

come less or vanish altogether if the referendum were impending. The man who gives his check for one hundred thousand dollars in order to get a bill through a law-making assembly can obviously not rely upon the popular support for it. The presumption is against a bill of that character, and if the single fact of the costliness of it were to become known or suspected, the chances that the referendum would be applied to it and that the bill would be defeated would be very great. Large expenditures are rash and unbusinesslike expenditures where legislation is passed under the scrutiny of the people and is liable to be revised by them.

Of course, all legislation can in some way be revised, and if necessary reversed by the popular vote, and that, too, without any change in our constitutional forms. If corrupt measures are passed, can we not turn out those particular rascals who enact them and put in others? The troubles connected with that policy are numerous and serious. If the new men whom we put in are adherents of another political machine, henchmen of another boss, the practical gain may be small and transient. A change of parties may do the one thing that we are determined to have done, since it may reverse one particular measure, but it will leave the field open for other measures, many of which may be as corrupt as the one that we suffered from before.

"Measures, not men," used to be the popular political cry. Some years ago we grew tired of it, and were even inclined to substitute the opposite cry, "Men and not measures." We found that accepting unworthy men in order to secure the adoption of our general line of policy was often in the end a losing bargain, for it involved accepting a multitude of more detailed enactments which these unworthy men were sure to give us. The worst of it was that, whichever cry we adopted, we adhered to the system which merged in one the choice of men and the dictation of measures. We could not do the two things separately and therefore we could not do either in any satisfactory way. We cannot now. Dictating measures in and by the act of choosing men is a hopelessly clumsy way of governing ourselves. Ultimately, we must have more power than we now have to choose men; but we must certainly have, in the near future, very much more power to control measures.

In two years, if the Legislature of New York takes no action on the excise question, the people of New York City will, in their present clumsy way, apply the referendum to that issue. The election of 1903 will become to a considerable extent an appeal to the people concerning the policy to be adopted in reference to saloons. Can they decide

that question on its merits? If they want one result they will have to accept with it the government of the city by Tammany, with everything which that means. If they want the other result, they will have to accept with it government by those who are called the fusionists. Would it not be well to separate, in this instance, the discussion of the measure from the election of the party that is to rule?

Is it well to stand where the adoption of a course of action that the people really want would have to mean a return to Tammany? This is only one striking instance of the evil that comes from dictating measures in and by the act of choosing men. With the institution of the referendum in working order we could first determine what policy we will adopt in regard to saloons, and then we could select the men to whom we wish to intrust the general interests of the city.

It is discouraging enough to try to purify American politics. It means eternal vigilance, but also means eternal work against unnecessary difficulties. We could remove many inducements to corruption if we chose to do it. We could put the bosses where they could not receive large pay for political "goods" because they could not promise, with any confidence, to deliver them. We could put the people where they could detect the rottenness of such compacts, and in a glaring case would be sure to defeat them. We could make it possible for voters to have their way in controlling measures of government without being forced, whenever they prescribed a measure through the medium of an actual election, to accept with it men and rings that they do not want in general control of the State.

Of course there are objections to the referendum. It would involve a little labor on the part of the people and would cost something. That objection counts for so nearly nil that it is scarcely worth stating. The people will never purify political life, and to the extent to which this would do it, at any such trifling cost as this would entail.

"The referendum would not be used frequently." As if that were an argument against it! A potential referendum costs nothing and is often as good as an actual one. The fact that the people can reverse an objectionable measure often forestalls and prevents it, and the popular vote is then unnecessary. In a way we may say that the referendum works most effectively when, as far as the actual voting goes, it does not work at all. The mere power of the people to vote on an impending bad measure works preventively, and the prevention, in that case forestalls the vote. In cases in which it is necessary to resort to it the voting works curatively, but the fact that it is not

necessary often to resort to it is a chief reason for favoring the system.

