

INTEREST IN DIRECT PRIMARIES.

Political activity up the State, unlike that in Greater New York, does not wait for the coming of September. Several contests for Assembly and Senate nominations have already been fought out, and others are under way. In all of them, the chief issue is Mr. Hughes's plan of direct primaries. This must astonish those confident gentlemen who had sunk that measure of the Governor's forty fathoms deep, but it is the fact. Indeed, the opponents of Gov. Hughes have found the people so interested in his project that they have made haste, in some counties, to call the party primaries at an unprecedentedly early date, so as to forestall discussion and outwit the advocates of the direct primary. In various parts of the State, as in Chenango County, candidates are announcing themselves in opposition to the choices of the party managers, and are doing it on the Hughes platform. Be their motives selfish or not, their course testifies to the extraordinary hold which the proposal to introduce direct primaries has taken upon the political imagination of the people of New York.

In this fact lies the really strongest reply to such arguments against the direct primary as are advanced by Prof. H. J. Ford, in his article in the July *North American Review*. His trenchant contention practically comes down to this: all political machinery is bad; it leads directly to irresponsibility and graft; therefore, instead of arranging to give the people more to do with primaries and elections, you ought to be planning to give them still less. Professor Ford's view frankly leans to the aristocratic theory of government—we use the word in no invidious sense. He would have as few elected officials as possible, with large powers entrusted to them, and with political machinery and the interference of the electorate reduced to the minimum. This is that idea of heaven-born rulers of men, placed above the crowd, which Lord Salisbury once expounded and which John Morley afterwards attacked with such an array of historic proof, showing what a mess the aristocrats had made of government. Be that as it may, we are in for the democratic movement, think what we will of it. The people are going to participate in their political management, whether we like it or not; and the only questions to ask are how they can be

got to do so wisely, and what useful political weapons we can place in their hands.

Professor Ford seems to think that no one can favor direct primaries, unless he can show, or believes, that they will prove a panacea for all our political ills. But Gov. Hughes is under no such illusion. He does not expect to get rid of the boss or the professional politician. What he is aiming at is a wider and more flexible system of party government. Of the new machinery, it may well be true that the skilled practitioners of politics will, in ordinary times, get control. They are in the business year in and year out, so that the average citizen cannot hope to compete with them. Yet the fact will remain that a new possibility of popular assertion, and even, in a pinch, of popular revolution, has been provided. Voters will be able more easily and directly to effect their will, when they really will something very hard. And undoubtedly it is this thought which most sways the people of New York, who are displaying so much interest in the subject of the direct primary. They are not abstract political philosophers. In the mere frame of government, as such, they are not deeply concerned. But they strongly desire to make their political activity more felt and effective; and because they are convinced that Gov. Hughes has pointed out the way to that end, they are supporting him with so much enthusiasm in his plan for reforming party management.

A LIBERAL AND LABOR ALLIANCE.

Last Friday's bye-election in the Cleveland Division of Yorkshire was hailed by the Conservatives as a blow to the Government, because the Liberal majority was cut down one-half. In 1902, the last time this constituency was contested, the Liberal candidate, Mr. Herbert Samuel, received a majority of 2,036; now the figure is reduced to 971. This result may or may not indicate dissatisfaction with the budget, but one thing is certain: the majority would have gone much lower, and might have been wiped out altogether, had not the Independent Labor party decided not to put up a man against Mr. Samuel. And this decision, of course, was due almost wholly to the Labor party's satisfaction with the budget. Indeed, the signs of a closer electoral coöperation, if not tacit

alliance, between the Liberals and the Laborites are multiplying, and are causing the Conservatives much uneasiness.

One of them writes to the *London Times* declaring that this "Liberal-Labor" movement means the extinction of the Liberal party. He is particularly distressed by the situation in Mid-Derbyshire, where a bye-election is soon to be held, and where the Liberals have endorsed the Labor candidate, Mr. Hancock. The latter, in his election address, committed himself flatly to free trade, and said that he was "opposed to any return, under whatever guise, to the old and discredited system of protection." This Labor representative also applauded Lloyd-George's budget as "the most democratic and beneficial to the general community ever put forward." As the Liberal majority in this district was more than 3,500 in 1906, the chances of Mr. Hancock's election must be thought excellent. If three candidates had stood, the Conservatives had high hopes of winning the seat. As it is they are exclaiming at the disgrace of the Liberal party in "surrendering seat after seat to 'Liberal-Labor.'"

The thing goes far beyond these scattering bye-elections. It foreshadows an understanding and working agreements between the Liberals and the Labor party in the general election, which cannot be deferred much after next year. If the committees of the two parties are able to arrange it so that nearly all three-cornered contests can be avoided, the task of the Conservatives in winning a majority, independent of the Irish, will be made much harder. As the drift now is, their success seems assured; but the great preponderance to which they have been looking forward, as a basis for a strong and lasting Ministry, will not so easily be attained if the Liberals and Labor party go into the struggle practically as allies. Hence these Tory tears.

