

LIVE QUESTIONS.

A Series of Articles Contributed to These Columns by Advanced Thinkers.

NUMBER X.—THE UNITED STATES NOT A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. THE REMEDY.

A study of the congressional election returns of 1894 proves conclusively that our representative system is a delusion and a snare.

For instance, Massachusetts, with a Republican vote of 191,243, secures 12 representatives, while the Democrats, with 130,893 ballots polled, are represented by only one congressman, or over 7 1/2 Democratic citizens must go to the polls to equal the representative power of one Republican.

Today Illinois is entitled to one Republican congressman for every 22,403 voters, but it takes 161,713 Democrats to gain one representative, or, like Massachusetts the proportion against the Democrats is over 7 to 1.

In Ohio it requires over six times as many voters to elect one Democrat as it does a Republican representative.

In New York state the recent vote stands 22,897 for every Republican representative, while requiring 100,610 Democrats to accomplish the same results, though in the congressional election returns of 1892 it took 31,680 Democrats to equal 43,356 Republicans.

Dear old conservative Pennsylvania secures 28 Republican congressmen for 613,921 ballots polled, while the Democrats have only two for 352,560 voters. Have the Democrats of the Keystone State sunk so low that it requires over eight of them to offset one Republican? If this state had had proportional representation, the representation would have stood 18 Republicans, 11 Democrats and 1 Prohibitionist.

In the states of Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin the Democrats, with over six times the Republican quota, have no Democratic representation at all.

Indiana leads off as the worst represented state in the Union. The Democrats cast almost 11 times the quota of the Republicans, and yet have not even one representative.

The People's Party adherents polled votes in excess of the average quota and yet in most of the states with no representation at all.

Georgia Populists cast nearly seven times the quota of the Democrats and yet are not represented, while in Texas they have almost ten times the Democratic quota, with the same results. In 1892 the Populists cast 1,046,392 votes, securing 12 representatives, yet in the last election, at the polling 308,330 more votes than in 1892, they have only seven congressmen.

Today the Prohibitionists are not represented at all in congress, yet they cast a vote which would entitle them under proportional representation to three congressmen.

These figures prove that our whole system of representation is manifestly unjust. The wonder is that we have submitted to it so long.

The evil lies in our district system. Suppose there were 30,000 votes cast in each of the 30 congressional districts of Pennsylvania, each district being entitled to one representative, with five parties in each district, the vote standing thus: 4,000 Prohibitionists, 5,000 People's Party, 6,000 Single Taxers, 7,000 Republicans, 8,000 Democrats. Yet the mere fact that the Democrats cast 1,000 more votes than any one party—a plurality of 1,000 votes, not a majority—entitles them, under the present system, to the one representative. And the remaining 22,000 people are not represented at all! Carry this illustration through the 30 congressional districts, and we find 120,000 Prohibitionists, 150,000 People's Party, 180,000 Single Taxers, 210,000 Republicans and 240,000 Democrats. Lo and behold, the Democrats march off with the whole 30 congressmen, leaving 660,000 men who actually went to the polls and voted unrepresented!

Is it right? Is it justice that the minority of the total vote should make the laws for the majority?

Must the political fight always narrow itself to two great parties? Is there no hope for the many reform movements? Must corruption and bribery run rampant that one party may succeed by a few votes? Is there no remedy, or must we continue to practically disfranchise a large proportion of the men who actually go to the polls and vote?

There is a remedy, and that remedy is proportional representation, which is that each political party within city, county or state is entitled to representation in proportion to the number of votes each party casts. To secure it we must first abolish all district lines.

For instance, to return to our previous illustration of Pennsylvania, abolish all the 30 districts, making the state into one large district. Suppose the voting power is 900,000, balloting for 30 congressmen. Justice would demand that every one-thirtieth of the 900,000 voters, or every 30,000 men, should receive one representative. Thirty thousand votes is then the quota. With this result, the 120,000 Prohibitionists are entitled to 4 congressmen; the 150,000 People's Party to 5, the 180,000 Single Taxers, 210,000 Republicans and 240,000 Democrats to 8, 7 and 8 congressmen, respectively. Under proportional representation the Democrats, instead of having the whole 30 congressmen, receive only the proportion to which their number of votes entitled them—no more, no less.

Is not this justice? Many people have a dread of adopting any new system, thinking it best to hold to an imperfect one rather than advocate one which has not received the test of experience.

