

## DEMOCRACY AND MENTAL HYGIENE

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IT is a truism to say that it is the duty of leaders to lead. There is one aspect of democracy as practised to-day which appears to prevent true leadership. This defect is not inherent in the democratic principle itself but appears to have been accepted in some way or other and has, to a certain extent, become a tradition in democratic countries. Men who are elected to represent the people in deliberative assemblies do not regard themselves as leaders of the people, nor do the people so regard them. Those deputed to enact legislation, therefore, consider themselves as bound to follow the immediate will of the people and do not think that they should lead the people onward on a higher and more developed form of the peoples own will.

This attitude, both on the part of people and representatives, hinders democracy from coming to its own and reaching higher than average political mind. It prevents democracy from rising above the present level and producing aristocrats in the true sense of the term. In a word, it prevents democracy from finding leaders. The state is thus left to struggle blindly on without expert guidance. Those chosen by democratic methods, and this is where the true meaning of democracy lies, should keep in view that they are chosen to make progress—not to follow the mass, but to lead. The people, too, should so regard those whom they themselves place in authority. They are there to represent the people on the road of advancement. All cannot be leaders for then there would be no leaders. Democracies differ from absolute monarchies, tyrannies, oligarchies in that the people choose who shall lead. It should not necessarily follow from this that those selected are to consider themselves as mere agents. No business could be run on the principle that the president and the directors were to be merely the echoes of the shareholders. On the contrary, they are placed in office to advance the interests of the company and it is this point of view which has been lost sight of in affairs of state. This is the reason why state activities are so often behindhand. Men at the head of affairs wait until the mass has begun to move and have either forgotten that they are supposed to lead or are too timorous to do so. It may be that the desire for office accounts for this attitude on the part of legislatures, but it does not account for it on the part of the people. This weakness in democratic affairs can be easily remedied if only men of courage, vision, high-minded ideals, and unselfishness are selected to direct. The reason that such are so in-