

It is only in France that the spirit of democracy has had free play. The old order perished utterly when the heads of those who had governed from time immemorial fell beneath the knife. It has taken more than a hundred years for democracy to accomplish its perfect work. The result is well described by a recent writer upon these pages: "France has arrived at a point when her finest spirits turn away from public life, leaving its emoluments to the self-advertiser and the unscrupulous. Sensational crimes, political squabbles, and financial scandals, dominate the attention of the enormous majority. A strike is cause enough for many otherwise reasonable people to cry out 'nous sommes perdus,' for others to demand a saviour of any sort, a king, a dictator, an executioner, a pope. The conception of men's rights is fading, —the reign of fear has begun."

In England the pretence of democratic government came to an end and real democracy began a few months ago, when the power of the House of Lords was destroyed and all authority was centred in a single chamber. For good or ill the House of Lords has had at least an equal share with the Commons in the government of England. The families composing it have, for the most part, supplied the personnel of the army, the navy, the church, and the diplomatic service. By the Parliament Bill the people of England have, for good or ill, deprived themselves of the services of this estate as trenchantly as if the bloody knife of revolution had been employed, unless indeed the House of Commons should prove an exception to the universal experience that the career of all purely democratic assemblies is one of automatic and progressive degradation.

There is a principle of commerce, known as Gresham's law, which applies as closely to-day as when it was propounded by the financier of Elizabeth's time, whose name it bears. According to the terms of this law, when two media of different value circulate on equal terms the baser inevitably drives out its more precious rival. This principle applies with equal cogency to political life. Bad manners under certain cir-