But, unfortunately, proportional representation has stepped from the theoretical to the practical field of politics. It is in operation in several of the cantons of Switzerland and has met with

such overwhelming success that it is only a matter of getting the "political machine" started, when all the cantons of Switzerland will adopt it.

Today only one party can win in any one district. Result, bribery and corruption, in order to be that one party. Under proportional representation all parties can gain representation. Any party can print the names of their candidates on the regular ballot, provided that party can show they can command 1 per cent of the total voting power. Today it is practically impossible for Prohibitionists or Single Taxers to gain the balance of power with any one district. But under this system the Single Taxers could unite all over the state to send one or more representatives to congress or to the state legislature. Then a man will vote with a knowledge that it will count for the party and principles in which he is interested.

For any economic or political reform movement, desiring to work along the line of least resistance, proportional representation is the quickest method to secure real and practical progress. All of whatever political shade of opinion, can unite on this platform. The farmers should take warning from the great loss of voting power and energy of the Populists, who in 1894 secured only seven representatives after polling votes which under proportional representation would have entitled them to 40 members in congress, a loss of 33 members. First secure proportional representation; then reformers can step into the political arena with the knowledge that every vote tells. Once in the field of action people will consider it worth their while to study your principles. As it is now the reformers are practically disfranchised, having no voice in the law-making of the land.

KATHERINE J. MUSSON.
Philadelphia, Jan. 1, 1896.

NUMBER XI.—THE POSSESSORY RIGHT OF SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS.

Wherever the children of men believe or can be induced or taught to believe in the fatherhood of one God and the brotherhood of all men the principles inculcated by Thomas Jefferson bid fair to dominate the political and social relations of the near future. One of the reasons urged by him against the creation of a national debt is of special interest at the present time. In a letter written by him in August, 1813, from which the subjoined quotation is made, he demonstrates the "possessory right of successive generations" thus:

"The generations of men may be considered as bodies or corporations. Each generation has the usufruct of the earth during the period of its continuance. When it ceases to exist that usufruct passes on to the succeeding generation free and unincumbered, and so on successively from one generation to another forever. We may consider each generation as a distinct nation, with a right by the will of its majority to bind themselves, but none to bind the succeeding generation more than the inhabitants of another country. Or the case may be likened to the ordinary one of a tenant for life, who may hypothecate the land for his debts during the continuance of his usufruct, but at his death the reversioner, who is also tenant for life only, receives it exonerated from all burthen. The period of a generation or the term of its life is determined by the laws of mortality. I find that of the numbers of all ages living at any one moment half will be dead in 24 years and 8 months. But leaving out minors, who have not the power of self government, of the adults living at one moment, a majority of whom act for the society, one-half will be dead in 18 years and 8 months.

"At 19 years, then, from the date of a contract, the majority of the contracters are dead and their contract with them. Let this general theory be applied to a particular case: Suppose the annual births in the state of New York to be 23,994; the whole number of its inhabitants will be 617,703, of all ages. Of these, there would constantly be 269,286 minors and 348,417 adults, of which last 174,209 will be a majority. Suppose that majority, on the first day of the year 1794, had borrowed a sum of money equal to the fee simple value of the state and to have consumed it in eating, drinking and making merry in their day, or, if you please, in quarrelling and fighting with their unoffending neighbors. Within 18 years and 8 months one-half of the adult citizens were dead. Till then, being the majority, they might rightfully levy the interest of their debt annually on themselves and their fellow revelers or fellow champions. But at that period (say at this moment) a new majority have come into place in their own right and not under the rights the conditions or laws of their predecessors. Are they bound to acknowledge the debt, to consider the preceding generation as having had a right to eat up the whole soil of their country in the course of a life, to alienate it from them (for it would be an alienation to the creditors), and would they think themselves either legally or morally bound to give up their country and to emigrate to another for subsistence? Every one will say no; that the soil is the gift of God to the living, as much as it had been to the deceased generation and that the laws of nature impose no obligation on them to pay this debt. And although, like some other natural rights, this has not yet entered into any declaration of rights, it is no less a law and 'ought to be acted on by honest governments."

The reader who will carefully peruse the series of letters from one of which the foregoing extract is made and who will then look around him, at the maladjustment of existing social conditions, will find cumulative evidence tending to prove that in these closing years of the nineteenth century the soil that is "marching on" is not that of John Brown (whose body, etc.), but is, rather, the soul of the patriot-statesman, Thomas Jefferson. GEO. C. WORTH.
St. Louis, February, 1896.

HOEBER AND THE DEAD PARROT.

Its Owner Wanted Him to Get Back the Money She Paid for It.

