

it is a fact we cannot blink, that the element of graft tends to distort the issue of despotism or democracy in every burning question. Have we not met men who are academically democratic, yet never on the democratic side of any concrete question which has begun to burn? Why is this so? Some no doubt are influenced by genuine alterations of opinion, induced by the heat of the conflict, which brings their academic speculations to the test of a stimulated judgment. Many, however, are influenced—unconsciously, it may be, for the most part, yet influenced nevertheless, by considerations of personal gain or loss. And do not these considerations constitute the essential principle of graft?

But when all the diverting influences to which individual minds are subject have been given full weight, there remains the truth which it has been my chief object here to point out, that the essence of every burning question, the principle that makes it what we understand by burning question, is the clash of the despotic and the democratic forces in human society—the irrepressible conflict of despotism against democracy.

In greater or lesser degree, every man yields himself to one or the other of those forces. The degree to which he yields may be affected by his selfishness, his ignorance, his thoughtlessness. But he does yield. And whatever the motive that determines him, he does turn his face, when the heat of social controversy arises, in one or the other of those directions—either in the direction of which the logical goal is perfect equality of legal rights, of political power, and of economic opportunity, or else in the opposite direction, of which the logical goal is oligarchy if not absolute monarchy. The ultimatum of democratic principle is government of the people by and for the people; the ultimatum of the opposite principle, whether we call this principle despotism or by some smoother name, is government of the people by and for a few or may be only one of the people.

When these two principles clash, as they do clash whenever and wherever common rights and private interests conflict, they generate burning questions. These questions vary in form with time, place and circumstances, and are numerous accordingly. But they are burning questions only because and to the extent that they are battle gauges in the perennial war of despotism upon democracy. In this sense, therefore, there is but one burning issue.

And the war of despotism upon democracy, let me close by saying, is at its heart the same war on a larger scale that is fought out to the end of his life in every man's breast, between his own selfish instincts of lust and pride, and his own sense of brotherly justice. His selfish lust and pride are the germs in him of that despotic spirit which in the wider field of human society is manifested in the struggle for political conquest, for ecclesiastical

dominion, for economic privilege. His sense of justice, on the other hand, is the germ in him of that spirit of democracy which is set forth as the vital principle of our patriotism in the Declaration of Independence and of our religion in the Golden Rule. Though the despotic spirit might possibly conquer the whole world, it is the democratic spirit alone that can make the whole world kin.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

Ohio.

Cleveland, April 16.—Only two things of genuine importance were actually accomplished by the Ohio legislature which recently and with significant precipitancy closed its session. These were the enactment of the 2-cent fare bill for passenger travel on the railroads of the State, and the repeal of the law prohibiting the printing of the same name in more than one column of candidates on the official ballot at elections. Substantial progress was made, however, in some other respects, the value of which will doubtless become more apparent in next Fall's campaign.

The 2-cent fare bill was passed early in the session, before the corporations were able to pull the strings of partisanship, local interests and personal corruption, whereby a little later they threw this reform legislature into a state of demoralization. This bill reduced fares from 3 cents a mile to 2, and the roads are obedient to it as to local travel. But they evade it with reference to through travel. The Lake Shore, for instance, charges the same fare as heretofore between Chicago and Cleveland. Astute travelers circumvent them somewhat by buying tickets from Chicago to Toledo going east, and from Cleveland to Toledo going west, and pay for the rest of their journey on the train. One good effect of the reduction of fares has been the abolition by the roads of clergymen's half-fare rates; a rather short-sighted policy for the roads, however, for it has dampened a friendly feeling among a large and influential class, upon which, with notable individual exceptions, these corporations have been accustomed to rely for more or less indirect support in times of need.

The change in the ballot law is a severe blow at party regularity. When the Australian ballot law came into vogue, the professional politicians bestirred themselves to make it as ineffective as possible. Among their tricks was one to provide for party columns, so that voters could vote a "straight" ticket by merely making a single mark in a circle at the top of the party column instead of marking each name. One object of this trick was to favor indiscriminate voting. Another was to facilitate intimidation by enabling the "straight" voter to come out of his booth almost instantly. If he remained there longer than the instant required to make one mark he could be "spotted" as probably disloyal. But fusions of two minority parties were still possible, and this possibility caused so much consternation among the professionals of the plurality party, that a bold stand was taken against it. The trick adopted by several States, including Ohio, was

known in Ohio as "the Dana law." It prohibited the printing of the name of any candidate in more than one column. Consequently, if two parties fused, both were compelled to present an incomplete ticket on the official ballot unless one would abandon its identity and, disappearing from the ticket altogether, allow the names of its candidates to appear in the party column of the party with which it had fused. This law is now repealed in Ohio. The whole ballot system ought to be changed by abolishing party columns and grouping the names of all candidates for the same office in alphabetical order as is done in Massachusetts; but the repeal of the anti-fusion law is a vast improvement even without the other.