"You can never get a full vote in applying the referendum." In the majority of cases you cannot. In some important case you can. The cases in which you do not draw out a full vote are those in which many persons have no decided opinions and wishes. Those who have opinions and wishes that are worth expressing represent, on such an issue the real popular choice. They are probably men who know more about the measures and about the way in which they would affect the well-being of the public. The vote decided by such men is far from being worthless, since it may register the only decision that can have the popular will behind it. Very important in this connection are two facts—namely, first, that any conspicuously bad measure would draw out a full vote; and, secondly, that it would be hazardous for any corporation to pay much to a boss, in order to secure the enactment of a bill, if it were afterward to take its chance on the issue of a vote in which even a minority of intelligent citizens should take a part.

There is danger that we may sacrifice something of the essence of democracy in order to save one of the names by which we are accustomed to call it.

We have long been proud of the extent to which we have developed the "representative" principle. We early discovered difficulties in the way of direct self-government by a populous nation, and hit upon the plan of selecting a few men to do the governing, presumably as we would like to have them. Very early we began to assert the right to prescribe what they should do after their election, and now we know that we must do that at every step if self-government is to be a fact. The representatives must actually represent, and we must continually make them do it. In reality, we rescue the representative principle when we make them do it. A large measure of dictation by the people makes it possible to allow the original framing of laws to be done by a few men, and if these men are compelled to be true servants of those who elect them, the system is successful.

A very striking fact is that on major questions affecting the public welfare the referendum actually allows legislators to use their own judgment to an extent to which they scarcely dare to use it now. They now legislate "with the ear to the ground," lest in revising their action by the present clumsy method the people turn them out. If a great measure were destined to be acted on by the people without danger to their representatives these men would be better able to make the preliminary decision in an unbiased way. The defeat of a measure not

tainted by corruption would not necessarily carry with it the condemnation of the men who executed it. Not less dignified and much more secure than it now is would be the position of a legislator in a State having the referendum.

The problem is not whether we shall or shall not dictate measures. We are trying to do that in a clumsy way, which makes politics corrupt and causes policies to reflect very imperfectly our actual will. We can do it in a more efficient way, and in the process we can purify and elevate our political life. The greatest "evils of democracy" come by a thwarting of the will of the people, and therefore the reformatory spirit should make common cause with the present popular tendency. Honest politics and real self-government go together, and prosperity goes with them.—[The Independent.

"Beginner's" Half Truth.

EDITOR TORCH OF REASON:

"Beginner" tells the truth as far as he goes but fails to give the whole story. I am ready to confirm all he says regarding the productive power of the millionaire's inventive and executive ability. The unprejudiced Socialist may endorse what F. M. Holland says in the same line:

"Suppose a sculptor sends a model of a statue to a foundry, where it is cast into bronze. It turns out to be such a marvel of beauty that he sells it for \$10,000. Would the workmen in the foundry have a right to say to him: 'We want our share of that money. It is the fruit of labor, and we have each of us worked much harder at the job than you did!' The sculptor might very properly reply: 'You have had your wages already. You worked no harder on my model than on the one which you cast just before. That statue is worth only the metal in it. It took quite as much muscle to model and cast it as my statue did. The price I got is the wages for the brains I used in the work.' Suppose, again, that these workmen leave the studio of the artist, go to the office of the proprietor of the foundry and say to him: 'You got more money from the man who made that model than you paid to us. We want our full share.' He might answer: 'The man that ran this foundry before I bought it paid you less than I do per man, and made you work just as hard. He managed so badly that he had to sell out at a loss. I know how to turn out better castings at less expense for metal and machinery, and I don't lose by bad debts as he did. I make more money than he, but it is not because you are paid less or worked harder. The foundry is more valuable than it was before, but it's because I know how to run it. The output is worth more than it ever was, and I have a right to all I earn by making it so. If I could not make my capital and skill pay in this country I should take them to Europe.' The man who could honestly speak thus, and who has the skill to run a factory, or railroad, or any other great enterprise at a profit, without wronging either his workmen or his customers, has a right to be a millionaire. He is not the enemy of his country, but a public benefactor. He is keeping goods