

Abolishing the Grille

IN a report of the proceedings of the House of Commons, a couple of weeks ago, appeared the following item:

The House went into Committee of Supply, and a token vote was submitted for the sum of £5 to defray the cost of the proposed removal of the Grille of the Ladies' Gallery.

In deference to the wishes of Mr. Bonar Law that time should be economized there was no discussion, but a division was challenged by the opponents of the alteration. There were

For the vote.....	164
Against	18
Majority	146

Significant of much, in the Carlylean phrase, is this abolition of a time-honored barrier. It inevitably follows the recent vote of the House to give the franchise to women. If they are hereafter to enjoy political rights, to elect members of Parliament, and perhaps themselves to be elected as such, it is obviously absurd to maintain in the House of Commons the old symbol of their inferiority. The Grille was that, whatever the explanation given for placing it before the Ladies' Gallery. If it was meant as a sort of protection to the fair sex, so that they might not be stared at or ogled from the floor, this of itself was a tacit adoption of the Oriental idea of veiled women, far removed from active interest in public affairs. If, on the other hand, the idea was to protect the members of the House from too close inspection and too severe criticism by the ladies aloft, this again was a relic of a time when women were thought of as totally apart from political life. There is some evidence that English public men have disliked to speak in the presence of women. In the House of Lords there is a small gallery for peeresses—without a grille. Peeresses can see and be seen as it is not befitting that commoners should. Sometimes the female auditors in the Lords outnumbered the capacity of their own gallery and sat elsewhere. This gave offence. Lord Malmesbury wrote in his diary, in 1855: "The number of ladies who attended the debate to-night caused great displeasure among the peers. They overflowed from the gallery into the House. . . . Lord Ellenborough said it had made him nervous, and Lord Lyndhurst positively refused to speak, saying that the House looked like a casino."

Many are the incidents and the stories connected with the Grille. Behind it the suffragettes used to sit and raise disconcerting cries of "Votes for Women." And when the ushers ascended to remove the disorderly women, the latter were found chained to their seats and bidding defiance to authority. From the Ladies' Gallery faithful wives have looked down encouragingly upon the oratorical efforts of their husbands below. A correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* recalls a scene which took place in the Lords on July 17, 1850, when a vote of censure on Lord Palmerston was carried for his policy towards Greece. The story runs:

Count Bunsen, the Prussian Minister, chose to hear the debate from the Peeresses' Gallery, instead of the seats assigned to the Diplomatic Corps. As the evening went on, several peeresses were turned away for lack of room. Even when Lord Brougham tried to find seats for two lady friends Bunsen refused to move. Whereupon Brougham descended to the floor of the House and called attention to a stranger's presence in the Peeresses' Gallery. "If he does not come down," he remarked, "I shall move your lordships to enforce the order of the House. It is the more intolerable as he has a place assigned to him in

another part, and he is now occupying the room of two peeresses." Loud laughter greeted this reference to Bunsen's ample girth, but he clung to his seat until the Usher of the Black Rod spoke to him, when he rose in a fury and left the House, taking his wife and daughter with him.

In an ancient kingdom like Britain ancient customs have a way of taking deep root. They persist after their origin is forgotten and their significance lost. Old ceremonies, old symbols, are clung to in a kind of pathetic feeling that they express loyalty to what has made England great. And it takes a violent wrench, a clear conviction that a thing has become not only obsolete but offensive, to induce Englishmen to give it up. Thus the removal of the Grille in the House of Commons is as striking a testimony as could be borne to the success of what is little short of a revolution. At last, it is admitted that women are entitled to be in public life in the open. They are not to be shut away behind artificial barriers. They are not to be compelled to observe what their rulers are doing through a lattice-work. The Grille in itself was only a trifle; but it had come to stand for the exclusion of women, so that its being torn away is symbolic of the free entrance now to be given English womanhood upon new privileges, new duties, and new responsibilities.

The Monitor to the Front

IS the monitor again coming into its own? We read that Pola, Austria's greatest naval base, was bombarded "by the great new Italian monitors and their consort British monitors." But this is only one of many similar items. It is the British monitors whose light draught has made it possible for them to keep up an effective bombardment on the German lines on the Belgian seacoast. They have repeatedly shelled the German naval base at Seebrugge, and it was one of these same monitors which steamed half-around the globe to destroy the German cruiser *Königsberg*, which high-sided warships had blockaded in the Rufiji River on the East African coast. Perhaps the most interesting thing about it all is that there was not a single monitor in the Allied navies at the outbreak of the war—excepting the statement that these monitors are practically unsinkable by submarine attack because of a double bottom or outer shell.

That this peculiarly American type of vessel, the fruit of Ericsson's genius, is receiving this recognition abroad in the greatest of naval wars, after having been discarded at home in America, need surprise no one; our navy is brilliant in action, dashing in leadership, and fertile in resource when war is on, but when it comes to planning it slavishly follows foreign experience and has repeatedly turned its back upon epoch-making inventions of our own. Fulton invented the first all-big-gun armored steam battleship in 1815, but the navy went right on building sailing vessels until the forties, when it put engines into sailing vessels long after England had taken the lead in building genuine steamships. It was an American who invented the torpedo, but not until three-quarters of a century later did the Washington Navy Department learn the value of this weapon from the Confederates, who also developed the first successful submarine. Our navy experts profited not at all by the latter, made no attempt to develop a submarine, and when Holland perfected such a boat allowed it to go

abroad for recognition. This was not for any lack of warning. Ericsson foresaw what was to come. In 1874 he wrote: "I look upon the enormous thickness of armor now being introduced in England and the monster guns building as the expiring efforts of the Island Queen to retain her supremacy of the sea. *The movable torpedo will inevitably render these efforts unavailing.*" In 1879 he said: "Take my advice: construct destroyers to sink the ironclads of designing neighbors, but let England cease to build the useless iron citadels. . . ." If he is looking down on what is going on in the world, he must be amazed at the correctness of many of his prophecies, and must take peculiar satisfaction in observing that monitors are the only armored vessels keeping the seas, while the great high-riding battleships hide in harbors, and occasionally blow up with all their crews, like the Bulwark, Vanguard, and others.