An old woman, who carried a large paper bag, asked to see Coroner Hoeber at the coroner's office, in New York. She was ushered into Coroner Hoeber's private room.

"My bird is dead," said the woman to the coroner.

"What is that?" asked Coroner Hoeber.

"Yes, he only lived a little while after I bought him on Houston street. Such a pretty green parrot, but he—"

"What do I about your bird care?" yelled the coroner, becoming excited.

"I took him to Justice Roesch's court at Second avenue and First street," continued the woman, paying no attention to Hoeber's interruption. "They told me there that, as the bird was dead, you would hold court on him and get me back my money."

"They are all crazy in Roesch's court," vociferated the coroner, dancing about. "We don't cognizance take of dead parrots here already. We have all we can do looking after men and women who their brains blow out. Did you think I was a taxidermist?"

"Eliza Thurston Berkland is my name," the woman went on when the coroner's breath gave out, "and I don't want my husband to know that the bird man swindled me. The bird was sick when he sold it to me. 'See,' she added, as she took the dead parrot from the paper bag and laid it on the coroner's desk. "Look you what a pretty bird. Can't you help me get my money from that swindler on Houston street?"

"Take yourself and your parrot out of my office quick!" the coroner roared. "This was one contemptible trick played on me, ain't it? I will hear no more from you!"

Mrs. Berkland picked up the dead bird and walked sadly out of the office. Afterward Coroner Hoeber threatened to discharge all the clerks in the general office for sending the woman to him.—New York Sun.

BISMARCK'S BOOK COMES HIGH.

No American Publisher Able to Pay the Price for His Memoirs.

Bismarck holds himself at a great figure in a literary way, as some of the American publishers are finding out. It looked last summer as if at least one of the American editors in Europe would bring back a contract for the American rights to the Iron Chancellor's memoirs. In fact, it was said that one of the New York magazines had secured these rights. Now it appears, however, that the whole matter of American rights is off, at least for the present. As high as \$20,000 was bid for the privilege of the American publication of the memoirs offered. But this was not enough, and as neither publisher nor editor can be found sufficiently daring to increase the amount, the matter remains in statu quo. It will require at least \$10,000 more to induce Bismarck's agent to say yes to an American issuance of his chief's work, and even then the publication cannot be made until after death, and some time after that. Furthermore, only the smaller portion of the work is finished—not more than enough for two octavo volumes, while the work will extend to six at least. From all this it is not very likely that the American people will read whatever Bismarck has chosen or may choose to write for some time to come. That much is certain.

Chicago's Effort for a First-Class Jury.

"May it please the court, I have a prayer meeting to attend, and if I sit on this jury the prayer-meeting can't go on," said the Rev. R. A. Haddock to Justice Hall. The justice paused in the act of taking his fee for a bond. Such a novel excuse had never come to his knowledge, and it required consideration.

"This court has a proper respect for prayer meetings," he finally said, "and it shall never be said the blind goddess who watches over this court was so unsympathetic and heartless as to deprive a flock of its spiritual guide, at least not while I am on the bench. You may go to the meeting."

The reverend gentleman lost no time in departing, and Constable McDonough went out to seek another juror. The justice explained that he had been bothered lately with professional jurors and carstone loafers, who were always within easy reach when a jury trial was demanded. In a case that came up recently he ordered the constable to bring in "a first-class jury," and that functionary raided the reading-room of the Young Men's Christian Association, the Rev. Mr. Haddock being among the number pressed into service.—Chicago Chronicle.

An Important Part Left Out.

Hazel—Oh, bother! I've used up all my note paper and my letter isn't half finished.

Grace—Why, you've written eight pages, haven't you? Isn't that enough?

Hazel—Yes, but I haven't begun on the postscript yet.—Somerville Journal.

Spared for Further Mischief.

"Madame," said the new boarder, "one of your family came very near dying last night."

"Indeed, I was not aware that any one was ill. Who was it?"

"The man in the room next to mine who played the cornet till 3 a. m. He stopped just in time to save his life."—Detroit Free Press.

Agreed to Differ.

Old Graybeard—It's a pity to keep such a pretty bird in a cage.

Mrs. de Style—Isn't it a shame! How perfectly exquisitely lovely it would look on a hat!—Erie Messenger.

a runaway train

Sometimes, through accident or neglect, control of a train is lost and it speeds down the grade. It is so easy to go down hill; but the journey back is slow and hard. Have you been climbing up in strength, accumulating force? Or have you been going the other way, losing ground?

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