

## Comment

Not only the owners and managers of the vast productive wealth of today regard the existing economic and social system as the most perfect yet known to man, but so do most of our political leaders, lawyers, clergymen, educators, literary lights and philosophers. There is nothing new about this and it is entirely natural. The same thing was true in regard to all of these classes in the age of feudalism, in the days of kings who ruled by divine right, and in the times of African slavery. Those who are the very pillars of any existing edifice will of course believe in the structure, defend it and resist change. History shows that the other classes mentioned will likewise believe, defend, resist change and build up theories and philosophies to explain and sustain the system in the midst of which they live and carry on.

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Systems that have existed in the past have either disappeared through revolution or through gradual decay and replacement by some new system that has developed from necessity or through the operation of natural forces. Often people have found leaders who have helped them to wreck suddenly or modify through a period of years a wornout régime. It would seem that one of the finest attributes of man is his power to project something superior to what he has attained, recognize it as such and work towards it. If ever the countries of the world had need of leaders ready to exercise this capacity, now would seem to be the time.

With the power to produce commodities for the well-being of mankind up to or beyond the needs of the earth's vast population, the problem to be solved is one of proper distribution. To the solution of this problem, the energies of the world's greatest minds should be at once directed. The challenge of this problem must be boldly and successfully met, or it must be admitted that man's power to play a real part in controlling his own destiny, when all the materials are ready for his hands to shape them, is a mythical power. The acceptance of defeat now, and especially in the United States where nature does her part so fully, means that men prefer to exist and develop under the operation and control of blind forces.

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In our last issue, we were bold enough to propose a way by

which the executive and legislative branches of the federal government might be kept in harmony. There is, as every intelligent citizen knows, the British Cabinet system which has spread widely among self-governing peoples. The system of government in the United States has evolved along a different line, largely because of certain provisions in our written constitution. Our scheme of party government is unique, and, being our own, it should not be thrown overboard for another but it can be modified.

Deadlocks between the President and Congress, which come too readily and often under our system are fatal to efficiency. They prevent the American people from giving credit to leaders who deserve credit and from placing blame where it belongs. They rob political leaders of the incentive to measure up to their responsibilities. Without seriously changing the nature of the President's power, or the nature of the House or Senate, party government in the United States can be vastly improved by some simple changes in the Constitution.

Let the President be chosen by a *joint convention* of the members of both branches of Congress, and whenever differences between House and Senate cannot be ironed out through the means regularly employed, let them be settled in *joint convention*. To make this system work well the terms of Senators, Representatives and President should alike be two years. Otherwise the Senate and House should be left as they are. The establishment of such a system would automatically do away with the Electoral College and presidential campaigns as we now know them. The new system would not prevent the elevation of a state executive, or any other citizen worthy of consideration, to the presidency,

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There is a good deal that is tiresome and indefensible about College Commencements. There are a good many things that members of faculties are expected to do in connection therewith that they cannot do with sincerity or pleasure. The conscientious college teacher is at the very time of commencement festivities confronted with stacks of examination papers and reports, and he is really concerned to deal justly with his students. He cannot find much to admire in drummed up reunions and artificially created enthusiasm. Former students who really want to come back to the institution from which

they were graduated, who really want to look at the campus again and go through the old buildings, and who really want to find and meet once more certain professors—let them come by all means. When they return expecting to get pleasure out of anything else that has been cooked up for them, they are usually disappointed. Would it not be better to greatly modify College Commencements, and confine the exercises to one short program, attended by graduating seniors, those receiving advanced degrees, relatives of any of these, members of the faculty, and any undergraduates or others who may wish to be present. Let the program be of reasonable length and the exercises dignified and artistic. The whole affair will then be helpful and enjoyable, a fitting close to the academic year for all really concerned.

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Much progress has been made in sanitation and in the prevention of disease, especially during the present century. Most people avoid the common drinking cup, the roller-towel has disappeared, and sneezing or coughing in the midst of a crowd is not so common as in earlier days. There is still room for improvement. Anyone can yet observe too many people, even some who are well educated, that take few precautions, violate the simplest rules, and endanger the health of others as well as themselves. As in economic or moral matters, prevention of disasters is better than attempting cures after they come, so in the realm of health, physical or mental, all endeavors to avoid preventable diseases are highly commendable.

The Indiana Society for Mental Hygiene is to be praised for its objects—"the conservation of mental health and the prevention of mental disease and defect." It is hoped that much good will come from such meetings of the Society as that held in Indianapolis on December 12. The educational value of the work of this organization can hardly be overestimated.

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In several instances questions have been asked in connection with articles published in this *Magazine*, in the hope that answers might be drawn from readers. The results have not been encouraging. Perhaps the queries have escaped the notice of those who could have supplied the desired information. Possibly another effort may bear fruit. At least we shall

try some questions on the small group who read these pages of "Comment".

Here are some of the questions: Who wrote the volume portraying the daily experiences of some Civil War soldiers under the title *Corporal Si Klegg*? Who can furnish some information relative to Taylor N. Snow who lived in Madison, Indiana, and who went to California in 1859? Can anyone furnish the actual measurements of Indiana trees that were from five to ten feet, or more, in diameter? Can any one supply the names of the father and mother of Judge James Hughes, once a citizen of Bloomington, Indiana, who was born in Maryland; or the name of the mother of Judge Jesse Lynch Holman, of Dearborn County, Indiana, who was born in Kentucky; or the names of the father and mother of Edward Allen Hannegan, who was born in Hamilton County, Ohio?

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