In the wreckage wrought by the corporations at this session of the Ohio legislature, was the Metzger bill, a measure advocated by Mayor Johnson to curb the monopoly power of street car companies. Another was the bill of Senator Frederic C. Howe, which provided a simple but effective method for equitably taxing monopoly corporations. It proposed to abolish State taxes on the real and personal property assessed in the counties and raise more than this amount for State purposes by a tax on franchises which now pay no taxes. Both bills were killed by corporation interests, and some Democrats in the legislature lined up with Republican members behind the corporation lobby in order to do it.

It is probable that the democratic Democrats of Ohio will make the next campaign an occasion for educating the people of the State with reference to the corporation tools who have misrepresented them, as well as with reference to democratic principles. The corporations worked for the most part through local bosses. The head center boss was absent, but county bosses were in evidence, and every one of them was interested in some public utility franchise or other.

It will be generally interesting to know that a constitutional amendment for the initiative and referendum actually passed the Senate by the requisite three-fifths majority, but was not put to vote in the House because, while it would have received a majority its friends did not believe it could get three-fifths. The discussions of this measure revealed very clearly the fact that it is not the referendum but the initiative that the plutocratic elements have come to fear. They feel that public opinion can be restrained if the people are not allowed to vote upon any law until some manageable legislature has submitted it to referendum; but they are desperately afraid of public opinion coupled with the legal right of petitioning for a law and then directly voting it into operation.

While the legislature has adjourned, it has left an investigating committee at work in Cincinnati with what President Roosevelt might call "a muck rake," and not a little plutocratic muck is it raking up.

Mayor Johnson's street car policy, though still obstructed is constantly gaining ground. The Chamber of Commerce came to the aid of the companies with a proposal for renewing their franchises, but this proposal has fallen flat. Public opinion here gives no indication of any disposition to tolerate further gifts of valuable public rights to these companies, and most of the important support they have heretofore received is drifting away from them to the

"holding company" plan—like the "contract plan" of Chicago—with which Mayor Johnson is endeavoring to settle the question.

L. F. P.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Thursday, April 19.

Destructive Earthquake at San Francisco.

Almost immediately after the volcanic eruption at Mount Vesuvius (p. 29) had subsided, San Francisco was visited with a destructive earthquake. It was by far the most disastrous the city has ever experienced. The first shock, which occurred at 5:13 on the morning of the 18th, was quickly followed by another, and in the evening there came still another. Between these there were four minor shocks. The water works plant being destroyed, the city was exposed for lack of water to spreading fires and is at this moment in danger of total destruction. Lack of water for drinking purposes, also, is causing untold suffering, and the only relief respecting the need of both food and water must come by sea, all railroad communication having been cut off. Fears of a pestilence make a terrifying climax to the succession of horrors. Some estimates place the loss of life at 10,000 and the personal injuries at 20,000; but the actual loss of life will never be known, for the bodies of many who were killed by the earthquake were consumed in the fires that followed. The burned area, eight square miles in extent, comprises the business section, in which were the finest and largest business buildings of the city. Nearly all are in ruins. Chinatown is totally destroyed, the Japanese quarter is burned out, and the retail district is swept clean.

◎

The same disturbance that wrecked San Francisco extended to Palo Alto, where it destroyed Leland Stanford, Jr., University; to Berkeley, where it badly damaged the State University; to Agnew, where it wrecked the insane asylum and killed 275 inmates; to Salinas, where the Spreckels sugar factory was destroyed; to San Jose, where 65 persons were killed; to Napa, Stockton, Vallejo, Redwood City, and even to Sacramento, where it was sharply felt. By scientific instruments the shock was noted all over the globe.

◎ ◎

President Roosevelt's Sensational Speech.

Social conditions, with especial reference to business and political corruption, was the subject of a speech on the 14th by President Roosevelt. He had recently spoken at the Gridiron Club, Washington, under circumstances making reports of the speech