

press, as a community it is not responsible for its Settlements, but that is certainly no reason why the police and the press should attack the Settlements and the people whom they are trying to interpret. What one must regret the most is that so profound a stirring of the emotion of the city should have taken place with so hapless and seemingly hopeless a result. Perhaps it has served to make us feel that we need light—more light if we are to advance securely to the critical task of community-building.

GEO. H. MEAD.

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## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

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### THE "DES MOINES PLAN" IN OPERATION.

Des Moines, April 6.—Before the primary election two weeks earlier than the municipal election (p. 27), there were 43 candidates for commissioner and nine for mayor, all independent excepting a whole ticket (mayor and four commissioners) put up for the people's acceptance by two newspapers.

This ticket was nominated by means of a so-called representative committee of 500, which selected 25, who in turn selected 5 to put upon the ticket. These five were called the Citizens' Ticket, or the "Des Moines plan" ticket, implying that this ticket business was a part of the "Des Moines plan," while in fact every precaution had been taken in the law to avoid such a thing as a "ticket." Again, this ticket of five men was referred to as "Des Moines plan" candidates in contradistinction to the other 47 supposedly not in favor of the "plan," the facts being that two of the five didn't know what plan they were for till put on the "ticket," while many of the other candidates were pronouncedly for the plan. Well, the primary election knocked out one of the five entirely, the other four just coming in "under the rope." The three having the highest number of votes of all were not on the "ticket."

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Last Monday, the five elected had from 3,000 to 4,000 votes over those on the "ticket." Its promoters reported the "defeat" of the "Des Moines plan" candidates, and "the success of the City Hall gang," or something to that effect, while the facts are that the old "City Hall gang" was as completely eliminated as was the "ticket."

Four of the commissioners were certainly the very best choice of all; and the fifth, Wesley Ash, a coal miner four years ago, and a labor union man little known, polled an unexpectedly large vote, giving a little color to the rumor that he was a corporation candidate as well as a "labor" candidate. But he may turn out all right.

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The main opposition in the first place to the "Des Moines plan" was its origin, which had been in rather plutocratic circles. Then, when practically the same men set up a "ticket," all the old suspicions

were naturally aroused, as well as those of many who had faith in the plan itself. So it was snowed under. But the result may be called a victory for labor unionism. Mr. Hamery is a painter belonging to the union; Mr. Mathis favors unions, and believes in municipal ownership of public utilities, as of course does Mr. MacVicar; and Mr. Schramm is an honest German, good to have charge of accounts, taxes and finance. Had it not been for D. M. Parry's work here against unionism, organizing his "Business Men's Association," which made such a mess a few years ago in trying to break up unionism, the labor men would never have tried to break into politics; but now that they have broken in and have won, they will not go to sleep again here.

LONA I. ROBINSON.

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### THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN GREAT BRITAIN.

London, March 31.—The political situation in all countries is the outcome of the prevailing social and economic conditions. From this standpoint the present political situation in Great Britain is a specially interesting one, full of lessons to the political student, and revealing even to the uninitiated the enormous difficulties in the path of radical social reform.

Despite the glowing records of the Board of Trade returns, indicating as they do the enormous natural resources and productive power of the country as a whole, the economic conditions of the masses of our industrial population is such as to arouse serious misgivings in the minds of all attentive to anything beyond the range of their own individual or class interests. To give but one well authenticated illustration. According to an investigation undertaken by Mr. B. Seebohm Rowntree (see his book "Poverty: A Study of Town Life") in the ancient and interesting city of York—where things are certainly not worse, probably a little better, than those prevailing in other towns and industrial centers—"it was found that families comprising 20,302 persons, equal to 43.4 per cent of the wage-earning class, and to 27.84 per cent of the total population of the city, were living in poverty." And what is even worse, though far more suggestive, of this poverty only some 25 per cent could be attributed to temporary or accidental causes, such as irregularity of employment, unemployment, old age, illness or death of the chief wage-earner; some 22 per cent only to "largeness of family," more than four children; and over 50 per cent to the chronic permanent cause of low wages, to the fact that those enjoying the boon of regular work did not earn sufficient "for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency."

