

challenged, and the potent friendships they would have repulsed, by deciding against the Tribune in this case.

Yet we are conscious, as they must be, that their decision, if the school board does not carry it up to the highest court having jurisdiction over it, must always be overcast in the public mind with a cloud of doubt.

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It would therefore be only fair to the Judge and the Master in Chancery, for the school board to appeal this case. The affirmance by the highest court, of their judgment for the Tribune, would remove doubts that might otherwise gain lodgment in public opinion.

As for the school board members, nothing short of an appeal to the judgment of the highest court can relieve them of reasonable suspicion. Corporation directors do not yield up millions of dollars in a lawsuit upon the adverse decision of a lower court; and if the same men, as directors of a public trust, were to reverse their habitual business policy in that respect, to the possible advantage of one friendly newspaper directly and of other newspaper and business friends indirectly, a charitable inference would be well-nigh impossible.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

"WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH KANSAS?"

Topeka, Kansas.

This question became famous in 1896.

It was asked and indirectly answered with brilliancy from an editorial chair.

To sum up that answer with brevity and that justice which we direly need and cloudily demand, the matter was this: Kansas was "raising hell and weeds" largely because it was making a strenuous effort, misdirected by unknown heroes, leaders, to become more really American in its social adjustments.

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The question had been asked when in nearly every country school house in Kansas there could be found a group of men, young and older, in cotton shirts and overalls, with mother earth clinging to their persons in spots, making some apparent effort to understand social economic adjustments—to know how the iron highways, the measure of values (money), and the growing power of capital could be made to conform to that natural law of God that the wages of productive effort are what is produced by labor applied to God's earth.

Those groups of men were not conscious as a whole that they were doing this; but some of them were, and the rest were certain they were receiving much less than their labor produced.

This condition had come about through the efforts

of many men, some of them sincere, some of them political hucksters, all of them avowedly for the people's interests. From among the men who stirred up the farmers' alliances in Kansas until they formed a political party, the name of one stands out in bold relief. Jerry Simpson was in a measure the accepted leader; he was our never-beaten fighting hero, in that period from 1890 to '98. Jerry Simpson by his unturning logic and his humorous and swift debate, had captured the 8th Congressional district; had left to his host of political enemies no other argument than his personal habits and appearance, and had forever enlightened these groups of men, though few of us knew it then, by his unflinching refusal to consider any detail as of higher value to society at large than God's natural laws.

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During that period, towards the end of which the question quoted above was asked and indirectly answered so brilliantly, things in the people's interest had been done, had been attempted, and had been in their platforms but had not been done.

Among the things done the most striking was the passage of the statute called "the court of visitation." This court was to consist of three judges, with common-law and equity powers. It could compel, upon complaint, submission before it of rate schedules and special contracts entered into by railroads. It was to judge of the reasonableness of such rates and contracts. It could, to assist its findings, ascertain under its own authority the physical value of the entire property of a railroad, and its methods of handling and raising its funds. It could appoint receivers and decide as to what was fraudulent procedure for railroads. It was hardly passed before it was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

The anti-trust law in use today in Kansas, and which defined trusts and the procedure to regulate or to oust them, was another of the things done. The uniform school book law, the bank commission law, the insurance legislation which stopped a plan then in vogue with some fire companies of compromising losses with men too poor to go to law, were also among the things done. And by no means the least striking law, the fees and salaries act, was another. This last was really original. The first officers whose fees and salaries were reduced and controlled by this act belonged largely to the People's Party—the party, that is to say, that wrote this law into the statutes of Kansas.

The People's Party platforms always contained the maximum freight rate, allusions to the initiative and referendum, and some promises regarding adjustment of taxation, and regulating interest rates. It might be said that along these three lines they did little or nothing. It is thought by many of us, who were units in those overalled groups of men struggling to understand and adjust social relations, as had their fathers and as their sons will, that what put the People's Party into the ranks of the "once lived" was the failure to write a maximum freight law on the statutes of Kansas, and to give greater coherence and power to the people's will.

An eminent jurist gave as his explanation of why the People's Party so completely passed out, that "Kansas only really thinks upon an empty stomach."

Some of us looking back toward Jerry Simpson meetings and those school house wars, believe that the worship of party and the envy, hatred and malice toward things and men possessing wealth, was what stopped the force and dissipated the units which gave that party its power. All of us who really lived then, are certain of this fact; that what of truth and justice lay in our efforts then will never die. What has died or is dying is our crudity, our worship of party, which is but a means, and our hatred of the wealthy merely because they had wealth.

