

10 *The Unfinished Programme of Democracy*

as we know it is justly open to the criticism that it has not seriously taken in hand the task of clothing the political skeleton with a body of living social flesh.

Modern democracy is, of course, historically very young ; and it may be reasonably maintained that it is premature to speak of its failure to realise its full promise. Nevertheless, it is of some consequence that already that part of the democratic programme which has been achieved and put to the proof is being exposed to heavy fire of destructive criticism. During the past few years, we have become familiar with the idea of a world made safe for democracy ; and in the minds of many people democracy (which in this connection means representative popular government) stands as a sort of ultimate good which it is impious to challenge or to criticise. Yet this democracy, for which the world has been presumably made safe at so great and sorrowful a price, is by some roundly declared to be radically unsafe for the world and a hindrance to social progress. The syndicalists, for instance, believe the democratic state to be no more than the citadel of bourgeois and plutocratic privilege, and have decreed its destruction, proposing to substitute for it a modified anarchism. Others, like Paul Bourget and Brunetiere, so far from finding it the sanctuary of the privileged, fear it as a source of anarchy and social confusion, and invite us to retrace our steps to happier days when authority being less diffused