Though minimized by the journalistic press, it was facts such as these that had brought home to the people the necessity for some far-reaching social or economic changes. Even the Tory party were swift to realize this fact. The most reactionary amongst them have always looked back to "the good old days of Protection," and have seen in Protective duties the best means of advancing the class interests of the owners of Great Britain. Their chance had at length arrived. Suddenly, as it appeared to super-

ficial observers, the man mainly responsible for the "inevitable" Boer war, became their mouth-piece, and advocated the people taxing themselves through customs duties as the one means of holding the Empire together, and as a sovereign remedy against unemployment and low wages.

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Whatever his merits or demerits, Mr. Chamberlain was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant, as well as the most unscrupulous, platform speakers with which this country has ever been blessed—or cursed; and he entered upon his new campaign with a zeal and vigor worthy of a better cause.

The predatory instinct of the adventurous amongst the privileged classes was aroused; they rallied to his support as one man, and practically inexhaustible financial resources were placed at his disposal, as they still are to-day at the disposal of those who have followed in his footsteps.

At first it appeared as if his giant effort had been made in vain, and had only forced the hands of the Liberal party to pronounce for radical Land Reform as the one possible remedy against the prevailing social ills, as the one alternative to the return to Protection. The general election was held; and the Liberals were returned with an almost unwieldy majority, under the leadership of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the most radical and democratic prime minister Great Britain has ever possessed.

Those attentive to politics realized that after many years Liberalism had now its final chance of proving itself competent to grapple with the many social problems confronting the nation. Much was hoped for; much, too much, was expected; much, far too much, was attempted; but little, indeed, has yet been accomplished, or seems to-day within measurable distance of being accomplished.

Who is to blame? What is to blame? These are the questions to-day forcing themselves upon the attention of the community as a whole. But before these questions can be answered some further analysis of the real political situation is requisite.

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In Great Britain, as everywhere else, the real political struggle is ever between the supporters, beneficiaries and parasites, of established privilege, and those consciously or unconsciously striving for a greater meed of social justice and economic freedom. In other words, it is between those striving to maintain, and where possible to strengthen and to extend, the legalized power of privilege, disguised though this always is as "the rights of property," and those contending for the sacred rights of men.

The former are always the most articulate, the most powerful and influential, as well as the most homogeneous and therefore most easily organized class in the community. They know what they want, and they have abundant means of enforcing their will upon the community as a whole.

The latter are far more heterogeneous; they represent and voice the general dissatisfaction with things as they are, the immortal democratic aspirations towards something better and more worthy of the opportunities within our reach. But they repre-

sent and voice also the prevailing ignorance as to the first steps necessary to secure any far-reaching economic or social reform. They may know what they want, but not the steps necessary to its attainment. Hence their comparative helplessness when confronting the entrenched hosts of privilege and monopoly.

In Great Britain what is known as the Tory party, since 1886 disguised as the Unionist party, has ever been the party of established privilege and monopoly. Its main fortress is the House of Lords, which is almost exclusively composed of representatives of every established privilege, but mainly, of course, of the landocracy. So long as the Tory party is in power, little or nothing is heard of the House of Lords, which contents itself with endorsing the legislation sent up to it from the predominant party in the House of Commons. But as soon as a Liberal party attains office, all this is changed, and the House of Lords, with its everlasting Tory majority, is galvanized into activity, and revels in the congenial task of rejecting or mutilating any legislation that may possibly be injurious to the vested interests they represent, and which give them their power and influence, as well as the revenues they individually and collectively enjoy.

Here, then, we have the main cause of the present manifest impotence of the Liberal party in Great Britain, despite its enormous majority in the House of Commons.

And yet it must be admitted that those responsible for Liberal policies cannot entirely be exempted from blame. Though in the main conservative and very tender of "the sacred rights of privilege," there is yet more than enough sturdy democratic sentiment amongst the people of Great Britain to cow the Lords into submission if only it were properly educated and wisely directed. It is here that the present Liberal party is sadly wanting.

They must have known, but they certainly failed to grasp or to grapple with the situation. Their supporters expected too much; and they attempted too much—or at all events too many things concurrently. Instead of organizing their forces and concentrating their energies on one definite line of social reform, whichever they may have regarded as the most important and vital, they have dissipated their energies on half a dozen different schemes and proposals. Licensing Bills, Education Bills, Small Holdings Bills, Land Valuation Bills, mostly framed on radical lines, have been introduced and passed in the House of Commons and sent up to the Lords, but so far none of them have succeeded in passing this ordeal.

