

more satisfactory solution of the ownership of public utilities. As to the free institutions, let us not forget that Europe does not lack altogether the presence of true, genuine democracy. Let us not forget that Switzerland and Norway are European countries and that although those countries are small in size, power and population they teach a lesson in democracy to the world. The talk of the different conditions can stand no close criticism. We all know that there can be no fundamental difference, and the objection raised on this ground without specifying what these differences actually are, is really hardly worth mentioning at all, were it not for the fact that the expression "differences in conditions" has become a most universally believed phrase.

Then we have the objection by so-called patriots, who object on the ground that government ownership is not a purely American idea. To them nothing is worth while which cannot be traced back to an American origin. They will accept anything if it can be proven to be American, but reject everything which is not so. This statement may seem exaggerated, and it may be so in words, but truly the spirit indicated is no uncommon occurrence. Tariff, for instance, has been defended on the ground that it was an American idea. In fact, of course, tariff is as old as history. But the belief that it is American has given the system an increased prestige.

With government ownership would follow greater publicity of what are now commonly termed private affairs. This is claimed to be un-American. Americans, it is said, want to be permitted the freedom of secrecy of private affairs. Certainly! But what are their strictly private affairs? Can any matter, the publicity of which would be necessitated by the government ownership of what is properly public property, be considered as a private matter, entitled to considerations which private matters naturally have a right to claim?

We have a right to be proud of our country and our government, whether we are Americans by birth or by free choice. But this does not mean that we should reject any lesson given to us by the actual experience of any other nation. True patriotism should tend to make us eager to collect the best of the institutions of all nations, and frame all into a perfect whole in our own government. It is a fatal mistake, common to many reared in false patriotism, to think that our country needs no improvements, because it has always been considered as taking the lead. Our institutions can never be too perfect, and we will never be so clever that other nations will have nothing to teach us. Let us bravely admit where we are behind, and try to improve. Let us be proud of where we are ahead, and continue to forge ahead. That is true patriotism.

The objections of those who disbelieve in republican forms of government by their insinuation that honest men cannot be found for public office have been met in former articles. Their views are so hopeless as to eliminate them from all optimistic discussion of the possibilities of the future democracy.

Finally, we must consider the fear of those who admit the propriety of government ownership, but think that the indebtedness incurred by the purchase of existing private monopolies would be a burden to future generations. This is a thoughtless

view. An increase of the outstanding debt of the nation or the community, is fatal only when it is not followed by a proportionate increase in property. But in the case we are considering, the property would increase, and the nature of the property would be such as to be a blessing for future generations, rather than otherwise.

To prove the possibilities of government ownership we have taken Sweden for an example. We could have taken many another European country, but we could not perhaps have found any other where almost all the proper functions of the government are so well proportioned and exemplified as in the case we have examined. The government of Sweden has in this particular reached a high standard of perfection, although we willingly admit it is far from perfect in a number of other particulars. But this does not now concern us. Our object is to acquire the best, and reject the less good. We can do so only by studying what other nations have accomplished. No prejudice and no false patriotism must enter into our investigation. If we proceed along the lines indicated we shall some day be the creators of a freer and greater America; we shall be able to call ourselves a free nation in a higher sense than now. We will be a "world power," but not by the "glorious feats of our arms," and we shall have collected all the crystals of the true democracy of our sister nations into one glorious crown, with which we shall crown our king—Justice.

ERIC OBERG.

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## THE MAN WITH THE MUCK RAKE.

Portions of a Sermon Delivered by the Rev. Thomas P. Byrnes, of the First Unitarian Church of Erie, Pa.,  
May 13, 1906, as Reported in the Messenger-Graphic, of Erie, Pa.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.—II Samuel xii-7.

This is the text that is usually chosen when a particular sinner in the church is to be hit, and hit hard. This text is often commended to the preacher as an example of direct preaching.

Nathan had told David of the rich man who stole the poor man's only lamb with which to furnish his table for the entertainment of his guest. The story touched David, and he threatened the guilty thief with death.

Then it was that Nathan turned upon David, and with dramatic effect said: "Thou art the man"; thou art the thief who stole the poor man's lamb; you are the sinner before God and man.

This method of Nathan's brings up the question of the place and value of the public condemnation of special sinners and wrongdoers.

This whole subject is now before the American people because we have had a season of Nathan's kind of preaching, and because we have a whole brood of Davids who are squirming and wriggling under these modern Nathans' roastings and lashings.

Many kind-hearted people already think that this method of Nathan, of saying to the sinners of our time, "Thou art the man," has already gone too far, and a demand for a let-up is being called for, especially by the big sinners and their friends.