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"What is the matter with Kansas" in Anno Domini 1910?

The same editorial chair, assisted by others who reveled in that brilliant question and the indirect answer, is very clearly and emphatically telling Kansas what is the matter. They are not only telling Kansas clearly and emphatically what is the matter, but they are putting their shoulders ably, tolerantly but unturningly to the wheel to remedy that matter—and not alone in Kansas but in the nation, through the Kansas Congressional delegation.

There are in Kansas, just as there were twenty years ago, leaders, heroes, telling Kansas "what all" to do. These leaders are some of them sincere, some of them political, all of them avowedly for conditions more in accordance with the American ideal—equality of opportunity to be maintained by really representative popular government. These editorial chairs and these heroes are rising up against slavery, just as their fathers did, and their sons must do. They have done things, and they promise to do things, and they agitate to get Kansas to see the need that it has, of a more businesslike adjustment of social relations.

They really began to do striking things in behalf of popular government in 1897. They wrote into the Kansas statutes the primary law, which upset the apple cart of a U. S. Senator, the mouthpiece of an Administration, just as another orator in the U. S. Senate got dethroned, though not so scientifically, 18 or 20 years before, because the majority willed it. Many a gentleman of the Democratic Party has declared this statute to be very imperfect. It is the pleasanter and easier method to agree to this fact. Truth compels one to add, however, that if the devil himself wrote this statute, Kansas had better never return to those mechanical conventions which were the conditions for selecting public servants before its arrival.

Kansas now has an appointed tax commission. This statute and this commission are also imperfect and not satisfactory to both Democrats and Republicans one hears and hears of. To this too it is easier to assent, but it must also in fairness be stated that before them, assessors were merely unscientific and on rare occasions charming despots in deciding values both of real and personal property. Then, too, no one had heard of the workings of a general property tax and how it prevented us from ceasing to tax what we wanted to increase in Kansas. The tax commission in their 1908 report advocated repealing this general property tax and separating the sources of the revenues of State and localities. Because they did this, comprehensively, too, behold; ten men have

heard about the unscientific despotism of the general property tax where one man had before.

Now all that is something, cuss these heroes or not, as you please.

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Kansas now has a board of railroad commissioners, elected. This board has a pretty broad statute behind it, and it must be said that less remarks are made in Kansas about the railroads, since these uprising leaders last amended and adjusted this law. Curiously enough when it was threatened to hold a special session of the legislature last year over the bank guarantee law, which was assailed and declared imperfect, several of the noted Insurgents proposed to change this commission into a court, that it might have a more recognized authority.

Since 1906 the prohibition law has so nearly prohibited that in justice it must be said that the present administration has made it prohibit. Men who loathe prohibition did in 1908 vote for this administration, because it had brought this about, not many of them, but some. You see they recognized that conditions were better if the people voted for the law they themselves loathed, that this law should be enforced.

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After stating emphatically their adherence to protecting labor and prohibiting sin by law, these Insurgent leaders have forcibly attempted and are agitating for many striking things for the people's interest. They put forward at the last legislature a public utility bill. This purposed to hereafter do away with franchises for a term and substitute indeterminate franchises—franchises dependent on quality of service rendered. This public utility bill contained things which had been the chief demand of Democrats since 1900. It was killed in the House. A few—no, not many—members of the Democratic party can never understand how this killing helped the people. The Insurgents, in this case, seemed Democrats to them.

They proposed a constitutional amendment for direct legislation by the initiative and referendum. The House failed by 4 votes to carry this; the Senate snowed it under. They proposed a constitutional amendment to abolish the general property tax, advised by the tax commission. The administration forcibly, by message, advised that it be submitted. It lost by a few votes in the House, and the Senate snowed it under.

They wrote into the statutes that cities could govern themselves by a commission directly controlled by the initiative, referendum and recall. Twenty cities in Kansas have taken advantage of this act, and though they still talk more of the men who are commissioners and their actions than of the splendor of the people's control, no one wants to go back to city councils.

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Those editorial chairs and the present administration and three of the Congressional delegation are not idle nor quiet now. They are out agitating for the short ballot, for the more businesslike plan of commissioners appointed by an elected governor, for the taxation amendment and for the public utility bill. Some of them, if not all, are agitating very ably

for direct legislation. It might be said with truth that Kansas insurgency has taken up the People's Party endeavors, has rendered some of them effective laws which no real Kansan would depart from, has enforced others, and is strenuously endeavoring to place upon the statutes other laws which that People's party of 18 years ago merely talked about incoherently.