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What the Liberal party will do to maintain its position and to make good its claim to support, it is difficult to say. The urgent need of the country is for social reform, for some means by which the economic pressure crushing the industrial masses beneath its weight, robbing them of everything that makes life truly human, may be permanently relieved. This, in truth, was the task demanded by the country of the Liberal party, though unfortunately many good liberals seem under the impression that this is possible without infringing on the vested interests of established privilege.

The Liberal party may attempt to evade their task by replying that "the House of Lords blocks the way," and appeal to the country for constitutional reform of the House of Lords. It is, however, more than doubtful whether any such cry would arouse any enthusiastic response.

For it is increasingly recognized that it is in some alteration in the established methods of taxation, both local and national, that the key to the problem can alone be found. And even the proverbial "man in the street" knows that over taxation the House of Lords has practically no power; that "the power of the purse" is in the hands of the House of Commons, and may be used, as it has been in the past, to secure redress for the social ills that afflict the patient and long-suffering people. They may reject or mangle all other proposals, but the Budget the House of Lords cannot amend and dare not reject.

Hence it is that it is to the Budget of this or next year that earnest Liberals are now looking as the one means by which the first step toward radical social reform may be taken if the present Liberal leaders prove themselves worthy of the high traditions of Liberalism and of the opportunities temporarily within their reach.

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Will they take this step? I do not know. The logic of facts is undoubtedly forcing them in this direction, bidding them take courage and fearlessly face the issue. Tariff Reform (alias Protection), or Land Reform; the Taxation of Commodities needful for human life and human industry, or the Taxation of Privilege, hurtful to all save the few who share in it: this is the issue to-day before Great Britain.

Personally I do not doubt the result if only the issue is fairly and squarely placed before the people.

Such as it is, the Liberal party alone stands between the privileged classes and their natural prey. Should its present leaders evade their responsibilities, the chains of Protection will be added to the fetters of Land Monopoly, and the path toward social justice and economic freedom will be blocked for many generations to come.

L. H. BERENS.

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## NEWS NARRATIVE

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To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

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Week ending Tuesday, April 14, 1908.

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### Freedom of the Mails.

President Roosevelt has taken drastic official action with reference to freedom of the newspaper mails (p. 11). He sent to Congress on the 9th the following message:

I herewith submit a letter from the Department of Justice, which explains itself. Under this opinion I hold that existing statutes give the President

the power to prohibit the Postmaster General from being used as an instrument in the commission of crime; that is, to prohibit the use of the mails for the advocacy of murder, arson and treason; and I shall act upon such construction. Unquestionably, however, there should be further legislation by Congress in this matter. When compared with the suppression of anarchy, every other question sinks into insignificance. The anarchist is the enemy of humanity, the enemy of all mankind, and his is a deeper degree of criminality than any other. No immigrant is allowed to come to our shores if he is an anarchist; and no paper published here or abroad should be permitted circulation in this country if it propagates anarchistic opinions.

The letter from the Department of Justice, referred to in the President's message, is from Attorney General Bonaparte. It is in reply to a request from the President for an interpretation of the laws affecting the use of the mails by "anarchist" publications. The Attorney General advises that publications like those submitted to him by the President constitute a "seditious libel" which is "undoubtedly a crime, at common law;" but as there is no Federal statute making them criminal, they cannot be prosecuted in the Federal courts. He holds, however, that Congress has power to make them criminal; and that "the Postmaster General will be justified in excluding from the mails any issue of any periodical which shall contain any article constituting a seditious libel and counseling such crimes as murder, arson, riot and treason." But he distinguishes between sealed and unsealed mail matter. In conveying letters and newspapers to persons to whom they are directed, he says, the United States "undertakes the business of a messenger," and adds: "In so far as it conveys sealed documents, its agents not only are not bound to know but are expressly forbidden to ascertain what the purport of such messages may be; therefore neither the government nor its officers can be held either legally or morally responsible for the nature of the letters to which they thus, in intentional ignorance, afford transportation."

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### Presidential Politics.

The Republicans of Delaware elected national delegates (p. 36) on the 7th, but gave no instructions. In Massachusetts, the Republican delegates at large were elected on the 10th without instructions. At New York City on the 11th, the Republican convention, dominated by Roosevelt men, perfunctorily endorsed the candidacy of Governor Hughes by adopting a resolution directing the delegates to present his name "as New York's candidate and to use all honorable means to bring about his nomination for President." A substitute instructing the delegates at large and requesting the district delegates "to persistently labor for his nomination until a nomination is made," was defeated in committee. The New