

Senator George H. Pendleton, of Ohio, was the most distinguished advocate of the merit system of the country. Grover Cleveland put it into practice. Tom L. Johnson declares it part of his creed. Thus does another historical superstition seem to vanish.—Alfred H. Henderson, in Cincinnati Times-Star.

#### THE LAW AS A MODERN CONVENIENCE.

The Prosperous city official paused to greet his fellow office-holder.

"What about your latest scheme," he asked, "to charge people 25 cents who stand in the shade of public buildings?"

"It's a long story," replied the fellow office-holder; "it worked all right though until the Daily Moon got out its injunction restraining me from using the sidewalk."

"That was bad."

"No; that was good, for it gave me a chance to get back at them. I got the court to grant me an order for the Moon to show cause why it should not be restrained from restraining me."

"Good for you!"

"No; that was bad for me. The proprietors of the Moon retaliated by mandamus me to withdraw my application for an order to show cause."

"Dear! Dear! What did you do then?"

"I withdrew it as instructed by the Court and then went to another judge, one of the faithful, and had the Moon's order vacated."

"You're all right!"

"No; I was all wrong. The Moon mandamus the Court for an order to show cause why its application for an injunction restraining me from exacting 25 cents of people who stand in the shade of public buildings should not be granted."

"Well! well! what will you do now?"

"I intend to mandamus the Courts to stop restraining me."

"That's the talk!"—Harry Hamilton, in Puck.

#### TOM L. JOHNSON ON THE HOPE OF DEMOCRACY.

An outline of the speech delivered by Tom L. Johnson, Mayor of Cleveland, at the testimonial dinner given on the 30th of November, 1905, to District Attorney Jerome, of New York, and to Mayor Weaver, of Philadelphia, by the City Club of New York.

My subject, "The City, the Hope of Democracy," is taken from the title of a book of the Hon. Frederic C. Howe.\*

\*Sold by The Public Publishing Co.

of Ohio. In this volume is presented the problem of the City and its solution. It describes the dangers that beset densely crowded centers, and fills us with well-grounded hope for their removal. The book is an inquiry into the causes of the corruption that produces misgovernment, and suggests the only way out—a free city, unhampered by State regulation; a city free to make mistakes, of course. The best way to know what to do is to learn by experience what not to do. Out of every mistake a free people will rise triumphant and stronger.

Our city governments show the conflict between two antagonistic forces, one in the direction of socialism, and the other in the direction of special privilege. Socialism would destroy individual enterprise. Privilege, in its struggle to protect its monopoly, destroys citizenship. Socialism would put industry and property in the hands of the government, and make it the sole employer of labor. Plutocracy, or conservatism, as special privilege delights to call itself, would keep all city enterprises in private hands for profit. These are the two extremes, and each must lead to destruction. We who favor municipal ownership of public service enterprises stand, as it were, between these two conflicting forces. We contend that public business only should be managed by the people, and that private business should always remain in private hands. These three schools of thought have been accurately described as Plutocracy, which advocates the private ownership of public business; Socialism, which favors the public ownership of private business, and Municipal Ownership, which demands the public ownership of public business.

What is it that stands mostly in the way of our cities becoming healthy, beautiful and full of public spirit? What are the forces back of the corrupt boss and petty grafter? Mr. Lincoln Steffens says, "Big business," and Frederic C. Howe says, "Big privilege;" but they really mean the same thing—unfair advantage of some kind. It is the corrupting influence of these owners of law-made advantages in an effort to preserve, enlarge or secure new privileges, that places great funds in the hands of corrupt bosses, or corrupted political parties.

In this process of city making which you are considering, what influence most baffles effort? It is the alliance of the keenest minds and the brightest intellects with our privileged corporations. This alliance is not, as is claimed by some, in order to keep

these enterprises out of politics; it is to keep bad men in politics, that larger profits may accrue to the owners of special privileges. The stockholders and investors in such enterprises find that their pecuniary interests lie in perpetuating the power of the boss.