Just as it was civilians who pushed through the building of the first monitor destined, as many think, to save the American Union at Hampton Roads in 1862, so it is only civilians who since then have advocated sticking to the Ericsson type of battleship. When the new navy was begun in 1884-1890, we bought our battleship plans in England and have blindly followed British architects from that day to this. Only a couple of modern monitors were built, and then ignored. The prejudice against them arises from the fact that they are poor cruising ships from the point of view of parading a marine guard or exercising the men at sea, and the navy man in the pre-submarine days objected to them because their decks were so constantly under water—something that Ericsson planned for because he believed that that made them the steadiest gun-platforms that could be invented. His turret has been taken for all our battleships, but the greater comfort of the larger craft and the higher gun-platforms they offered have led us, too, into the folly of building Dreadnoughts on the English type. Not being interested in the monitor, we have not devoted ourselves to remedying its defects and making it more livable. The first ones were somewhat hard upon their crews because of the lack of our modern ventilating machinery, refrigeration, and many creature comforts now found on every battleship and cruiser. But what men have endured upon the "unlivable" submarines for weeks at a time since 1914 is certain to have its effect in future warship designing, and the men of the British monitor which finished the Königsberg undoubtedly suffered much less than submarine crews.

Original points in the monitor's favor are plainly now fully recognized. She can carry as heavy guns as a battleship and yet draw little water, thus being the ideal type for coast defence or for operations like those on the Belgian coast, and she presents a much more difficult target for the enemy's fire than does the ordinary vessel. It is safe to say that if the attempt is made to capture German submarine bases the monitors will lead the way, as they led the way into Charleston harbor. To our mind, this war has demonstrated the fact that Admiral Sir Percy Scott knew what he was talking about when he declared, just prior to the war, that the day of the battleship was over. He prophesied just what has happened—that the submarine would drive the battleship to cover. As one of our ablest admirals pointed out before the war, big men are not necessarily the best fighters. He asked these questions:

With the same total number of guns, is it not conceivable that an admiral might prefer to have them distributed on more rather than fewer ships? In the line of battle would not the loss of one

such smaller ship be less grave in its consequences than the loss of a leviathan? Is the development of the monster battleship of to-day predicated on any study, however superficial, of what has actually occurred in naval warfare? Is it not rather due to a rivalry which prompts us to "see" our possible enemy and "go him one better"?

It is perfectly obvious that if the German mine fields are to be invaded, small monitors will be better than large battleships. Ericsson never claimed anything for his boats except that they were *floating batteries*, with enormous offensive and defensive qualities, with an extraordinary arc of fire and a minimum of vulnerability. Yet here we have the fact that aside from the development of the submarine's tremendous offensive power, the only other naval development of any interest in this vast war is that for offensive purposes English and Italians, and presumably the French, have turned to the exact type of vessel that Ericsson conceived at the time of the Crimean War.

Finances of the States

THREE or four years ago many States awoke to find that their expenditures had more than doubled in the preceding decade. If we measure the importance of State government by its cost, it would appear about one-sixth that of the incorporated cities, and normally about two-fifths that of the National Government. Recently, too, attempts at economy and heightened executive efficiency seem either to slow the rate of the increase or to guarantee that it serves good ends. Some light is thrown on the exact situation by a census bulletin which Director Rogers has published on "The Financial Statistics of States, 1916." It shows that, with aggregate revenues last year of about \$467,000,000, and an outlay of \$425,000,000 for current expenditures and of \$85,000,000 more for permanent improvements, our States are not paying as they go. The increase in revenue during the year was just over 1 per cent., and that in current costs was 6; against which it is cold comfort to put a decrease for permanent improvements of 10 per cent. Indeed, 26 States last year were not paying their total expenses from revenue, and 11 were not even paying current expenses. Twenty-two made both ends meet.

The showing has for some time been of a sort to stimulate efforts to draw upon larger sources of income. Yet we still find the faulty general property tax occupying much its old place. A table of the per capita yield of various State revenue sources in 1913 shows the special property taxes yielding 70 cents in a total of \$3.80. Director Rogers reports that last year this and other special taxes contributed \$88,000,000 in the total of \$467,000,000. The development of intangible property makes evasion of the general property tax easier, and yearly the growth of the tax burden makes the temptation to evasion greater. Probably not a State possessing it does not hear regularly the complaint of local taxpayers that it penalizes honesty, lacks uniformity, and has a generally demoralizing influence. There is need for either a reform of the administration or of the tax itself. The latter would be the better. Yet even going back a decade it would not be easy to plot a line of marked progress for special taxes or the separation of State and local revenues. New York is happily among the few leaders. Eleven years ago New York took the first