

of Bigelow, the embezzling banker of Milwaukee. With this case for a text, the press has surfeited us with sermons on the impartiality of the law. It is not true, we are told, that the law is enforced against the poor and not against the rich. Unhappily the Bigelow case is hardly a convincing instance. Although he had been a rich and influential man, he was neither when his crimes came to light. Before we cease to suspect that "rich men rule the law," let us see some rich man sent to prison for a richmen's crime. So long as the Rogerses and the Rockefellers and the Stillmans and the Equitable group are at large, it is not so clear that the law operates impartially; and to point to Bigelow's case as an example of its impartiality is weak. Bigelow wasn't sent to prison for his crime—embezzlement; he was sent to prison for his misfortune—failure in the investment of the proceeds of his crime. Suppose his investments had been profitable, does anyone imagine he would have been brought to the bar of justice? Yet his crime would have been as great.

THE CASE OF THE EQUITABLE.

Mr. Paul Morton's acceptance of the chairmanship of the board of directors of the Equitable company makes the question of his fitness a very curious as well as important financial problem.

With public faith in the integrity of life insurance management in general rapidly waning, and, in relation to the Equitable in particular, quite destroyed, the man to meet the need must not only possess unquestioned ability, but, above all, his record, his character, must be such as to compel the unqualified confidence of the public.

Such a man would not undertake the task unless assured a free hand. Given that assurance, the right man might, by assuming the direction of this great public institution, add luster to any name.

The board of directors recognized the need of a man whose character would compel confi-

dence. They made overtures to a number of such men in succession, who declined. Why did they decline?

It is conceivable that such a man might have conscientious scruples against accepting a salary so enormous as to render it a potential bribe—a possibly irresistible inducement to acquiescence in frenzied financial schemes.

Of course, able arguments can be made in favor of a hundred thousand dollar salary; able and lengthy arguments can be made in support of a million-dollar salary; and still abler as well as interminable arguments could be made to demonstrate both the equity and business expediency of paying a billion-dollar salary, if graft, under the name of "salary," should ever reach that magnitude. But, for the purposes of this article, suffice it to say that the able men of sterling character who declined the Equitable's overtures did not do so on the ground of insufficient salary. Let the question be repeated, then: Why did they decline?

There was a task to match the ambition of the ablest man. There were the stored-up fortunes of vast multitudes awaiting an honest man to conserve and distribute them. There was a rare field for the exploitation of the highest gifts of mind and heart; an opportunity to earn—with the certainty of receiving—the grateful plaudits of millions of men, women and children!

Why was it all refused?

The inference will not dawn that the power to do the right thing by the policy-holders was not tendered along with the hundred-thousand-dollar salary.

Was it not precisely that assumption that prompted the Chicago Tribune of June 10 to say, editorially:

It is almost an insult to assume that Mr. Robert T. Lincoln, for example, would associate his name and that of his honored father with a scandal—for a price?

Referring to the reported tender of the Equitable's chairmanship to Gov. Deneen, the same paper said:

He (Deneen) believes that "a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches," especially if the latter must be acquired by merging one's individual-

ity and renown in a great corporation which is rich but not respectable.

The Tribune also mentioned Gov. Herrick as one of those who resisted the allurements of the Equitable's overtures, and observed:

A great salary will not tempt any of the men named, or others like them.

In this same issue of the Tribune Mr. Morton's picture appeared in connection with a conspicuous announcement of his acceptance of the place that "a great salary will not tempt any of the men named, or others like them," to accept.

Is Mr. Morton the man for the place? Has the ex-vice president of the rebate-scamalized Santa Fe railroad the prestige of character demanded by the Equitable situation?

If the conditions on which the office was previously tendered to Robert T. Lincoln were such as to render the overture "almost an insult," what is there in the character of Mr. Paul Morton, as compared with the character of Mr. Lincoln, to strip the tender of its insulting quality? Or did Mr. Morton pocket the insult, as a necessary preliminary to pocketing the salary?

Was the Equitable really hunting for a man who measured up to the situation from the public's side, or from the side of its discredited managers?

Did it first try its conditions on the highest class of men, then on a lower class, and so on down, until it found a man that the conditions would fit?

Is the man who is generally believed to have evaded the law as a railroad official, the kind of man required to rebuild the shattered confidence of the public in a disgraced and discredited financial institution?

EDWARD HOWELL PUTNAM.

THE CROWN AND THE LORDS.

A liberal-minded old teacher, some thirty years ago, when there was less of machinery and more of the humanities in the schools, was in the habit of talking to his boys on various problems. Sometimes the talk was of individual conduct and homely duties; at other times he spoke of larger matters of the history of politics. One day, speaking of England, he

said that the abolition of the Crown and the House of Lords was inevitable, that he expected the change would come within ten years. Twice ten years have been added to his ten, and to-day his prophecy would seem to many farther away from fulfillment than it seemed thirty years ago.