But for the great profits that flow to them from grants of street railway and lighting franchises, these men would exercise their great influence to make our cities better, instead of, as now, to keep them bad. The greatest loss to the city is not the value of the franchise to its private owners, nor in loss of convenience or profit to the people; it is in the destruction of public spirit and civic virtue among the men who naturally belong in the ranks of those seeking to make this world a better world for all of us.

We hear on all sides that what we need is good government, the abolition of graft, the election of good men to office. At times we have examples of good government, of cities free from graft, and of good men in office; but without any marked change in our civic life, and certainly without any enduring evidence of improved conditions among the people. The truth is that we attach too much importance to merely good government, desirable as that is. It is the environment of the citizen that determines his usefulness, more than mere forms of government; and the environment of the citizen is more affected by economic conditions than by forms of law. Good government, no graft; good men will save money and enforce the law. But economic changes require the abolition of law-made advantage.

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All are willing to help in an effort for good government, and in an attack on the petty grafter; but how few are willing to look the economic conditions of our city in the face, and to attack the big grafter? How few men will look back of the corrupt boss for the force that is really producing the corruption—of which the boss is only the agent. No lasting advance on solid ground will be made until we face the economic problem of the city and attack the privileged interests which are responsible for the evils we are combating.

Some men are satisfied with putting good men in office. How slow they are to study how best to get bad men out of office.

In putting good men in office we have in the past made mistakes, and always will do so. Men elected on one question will disappoint their constituents on some new proposition, without being guilty of any crime save that of bad judgment. The power to get men out of office who for any reason fail to represent the views of their constituents will do much to purify city politics, destroy the power of the grafter, and prevent privilege from taking undue advantage of the people. Los Angeles has established this power of recall. This idea of putting men out of office on short notice and having a new election in the district, it is said will destroy the independence of those holding office. But what we want is not independence, it is representation. We want the power to correct our own blunders, the blunders and dishonesty of our servants, before it is too late. Our conclusion, I repeat, is that it is much more important to have a way of removing bad men from office than to put good men into office. This removes at once the incentive for a representative to defy the people who have confided in him. This will give us representative government, the intelligent rule of the majority, and unless you doubt the ability of the people for self-government, you cannot deny their right to the mere machinery by which they can secure this.

Our interest in politics is that the city may be a healthier, happier and pleasanter place to live in, but above all that the citizen may be aroused to feel that it is really his city, that the parks and playgrounds and streets are really his. It is our desire to interest all right-thinking people in the effort for a higher citizenship; to make the city the place in which individual activity has its freest scope; in which

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merit, rather than accident, shall determine every man's and woman's place. It is our wish to fight every influence that makes in the other direction, and to destroy utterly the using of the city's property, its streets and highways for the operation of privileged corporations for profit. If a monopoly serves the interest of the people best, as is true in some cases, then that monopoly should belong to the whole people and should be operated without profit for their benefit.

Nor is this all. To remove that form of taxation that places an embargo on thrift and fines a man for placing a bath-tub in his house or flowers in his yard, or for erecting a factory or a home, while at the same time it places a premium on the preservation of an unhealthy tenement, is another object we have in view. Our interest in city politics calls for the taking by the city itself of the unearned increment. This is not so much for its value in dollars and cents, as for its higher value in freeing men from a pecuniary interest to defeat those things which we are fighting for in the upbuilding of a modern city. It is to enlist our thinking men on the people's side for truly representative government, instead of for a government representing privilege, whether that privilege be land monopoly or franchise grants.

To do this in Cleveland it was necessary first to give good government as it is popularly called, such as well lighted, well paved and clean streets, handsome and popular parks and playgrounds, an efficient police and fire department, an ideal water works, attractive grouping of the public buildings, useful river and harbor improvements. This and the abolition of graft are simple things; they require only ordinary honesty, intelligence and ability. If this were all that there is in the problem of the city, we could hardly expect it to attract the attention of our strongest citizens. These matters should be considered as a mere means to an end. All these forms of so-called good government increase land values, which only a small part of the community now own; and enhance the value of franchises, the profits of which a still smaller portion of the people enjoy. Remove these obstacles, and representative government becomes the foundation for a free city. A free city will give us a free people, and a free people will engage in city making; they will test all questions by their benefit to the community as

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