

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

### The President's Message.

In all the preachy parts of President Roosevelt's message the best thing he says is this: "Wise radicalism and wise conservatism go hand in hand; one bent on progress, the other bent on seeing that no change is made unless in the right direction." But whether Mr. Roosevelt has the faintest conception of what this awkwardly constructed epigram means, one may well question after trying to follow his message through its maze of sociological epithets. They defy consistent definition. Taking the message as a whole it is truly suggestive of the recent comment upon Mr. Roosevelt, that he is like the lost traveler who asked if he was on the right road to Jericho, and was told that he was on the right road right enough, but was going the wrong way. It is the message of an aristocrat who hates plutocracy, and holds democracy in contempt, but loves to serve his fellow man paternally, condescendingly, autocratically.

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### President Roosevelt and Woman Suffrage.

On the subject of woman suffrage, President Roosevelt maintains a delicate balance. His principles are for it, but he keeps his principles under control. He believes in it, but not in putting it into practice. "Personally," he says in a letter to Lyman Abbott, "I believe in woman suffrage; but I am not an enthusiastic advocate of it, because I do not regard it as a very important mat-

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ter." After explaining why he is "lukewarm or tepid" in support of it, he introduces an epigram. It is one of those Rooseveltian epigrams which are strikingly axiomatic in form but amazingly false in the application he makes of them. "Man and woman should stand on an equality of right," he proclaims, "but equality of right does not mean identity of function." Nothing could be truer. Yet Mr. Roosevelt makes an utterly false application of that truth. He implies that voting is itself a function—a masculine function. But in truth, voting is only a mechanism for the performance of public functions—feminine public functions as well as masculine. His idea is that the sole function of woman is motherhood. But motherhood means infinitely more than child bearing and child rearing. It means also citizen rearing. And then there is wifehood as well as motherhood, and sisterhood as well as both, each having civic functions. How can there be complete wifehood or sisterhood or motherhood in segregation from public affairs? In the absence of that understanding of public affairs which is bred by the interest in them which can spring only from participation, complete womanhood—which includes complete motherhood—is impossible. The mother without a voice in the fostering of the municipal family and the regulation of the national household, must be of an extraordinary type if she maintains even her own intelligence and love of citizenship. How then can she foster that intelligence and that love in her children? Mr. Roosevelt might as well expect an ill-bred woman to rear a well-bred family as a disfranchised woman to rear children of genuine public spirit.

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### The "Suffragette" Tactics.

It is somewhat difficult to believe that some of the leaders in the disturbance tactics which London "suffragettes" have adopted are sincerely desirous of securing legislation favorable to woman suffrage. Lack of common sense would seem to be the only explanation, other than lack of good faith, for their conduct at the meeting of the Woman's Liberal League last week. The meeting was not theirs. The hall had been hired by another organization for a particular purpose, and in so far as they were invited at all it was as guests and upon the tacit understanding that they would respect the rights of their hosts. The speaker was a member of the ministry who is thoroughly identified with the woman suffrage movement, and has undertaken the task of securing the presentation by the ministry to Parliament of a woman suffrage measure. He was present on this

occasion to explain the situation to a woman suffrage meeting called by a woman suffrage organization. Yet a collection of women, professing to want what he is trying to secure, and what he is likely to be successful in securing, and was there to report to the public upon—they turn the peaceable meeting into a riotous gathering at which the speaker cannot be heard. They would deserve the severest condemnation had they done this at a hostile meeting. To do it at a meeting intended to promote the cause for which they profess to stand, adds another to the reasons for condemning them.

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### The Steel Trust and the Tariff.

A curious fact is noticeable in connection with the tariff investigation which the House committee on ways and means is conducting in Washington. Not only are they apparently unable to draw out any information from the steel trust, but the steel magnates seem to be wholly indifferent to tariff legislation. Can it be, then, that Mr. Carnegie's recent outcome for free trade is the voice of the trust itself? Mr. Carnegie has been suspected of becoming a free trader because he no longer needs a tariff—having salted away his tariff plunder where free competition cannot break in and dissipate. But it is possible that he is only acting as spokesman for the trust. It is possible that protection is no longer of any use to them, is a positive hindrance, and that they would rather have it abolished than not. This suspicion is certainly in keeping with their behavior in giving the tariff committee a cavalier go by. And it is explainable upon the fact that the steel trust has acquired the richest sources of production on the planet. With its acquisition of the Tennessee properties for a song (p. 679) it got into a position where all the iron interests of the world are at its mercy. Why should the steel trust bother Congress for protection when it can make and enforce its own?

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### An Abuse of Statistics.

A glaring example of a common misuse of labor statistics in support of protection, appears in a document recently submitted to the House committee on ways and means by the paper trust (p. 146). It pleads for continuance of the present prohibitive duties on news paper. The plea is of course in behalf, not of the trust but of its workmen! To show that it is the workmen that will suffer if the tariff be abolished, this document produces a page of comparative wage statistics