The last three decades have seen royalty, and its accompanying nobility, increase in pomp and pretension. They have seen a new imperialism arise and a recrudescence of royal functions. They have seen processions of state and the outward manifestations of imperial power increase in grandeur and gorgeousness.

And yet the teacher's prophecy will come true. However entrenched seems the hereditary idea of Crown and Lords, it is sure to fall. Its absurdity is sure to become manifest to modern thought and education. The schools, in spite of their conservatism, will do their work of widening the thoughts of men. Books like Morrison Davidson's, hardly noticed by the orthodox, yet selling by the thousands, will be found not to have been written in vain. The end must come to this absurdity of Crown and Lords, as it has come, or will come, to every other high farce that has paraded, or still parades, on the human stage.

Even now voices are not wanting. In the May number of the Westminster Review there is a brief but pithy editorial article entitled: Wanted—An Elective Executive. It is true that the writer is referring to the election of a Prime Minister by the House, and makes no mention of the King; but the very fact of electing an executive as the real representative of the popular will would have an influence in emphasizing the expensive uselessness of a royal figurehead.

The article reads in part as follows: "The House must control the Executive. And that result can best be attained by the adoption of the system known as the Elective Executive, under which all ministers would be directly elected by the House and directly and individually responsible to the House, while the initiation of legislation would rest, not with the Executive, but with the House.

Under this system, of course, such an anachronism as the House of Lords could not long survive. This chamber of hereditary wreckers would right speedily be swept aside, and its place would be taken by the Referendum."

This is brave talk, and apparently not without significance at the present stage of parliamentary agitation. The conservative ministry is hanging on to every nook and crook, fearing an appeal to the country, and terribly uncertain as to what new policies may be forced into the arena. Many seem to feel that the country is on the eve of some new turn, and conservatives naturally wish to postpone the crisis. We may be quite certain that feeling is running high when a leading review speaks of the upper chamber as an anachronism, calls their Graces by such an epithet as Hereditary Wreckers, and proposes that parliamentary bills be referred for approval not to them but to the people. Referendum instead of Lords, the people instead of dukes—what a world of difference. And it must come so. In spite of all reactions of royal parades and imperialism it has been inevitable since the Reform Bill of '32. It is the natural evolution of democracy.

J. H. DILLARD.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

DIRECT LEGISLATION IN DELAWARE.

Wilmington, June 10.—Gov. Lee has signed the bill for submitting to the people of Delaware at the next general election the question of instituting a system of advisory initiative and referendum, the passage of which by the legislature was noted in *The Public* of April 1st (vol. vii., p. 823). The earlier part of the work for this reform was begun before I engaged in it. As near as I can tell, it was begun by the farmers in Kent County. But a little over a year ago a number of men, nearly all of whom were single tax men, met and advised that on account of experiences in endeavoring to promote the single tax cause in the State of Delaware in the past, we needed direct legislation. It was decided then to form an organization for the purpose of promoting direct legislation in some manner, and of this organization I was elected president. For a long time there was considerable difference of opinion and uncertainty as to the best method of procedure. Literature on the general

subject was distributed in every house in Wilmington, and to almost every house in Dover, and in other parts of the State, but not in a very thorough manner. A tentative canvass was made on a certain street which was considered to be a fair average sample of the city. This showed 30 per cent. of the voters willing to vote for direct legislation, even though they did not vote with their party. In addition, 20 per cent. favored it, but were not willing to vote outside of their own party. The rest either would not express an opinion or could not be reached for an interview. The canvass disclosed sufficient interest to make it worth while to go ahead.

So letters were written to the newspapers, and the editors were visited by persons capable of treating them in a friendly way and of making a good impression. All newspapers in the city of Wilmington were influenced in favor of the work.

The legal aspect of direct legislation was carefully examined, and it was found that the constitution of Delaware does not admit of anything of the kind, and an amendment would take nearly six years to become effective. On account of this, it was decided to make the attempt at having the constitution amended, but meantime to go ahead and do the best that could be done to awaken popular interest. It was thought that it would be better to get some measure passed by the legislature, even though the measure was not very effective, than to make a trial for an effective measure, and not have it passed; therefore, the bill offered to the legislature was merely one to submit to the voters at the next general election the question, Shall the General Assembly institute a system of advisory initiative and advisory referendum?

In case of the passage of such a bill, the next legislature would not be bound by it, i. e., they would not be compelled to establish the system, even though the voters wished it. The reason for this is that it has been well established in law that no legislature can do anything to bind another legislature. However, it was thought that a popular vote would have considerable moral force, and, besides this, the getting of any measure through the legislature would increase the respect of persons generally for those engaged in the movement, thereby insuring them a larger following than they might otherwise have.

A dinner was given, to which were invited a number of prominent people of Wilmington, the Mayor and the City Council being included. Mr. J. Z. White, of Chicago, was asked to explain the subject at this dinner. This he did very well, and the affair was considered a success. Many persons who did not expect to take