

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-