

*Undercurrents
in American
politics.*

In the spring of 1914 President Hadley delivered at the University of Virginia a series of three lectures on Political Methods, and at Oxford University a similar series on Property and Democracy. The six lectures have now been gathered into a single volume entitled "Undercurrents in American Politics" (Yale University Press).—although in his preface the author suggests that an equally

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appropriate title would be "Extra-Constitutional Government in the United States." The Virginia lectures undertake to show how those matters which were placed by the framers of the Constitution in the hands of the federal government have frequently been managed by agencies which are extra-constitutional and very different from those which were intended to manage them. The agencies principally considered in this connection are political parties and the press, the most original and illuminating of the lectures being that one devoted to the press as the present seat of actual political power. It is demonstrated that in a democracy public opinion must somehow be organized in order to be effective. This organization was once the work almost entirely of party managers; but it is maintained that nowadays it is through the press that the American people forms its opinion as to men and measures, and that the man who accomplishes most in modern politics is he who recognizes this fact most fully. The organization of public opinion by the newspapers instead of by the party managers has the advantages, we are told, of involving a more direct appeal to reason and of causing public opinion to be formed in the open; but it affords no necessary guarantee against appeals to prejudice, emotion, and impatience. The Oxford Lectures, on Property and Democracy, show how in this country a great many organized activities of the community have been kept out of government control altogether. Here are traced the gradual growth of political democracy in the United States, the essentials of the constitutional position of the property owner, and the more important recent tendencies in economics and in legislation. It is shown that in spite of frequent acts of adverse legislation the constitutional position of the property owner in the United States has been stronger than in any country in Europe, and that there is no nation which is so far removed from Socialism as ours by its organic law and its habits of political action. The rights of private property are substantially buttressed by numerous provisions of the Constitution, and they have remained unshaken amidst the most sweeping democratizing changes in the domain of politics. Only since the opening of the present century has there been any serious movement toward State Socialism in America, the main-spring of this movement being popular dissatisfaction aroused by the manifest failure of competition as a regulator of business and of industrial operations. Experiments in State control, however, are proving more costly than the general public knows, and Mr. Hadley

properly concludes that the solution of the problem will not be reached until the public demand for State control of industry and for trained civil service go hand in hand. "Until the public appreciates expert work in the offices of state, industrial control in the United States is likely to remain in the hands of the property owner"; after that, the inference is, there may be a very considerable extension of public ownership and control.