This question has been especially brought up for

discussion because President Roosevelt, in his now famous "Man with the Muck Rake" speech, has made a mild protest against the modern Nathans who have been lashing particular sinners and wrongdoers. The main interest in this speech has been due to the conviction in many minds that the President has seen fit to condemn in a public speech these men and women who have recently been engaged in what is called the campaign of exposure.

President Roosevelt's main contentions in his speech, as I understand them, are that real wrongdoers and corrupters of the public welfare ought to be condemned and exposed, but that the truth only should be told; that good men ought not to be slandered; that the picture ought not to be overdrawn, and made too dark; that confidence in human nature ought not to be shaken, and that the securing of good men for the public service ought not to be made difficult because of the unjust criticism they will be subjected to. With these propositions every sane and fair-minded man will agree.

But in order to agree with the above propositions must we condemn the men and the women who, with high purposes and for the sake of the public welfare, have exposed particular wrongdoers and who have thrown the limelight of publicity upon the sore and ugly spots in our political, social and business institutions?

While the President's address was on the whole sound and wholesome, yet it has been misinterpreted in many quarters, and it has been used as a text to condemn the well-intentioned exposers, to call a halt on the Nathans of our time; it has been used as a plea for leniency and charity for the persistent violators of the moral law, the corruptors of the public welfare, the daily plunderers of the people. It has been used to call a halt upon the greatest moral crusade of our time, to cast discredit upon the best piece of national moral cleansing our country has had since the abolition movement, to cast discredit upon a work that has turned the tide of moral sentiment in our country, and toned up our whole political, social and business civilization.

I protest against these men being called "muck rakers," for they have done a helpful service to our country, and toned up the moral atmosphere of our time.

We are told that a halt should be called upon this campaign in the name of decency and Christian charity. We are told that these so called "muck rakers" have outraged the common sentiments of our humanity in their merciless condemnation of men and measures.

Well, as a Christian preacher I recognize the place of kindness and charity in human life. It is the proper sentiment in our individual relation with our fellows. Made as we all are of the same clay, cast as we all are in the same mold, living as many are in glass houses, it becomes us to be kind and charitable to our fellow men and women. But charity should not be one-sided, nor narrow in its expression. To whom shall we be charitable, to the robber or to his victims?

Charity to the plundered people of America has required this merciless exposure of the brigands who were plundering them.

The men and women who have carried on this campaign of exposure are in good company, for it

will be time to say that they have been too severe when it is first proved that the Man of Nazareth was too severe when he told the Pharisees to their teeth that they were "whited sepulchers filled with dead men's bones."

But this plea for leniency is based upon another and less justifiable reason. It is based upon the plea that the men and interests attacked are great and powerful. It is based upon the assumption that great sinners ought not to be subject to such mean and vulgar attacks. This is the assumption, else why this plea for leniency for great public men, great heads of corporations, great captains of industry, who are daily breaking the law and living in entire disregard of the Ten Commandments? Are these immunities and safeguards the legitimate rewards of wealth and greatness, so that it is to be understood that when men reach the sacred circle of the powerful few they are to be above the laws of the land, above the binding restrictions of the moral law, above the requirements of fair play and all the just rules of the game?

We have heard no such plea for common sinners, no charges of "muck raking" against those who expose the petty pilfering of small thieves, no great campaign to protect from just condemnation the vicious classes in the common walks of life. No, not in the whole history of humanity has a man been called a "muck raker" because he exposed the wrongdoing of the weak and defenseless.

This is the most outrageous privilege of all in an era of special privileges, the one that is the greatest menace to a democratic civilization, the special privilege of being immune from the law, above the law and the moral standards of the time.

So, I say, in this whole question of justice and public condemnation, let there be one law and one method for all alike, one moral standard for all classes, one system of justice for rich and poor, high and low. Here as well as in every realm of the social order should be applied the good old Jeffersonian principle of "equal rights for all, special privileges for none."

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## INTELLIGENCE OF THE NEGRO.

An Open Letter from General Hermann Lieb to the Hon. Chas. Francis Adams, on the Latter's Article in the Century for May, 1906, Denying the Possession by the Negro Race of Inherent Powers of Development.

For The Public.

My Dear Sir:—

It may appear presumptuous to challenge the statements and conclusions of a statesman and literateur of your national renown. Still, since the issues you have raised in your communication to the Century Magazine are of such transcendent importance, both to the Negro population of this country and to our republican fundamentals, I feel it my duty to throw my light weight on the side of fair dealing.

The saying that "the Negro has never been given a chance," may appear to you, after a short visit to Africa, as "the sheerest of delusions"; but it is, in my humble opinion, nevertheless a "self-evident truth," which cannot be lightly sneered away.