

atry. Though scores upon scores of thousands of women as good as she, but whose virtues are unheralded, have died since her accession to the English throne, their virtues had shone in narrower circles and from less conspicuous stations; and if the story of hers is echoed over the world to-day merely because of the royal place she held, it must not be forgotten that she possessed them in eminent degree along with her sisters more obscure. Victoria was truly a good woman. Were her virtues worthy of no other remembrance, she would deserve to live in history as a magnificent example of the truth that intelligent and conscientious performance of even the most exacting civic functions is not incompatible with any of the duties or charms of maidenhood, wifehood or motherhood.

Nor is the popular disposition to credit Queen Victoria with the British progress that has distinguished her reign wholly misplaced. The English crown and throne are, indeed, only surviving symbols of divine right in a democratic environment. Like the absurd medieval oath of allegiance which members of parliament have taken to the queen's successor, they are mere mementoes of departed royal power. If they were more than that, the British would not be the people they are. Nominally, British sovereigns may veto acts of parliament. In reality that prerogative is obsolete, and its exercise in our day would be rightly regarded as an act of reactionary revolution. Parliament is supreme in England, and answerable only to the people. Nominally, British sovereigns rule, but in reality a committee of the majority party in parliament—the ministry—rules in the sovereign's name. Nominally, the sovereign chooses the chairman of that committee—the premier; actually he is chosen by his party associates. He is the leader of the popular party. A British sovereign who attempted to force an

unacceptable premier upon parliament, would bring the whole governmental machinery to a standstill. In fine, the British sovereign, so far as concerns official authority, is a highly ornamental, an impressively historical, a solemnly hypothetical, an utterly weak, and for the latter reason a very useful, personification of Britannia. Considerations of official power aside, however, the sovereign may wield great influence, both personal and official. And such influence was undoubtedly wielded by the now departed and affectionately lamented Victoria. Throughout her mature life she was an intelligent participant in the administration of public affairs. Her influence, unfortunately, was always conservative, and at times reactionary; but there is ample reason to believe that it was exerted in good conscience. And in the conservative point of view, it was put forth with statesman-like foresight and judgment. Doubtless her thought and aspirations, besides largely influencing social life, have molded and vitalized in some degree both the legislation and the administration of her phenomenally long reign. Upon her bier, democrats not less than aristocrats may be permitted to place a tribute of respect to the memory of this sovereign who was a British statesman, this statesman who was a good woman.

Ex-Congressman Tom L. Johnson is vigorously making good his determination to devote himself as a private citizen to the public service. At the Jackson day banquet in Cleveland early in January he publicly announced that he was now "free from business associations of every kind," and proposed to devote the remainder of his life to promoting the public welfare. "I shall not limit my work to Cleveland," he is reported to have continued,—

but shall extend it to state and nation, fighting for the principles of democracy, for the great principles in which I believe and with which you are all familiar. I want no office; I will ac-

cept none. I simply want to be in the ranks with the rest of you.

In the same speech he declared against the extension of street car franchises, and for low fares and municipal ownership.

What Johnson meant by being in the ranks he has since exemplified. He is at this moment in a rattling fight against the Cleveland street car ring, along the lines suggested by his speech at the Jackson day banquet. The street car ring of Cleveland, though its street franchises have yet several years to run, is trying to secure long extensions, with five-cent fares and no other substantial concessions than a percentage of gross receipts to the city and tickets at the rate of six for a quarter to the people. Against this Johnson is making his vigorous fight. He opposes the plan of selling rides at wholesale by means of tickets, because only the well to do benefit by it. Speaking from experience as a street car manager in Cleveland, he says that by far the largest proportion of street car patrons are reluctant to invest in tickets. They pay as they ride. Again speaking from experience, he asserts that the best financial results for the companies are to be obtained by three-cent fares; which are best also, under private ownership, for the patrons of the roads.

