and our Southern States, the course that Norway and Sweden are apparently about to pursue is highly significant.

Those two countries were bound together for certain purposes. As is always the case where inflexible bonds of union exist, the more aggressive country of the two began to acquire inordinate power over the other. The other gave notice of dissolution of the bonds, and made overtures for fraternal relations. When Norway did this, Sweden would, had she followed our example, have resolved upon force, and after plunging the two peoples into a

bloody war would have burdened them with an inheritance of hatred for generations to come. But Sweden's official advisers are wiser if not better. Declaring that a union without natural accord could bring no advantage to either people, they recommend acceptance of the fraternal overtures of Norway in the spirit in which they were made.

Out of the greater independence of both peoples that would result, a closer because freer union would almost certainly eventuate. By a defensive alliance of Sweden and Norway, with free trade between their peoples, the most perfect unity can be secured without prejudice to complete autonomy and without irritation. Should Denmark come into this alliance, which is not too much to expect eventually, a Scandinavian federation upon the basis of local autonomy would be effected, in comparison with which an imperial union maintained by coercion would be the last thing to be desired. In the first step towards this possible consummation, Norway is of course entitled to the credit of asserting her independence with dignity and in a spirit of fraternal good will; but Sweden, should she follow the advice of her king and his ministers, will have earned at least equal credit.

Single Tax Agitation in Denmark.

Slowly but all the more firmly for that reason, the central idea to which Henry George gave form and which has gained an influential position in the English speaking world, is making headway in the countries of other speech. To several instances (vol. vii, pp. 12, 28, 338, 346, 410, 618, 823; vol. viii, pp. 72, 103) we have heretofore called attention. Another is reported from Denmark. An excellent monthly magazine, "Ret" (Right) which comes to us from Slagelse, a city of about 20,000 inhabitants some 50 or 60 miles from Copenhagen, is the organ of the Henry George