Furthermore, this new political combination will have highly important immediate effects. It will make any meddling with the budget by the Lords, much more their throwing out of the finance bill altogether, an exceedingly delicate and dangerous operation. Should such a revolutionary step be ventured by Mr. Balfour and his obedient Peers, the infallible result would be to weld all radical elements indissolubly. The cry would be raised that the Conserva-

tives were merely the party of the landlords and of privilege. And a new and burning issue would be injected into the campaign, the voting upon which no man could predict. All these considerations are plainly giving the Conservative leaders pause. Many among their followers, and several newspaper organs, in their violent denunciation of a "socialistic" and "confiscatory" budget, have been demanding that the House of Lords take its courage in both hands and make an end of the measure entirely, challenging an appeal to the country at once. But Mr. Balfour's cautious Scotch nature does not incline him to such vertiginous policies. During all the debates on the budget in the House of Commons, he has not once intimated that it might be done to death in "another place." And the likelihood is strong that his aversion to such a course will be deepened by the evident preparation of the Liberals and the Independent Labor party to pool their electoral issues.

Unquestionably, Mr. Asquith and Lloyd-George and Winston Churchill are in a position to appeal strongly for Labor support. They have sought to enact a budget which, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer asserted in the Commons, is a war budget—that is, a war for social reform. In addition to making a beginning of special land taxation, which the Labor party has long urged, they have inaugurated the system of old-age pensions, and have besides undertaken, through a system of official Labor Exchanges and in other ways, to grapple with the problem of the unemployed. If gratitude were the most powerful motive in politics, the Liberals might certainly be able to count upon the heartiest kind of support by the Independent Labor party. We know, however, that it is not. Pride, selfishness, greed, the spirit of faction, often show themselves able to lead political man to do what gratitude is too feeble to induce him to attempt; and, in spite of the *rapprochement* now visible, it is not probable that we shall see anything like a real consolidation of Liberals and Laborites, even for one general election.

INDIA AND TERRORISM.

Only three days before the assassination of Lieut.-Col. Wyllie, a special correspondent of the *London Times*, in

summing up his researches into the present condition of India, showed himself a prophet and a sage:

That the anarchist organization will continue to spread and will break forth into fitful outrages is tolerably certain. The anarchists remain a class apart, though they are really only the ultimate expression of a very widespread phase of Indian feeling. Lord Morley is under no illusions about their continued existence, and has repeatedly warned the British public that "bombs are not an end." Alone the anarchists could do little. A Punjab civilian said proudly, "The bomb is not made that could burst the Indian Empire."

The murder of Col. Wyllie came, and British opinion, in spite of early manifestations of rage and panic, has on the whole remained sober in the face of exceptional provocation. The Tory press will probably raise an insincere cry for strong measures in India. The violated sanctity of human life in sea-girt Britain will be insisted upon. But the noise will be made for partisan purposes, since India, like the navy, is no longer outside the sphere of domestic politics in England. At heart, there are few Englishmen of standing who believe that reaction is possible or desirable in India.

We catch this mood in the article on Britain's future in India from which we have quoted. At first sight, the writer is openly in favor of a drastic policy against Indian "sedition." He declares that, so far as British rule in the peninsula is endangered, Lord Morley's reforms have not abated that menace in any material degree, for British rule is disliked, not because it is bad, but because it is foreign. Nearly every experienced administrator in India is against the reforms. If Hindu discontent has recently shown signs of abatement, the reason is found, not in Lord Morley's policy of conciliation, but in "the tardy vigor of the authorities in dealing firmly with the seditious press, and in the wise and discriminating exercise of the salutary power of deportation." As for Britain's general attitude toward India, we find the argument of the mailed fist put forth with engaging frankness. "While we believe our presence in India to be for India's good, we must maintain it against a growing and unappeasable antagonism." And yet, for all his fine frenzy, this writer cannot help revealing his perception that force alone will not avail against a great people awakening to national consciousness and modern ideals. He admits that the

Indian official is too prone to say, Do this and it shall be done. The Indian politician's right to speak his mind boldly must be recognized. British policy, administrative or legislative, must be willing to defend and explain itself.

But just how it is possible to reconcile the Indian politician's right "to speak his mind boldly" with "the wise and discriminating exercise of the salutary power of deportation," is hard to see. The danger is that a discontented people may be driven to make use of that "ultimate expression" of its feelings which the Hindu student in London employed against Col. Wyllie. Terrorism as a policy has been repeatedly proven futile, as notably in Russia. Terrorism as a symptom has its value. The isolated act of a Guiteau or a Czolgoz is indicative of nothing but an individual aberration. But in Russia, or in India, the political assassin, even though fanatic or half-insane, is the product of conditions. His act may do more harm than good, as the case usually falls; but only in Russia is it imagined that a nation's ailment can be permanently done away with by hanging the individual in whom the general ill-being rises to fever heat. Common sense, which with the British people rises to genius, must recognize the folly of making terrorism an excuse for reaction. Given the awakening of Asia to the aspirations of Western liberalism, and it is not Britain's army, but such reforms as Lord Morley has "forced"—so we are told—upon the Indian administration, that will shape the future of India with a minimum of riot and political assassination.

REFORMING THE FOURTH.

It should seem, to judge from figures compiled by the *Chicago Tribune*, that our great national holiday has this year, thus far, cost us fifty-two lives. After the same interval of time last year, the death-roll was seventy-two. Thus our attempt at a sane Fourth has saved us twenty lives—a great saving, but not enough. To effect a moral reform, the substitution of a good habit for a bad one is essential. A drunkard could never reform in a moral and æsthetic vacuum. But give him sustained new temperamental and emotional interests, and he may wonder why he was ever intemperate. The Fourth of July, as we celebrate it now, is a bad habit, a bad na-