

The opposing parties were distinguished by a flag. On the People's Party flag was inscribed "People before Party," while that of the Rate Receivers' Revenue Party bore the legend "Patriotism before Party." Here was a pretty fix for any Government. No promises they could make would satisfy where the issue was so squarely joined. The people were perplexed while the politicians clamoured to the clouds. After the militia had been called out, and it was found that not more than a third of them answered the call, while the other two-thirds divided about equally between the two factions, a certain man of humble birth and lacking social advantages stepped into the breach and saved the people from a bloody war, and at the same time got rid of Party permanently in the fairest land in Luna. His proposal, which was adopted was that, as they were evidently very desirable possessions, the seats in parliament should be sold to the highest bidder, with an extra 40% premium on the sale price for a seat on the Treasury Bench. The whole fund so obtained was to be devoted to public works and charges, and would take the place of all taxes whatsoever, voting and polling to be abandoned. He showed that an election now cost the candidate very much, so that his position would not be altered by a sale of seats, and as the cost in machinery, loss of time and taxes by the present method would all be cancelled, the showing indicated a large net gain to the present ratepayer. Some doubters raised the question of the will of the people being jeopardized if voting was abandoned, but it was pointed out that legislators did not consider the will of the people as a whole; only of those who would vote for them, and sometimes made mistakes even then; besides which the real work of the country went on just the same whether the legislators were at their posts or no; whether they lived or died; and, in short, that politics was only a game in which the common herd were always chasing the ball afield, while the politicians were at the bat or pitching. The matter was finally put by plebiscite to the electorate in this form:—"Will you have high taxation and a franchise, or an annual sale of seats, no voting, and no taxes?" The plebiscite was to be taken in a novel way. The voter was to mail a lucifer match in a regulation enve-

lope to the Receiver General, whole and complete if a vote and taxes were wanted, while if it was to be no voting and no taxes to pay, the lucifer end of the match was to be broken off before sending. Well, the vote was taken and the matches weighed—they could not be counted as there were seven tons of them; and would you believe it, it would have taken the prophet Elijah himself to start a conflagration in the pile—there wasn't a brimstone end in the seven tons!

So it was settled that those who wanted a seat in Parliament must buy for cash. Stump speeches were at such a discount that after brokerage was provided, there was nothing left. The funds that came into the treasury from the sales were so large that after a while the authorities didn't know what to do with them; after every improvement that could be thought of had been made; after paying for public works, administration of justice, providing for local expenditure, post offices, public libraries, asylums, reformatories, jails, parks, gardens, fountains, and so forth, there was a fund sufficient to erect without debt, a well equipped Poor House in every parish, and even then they had a surplus of several millions in the Banks that was easily loaned out on sound securities at 7 per cent. per annum. Every public charge and burden was thus removed from the working classes; all they had to do was—work!

Sceptical persons may question the power of the upper classes to bear all this burden unaided, to say nothing of its apparent injustice; but the answer is so plain that whoso reads may run if so inclined. The upper classes owned all the land that was worth owning,—the other parts were declared absolutely free to everybody—and as their right to own the land was not disputed, they naturally owned what it would yield; so whatever was required for public purposes had to come out of them anyway. It was as broad as it was long; if the lower classes had continued to pay taxes there would be so much less for the land owners, and they might just as well bear the burdens manfully that they must bear, and save the lower classes a lot of bother besides. Those who owned the greatest value in land could pay most for a seat in parliament, and did, and bore the greatest burdens

(To be Continued.)