Judging from the Cleveland papers, Johnson is pushing his opposition to franchise extensions with effect. He is accused of circulating anti-franchise petitions and paying two cents a name for signers. This horrifies the ring, which denounces it as bribing voters! To which Mr. Johnson characteristically retorts that if the people are to be bribed for two cents a head, the ring had better buy them up than to corrupt councilmen. Of course he is suspected of political ambition. Because he fights the street car ring so vigorously, its managers are sure he wants to be mayor. Mr. Johnson himself says he doesn't want to

be mayor. He has severed his business connections and wants to devote his life, in the capacity of a private citizen having ideals of good government, to furthering reforms in the direction of freeing the people from the burdens of monopoly. But if the street car ring doesn't want him to be mayor, and evidently its feelings that way are very strong, the people of Cleveland could hardly do better than elect him whether he wishes to be elected or not. With a term in the mayor's chair and a council that would cooperate, Tom L. Johnson would come nearer than any other mayor to settling the street car question in Cleveland in favor of the people. He would also promote in other desirable ways that rational radicalism which is the only true and safe conservatism.

Gratifying news of a local political character comes from St. Louis. The Meriwether mayoralty campaign of 1897 is to be reorganized in the spring. No leading candidate has yet been thought about, but intelligent preliminary steps in organization are being taken. "Kitchen" conventions are organizing throughout the city. These are little gatherings in private houses. Only a dozen or two voters are expected at any one of them, but each person in attendance is urged to hold another in his own house. In this manner the endless chain principle is utilized. The open campaign will not begin before the middle of March. After that, the "kitchen" conventions having broken ground, large mass meetings will be held until the election. In 1897 Meriwether, pitted against both the republican and the democratic machines, polled 18,258 votes. His old supporters believe that the reorganization can add to that vote this year; and, in view of the effects of the street car strike of last spring, that it may win the election. This political movement aims at municipal ownership of public utilities. Its weakness is the lack of local newspaper

support, but hopes are entertained of overcoming that by inducing the Chicago American to issue a St. Louis edition.

We are advised by Senator Bucklin, of Colorado, that the report of the Colorado senate revenue commission, of which he is chairman, containing the commission's investigation into the Australasian land tax, has been exhausted. This is to be regretted, for the report is one of the most valuable official documents on taxation ever yet produced. More satisfactory is the news that the recommendations of the commission are commanding favorable consideration. Ex-Gov. Thomas approved them in his final message, and Gov. Orrin indorsed them in his inaugural address, while the recently elected senator, Patterson, supports them personally and in his newspaper—the Rocky Mountain News. The senate committee on the constitution has made a favorable report upon the recommendations, they having been referred to it; and it is believed that the proposed constitutional amendment embodying them will receive the requisite two-thirds vote in the senate. When the fact is noted that this amendment would allow the legislature to provide for levying the Australasian land tax—an ad valorem tax on land to the exclusion of improvements—for state purposes, and would empower counties to adopt it by popular vote for county purposes, as a matter of local option, the great importance and far reaching possibilities of the measure become immediately evident.

Missouri, as well as Colorado, has taken up the subject of local option in taxation, though in a more cumbersome and less direct manner. A resolution is now pending in the legislature of that state looking to a constitutional amendment under which the state would reserve to itself the power of taxing corporate property,

including franchises, and would get revenue from no other source except from license and inheritance taxes, and from fines, forfeitures and fees of public officers. The taxation of real estate and personal property would be left entirely to the localities respectively in which the real estate is situated and the owners of the personalty reside.

It is to be deeply regretted that President McKinley, by appointing a son of Justice Harlan to important office, and the son by not promptly rejecting the appointment, should have placed that distinguished member of the supreme court in a predicament in which, should he support the president's colonial policy in the pending decision of the court, his verdict can never be quite free from suspicion of sinister influences. The president's action is especially culpable, for it exposes not only Justice Harlan but all the other judges who may decide in favor of the president's policy to like suspicion. One judge having been thus openly approached with the disturbing influences of presidential favor, covert approaches to others will inevitably be suspected even by men who incline to look upon judges as beings of superior integrity.

The appointment of young Harlan is more significant perhaps, in that it exposes Mr. McKinley's conception—or is it Mr. Hanna's?—of the manner in which favorable judicial action may be secured, and tends to undermine popular confidence in the judiciary. To the ordinary mind, unaccustomed to worshiping presidents and not disposed to regard judges as demi-gods, the appointment of Justice Harlan's son means nothing less than that Mr. McKinley hoped thereby to influence the action of the supreme court upon a question of vital importance to the principal policy of his administration. It might mean more; but to the average mind it could not mean less. What public necessity was there for