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And what is Kansas doing?

Kansas is not saying much; what it will do will be seen in August after the primary.

As a straw indicates the direction of a sluggish stream, sometimes, so does this incident: There are 6 party Democrats the writer knows in this town, who will call for a Republican ballot at the primary. They defend this action by saying that they intend to have two more or less democrats to vote for at the election for Congress and for Governor. They add quietly that at that election they purpose to vote for the more democratic of the two.

And so it goes in Kansas, as it does in all the rest of the world more or less. The brass band and the quiet voice, the warfare and the quiet thought, the sincerity leader and the political huckster are all mixed up in Kansas today.

Some of us whom the indomitable humorous wit of Jerry Simpson woke up when Kansas was thinking with an empty stomach, are feeling exceedingly hopeful. Efforts are being made here today which will render the lives of our babies freer in Kansas and the United States in days to come. Men are contending for more justice and truth, contending unturningly. It is the same truth; the truth which compels against despotism and towards pure democracy.

GEORGE HUGHES.

INCIDENTAL SUGGESTIONS

A GLIMPSE OF PRISON LIFE IN GEORGIA.

Detroit, Mich., June 16, 1910.

It was my privilege a few weeks ago to visit the Stockade and Poor Farm of Richmond County, Georgia. We have recently had uncovered for us such a slough of horrid truths concerning prisons in general, that this one, by way of offset, gave me a real relief and pleasure. But at the County Farm I found that the Beast in Politics was as much at home as elsewhere.

The convicts are employed almost wholly out-of-doors—those who are able working the roads. There are about three hundred miles of roads in that vicinity, that are said to be as fine as any in the world. I toured by automobile from Augusta to Savannah with some people who had lived many years in Europe, and they agreed that they had never seen finer roads.

On this trip, we occasionally met detachments of the Chain Gang at work. They were for the most part courteous and interested, taking off their caps and smiling. Very few of them failed to meet our eyes, and they seemed unconscious of being criminals. I had frequently heard the Negroes compared

to irresponsible children, and I wondered then if their crimes were not due more to lack of self-control than to real wickedness. We hear that the brains of the patient with nervous prostration, and the criminal, are both not normal, and the out-of-door life is recommended to the former to restore sanity. Why not for the latter? Here it was being practiced. Those convicts who were old or weak, tended the vegetable gardens.

Their Prison, or "Stockade" as it is called there, was built entirely by convict labor, a \$35,000 building being put up for the cost of the raw material, \$12,000. The building looks like a large red brick High School, set on a rise of ground, and commanding incomparable air and sunshine. The inside was cement; and the beds were made by the convicts of iron pipe, and so arranged that they could be lifted and hooked to the ceiling, while the whole room was washed with a hose.

The women convicts are an adjunct of the Poor Farm, which is several miles from the Stockade. They work the gardens and do the housework for the old and helpless and the Tuberculosis Building, which is a second adjunct.

The man who had been County Commissioner there for thirty years, had been able to build two such buildings, one for the whites, one for the blacks, and a fine new hospital, without taxing Richmond County more than other counties, nor as high as many.

The convicts built the Hospital as they did the Stockade. But alas! When I was there politics had declared that the policy of this fine, unselfish man, had been too extravagant, and the new Hospital stood clean and empty with sufferers all around in crowded quarters. The Tuberculosis Building for the blacks stood closed, with tuberculosis raging among the Negroes more fiercely than among the whites. There were but four patients in the other building, the politicians having made it so difficult as to be well nigh impossible for anyone to get in. The kind nurses told us of the crying need among the mill people, and their own frantic desire to help. But in the place of the former county commissioner, a Commission of five politicians were drawing five salaries instead of one. Bath rooms, modern and clean, had been installed in the cottages of the old women, and the new Commission would not allow the running water to be turned into them, although it would have cost the County nothing extra.

We stood peeking through the high board fence watching the Negro-women convicts at their noon-hour recreation in the sunshine. They marched around in a single file, singing and laughing. They beat time to their songs, by dropping one knee, and clicking their fingers at the end of every measure. This is one of their songs—as much as I could catch of it—evidently of personal experience, chanted in an indescribably weird and mournful melody—if one can be said to "chant a melody"—and is it not suggestive of their irresponsible childishness that this solemn wall came to our ears interspersed with the merriest laughter!

My mother tuk an' tol' me.

Oh! Lo-o-rd, Lordy me,

She tol' me not to gamble,

Oh! Lord, Lordy me;