

are alert. Plutocracy does not stop fighting until it has nothing to fight with or there is nothing left to fight for.

In this emergency just one man whose business and political associations are with the classes who have worked for, or apologized for, or in some other way strengthened the hands of the traction interests, comes promptly forward with the right word at the right time. This is William Kent, formerly a good citizenship alderman and lately president of the Municipal Voters' League, a man of wealth and high standing. After reviewing the new situation in an open letter in the Chicago Record-Herald of the 14th, Mr. Kent says:

The call is urgent upon the intelligent men of Chicago who are accustomed to organize and do things to come to the rescue of the situation. We are going to have municipal ownership and operation. Shall it be a success or a failure? Its success or its failure rests with the sort of men who built up Chicago after the great fire, with the sort of men who built the world's fair; and this sort of men is still with us in larger numbers than ever, equally brave and equally disinterested if they can only get the cobwebs of prejudice from before their eyes and realize the opportunity for service to this community. The pride that people of Chicago would feel in a well-organized and well-operated municipal street car system would far excel any temporary elation they might feel over such a spectacle as the world's fair. We are going to have municipal operation of street railways in Chicago. Will it be a disgrace to Chicago or will it be its crowning glory?

With no desire to be pessimistic, we cannot but think of Mr. Kent as of a patriotic John crying out in a plutocratic wilderness. Civic patriotism is not very strong among the business men of Chicago when there is the alternative of private profit; and among those in Mr. Kent's circles who feel civic patriotism disinterestedly as he does, but few have his democratic vision and moral courage. Yet if his noble advice were taken by the classes to whom it is offered, the traction problem would be solved in a week, and

within a year Chicago would lead American cities in the successful ownership and operation of street car service by the municipality. Nor is that all. The financial classes who are land owners in Chicago would within another year make more out of the consequent rise in site values than they are losing through the Supreme Court's decision. This advantage to land owners is of course to be deplored. But it is an inevitable consequence of all civic improvement and belongs in a category of public evils which must be endured patiently until the people are disposed to remedy them radically.

#### The Colorado assassination conspiracy.

Reports of a horrible conspiracy to assassinate were published over the country early this week. The charges are against leaders of the Western Federation of Miners (p. 822), the socialist labor organization which has its headquarters at Denver. If these charges are true, there can be no reasonable sympathy with the men accused. Their crime merits unsparing condemnation and relentless punishment. But as published the charges do not bear the earmarks of truth. They rest upon a fantastic confession purporting to have been obtained from an alleged accomplice by means avowedly unlawful and through nerve-racking methods; and the corroborative facts are such as might easily be "faked" by detectives. The whole affair has less the appearance of the discovery of a conspiracy of assassins than of an effort to arouse public prejudice against men about to be tried for their lives—men who are innocent but whom the Standard Oil crowd have marked for hanging. That there has been a conspiracy to assassinate is true beyond peradventure; but whether the prisoners or their prosecutors are the conspirators is an open question.

#### Opinion factories.

As larger public controversies

grow warm, facts are disclosed which shed light in all directions, and even upon the ebb and flow of smaller ones. The controversy in Congress over railroad rates, for instance, has exposed the work of some of the press bureaus which contract to manufacture public opinion. Whenever a news report, editorial or public speech appears in the smaller papers, which is favorable to monopoly interests, the suspicion would be reasonable, on the general facts, that it was inspired by some monopoly interest and formulated by a press agency under the retainer of that interest. In the case of the larger papers, there is probably no intermediate bureau; the business is done direct.

#### Corrupting judges.

An investigation of public corruption is in progress in Cincinnati, which gives promise as it proceeds of scandalous revelations. The Republican leader, Boss Cox, already known to be unfit notwithstanding the respectability of his associates, has been shown to have regulated decisions of the judiciary as well as the distribution of public plunder. And the developments thus far point to higher game than Boss Cox.

#### SUSAN B. ANTHONY.

The woman whose public service for 60 years has honored this name which she bore, has left name and service as a rich legacy to the associates who survive her, and the recruits that are coming to her cause.

In the days of abolitionism Miss Anthony worked for the freedom of the slave; and before as well as after the heat of that conflict her work was for recognition of equal legal rights alike for men and women. Her impulse was in each instance the same: she was a democrat in the unsullied sense of the word.

In some respects she saw the work to which she devoted her life culminate in success. The chattel slave was freed, and woman enfranchised as to property rights. When her career began women were regarded as no more fit to

own property than to cast votes at elections. Even women themselves, some of them, were just as confident then of the incapacity of their sex for separate property rights as some women are confident now of the incapacity of their sex for voting intelligently. Doubtless these women were just as much averse to having property responsibilities and duties thrust upon their sex then as women of the same type are now averse to having political responsibilities and duties thrust upon that sex now. Yet Miss Anthony lived a whole lifetime after women had been invested fully with property rights. And she had the proud consciousness that this had been done through her work and the work of others like her.

But in another respect her work was unfinished. The thought of the injustice of denying political rights to women was with her in her dying breath. Faithfully as she had worked for that enfranchisement, she knew she could not live to see it accomplished. Yet it will be accomplished, and to her name will belong, and to her memory let us hope will be paid a just tribute of praise for having so faithfully and effectively helped it on.

#### LABOR IN POLITICS—AN INSTANCE.

Organized labor may maintain any one of three different attitudes toward politics.

It may, for one thing, hold aloof from politics altogether. If it does this it will in due time find its operations hedged in with hostile legislation and tied up with injunctions, its leaders in jail, its adversaries fortified behind impregnable special interests, their agents in places of legislative and administrative power, their lawyers on the bench, and trades unions in comparison with employers' unions as a rope of sand to a wire cable.

Instead of holding aloof from politics, organized labor may admit politics into labor unions. In this case, self-seeking politicians, and through them the gigantic financial interests with which labor is most desperately at war, will bring the labor vote into the service of its enemies, and the last

days of organized labor will be worse than the first.

The third attitude which organized labor may maintain toward politics is not to hold aloof from politics nor yet to admit politics into labor unions, but to lead labor unions into politics.

In doing this, three courses are possible. Labor may organize a new labor-class party or affiliate with one of those already existing; it may affiliate with one of the other side-parties already existing and which invite its cooperation; or it may make of the most available of the two great parties into which the mass of American citizens divide, its most obedient political servant.

In a more or less tentative way and to a greater or less degree organized labor has experimented with all these policies, and the results of that experience as well as the general tendencies of human nature impress us very strongly with reference to the relative merits of the possibilities we have outlined. But we have no intention here of discussing the matter. Our present purpose is to tell the story of one of the most intelligent, forceful, faithful and devoted labor leaders of the East, who has adopted one of these policies. He does not believe in labor's staying out of politics; he does not believe in letting politics into labor; he does believe in leading labor into politics. But he has no faith in labor-class parties, conceiving that the best party for labor would be one that stands honestly for democracy—that is, for equal human rights; he has no hope from permanent side parties; he has both faith and hope in the possibility of labor's making the Democratic party genuinely democratic. By pursuing this course he has made the labor vote of a large Eastern city a controlling element in the Democratic party there, and, forcing plutocratic Democrats to the rear or out, has made that vote an effective influence in public affairs.

The man to whom we allude, Michael John Flaherty,\* was born at Cohoes, N. Y., in 1853.

Cohoes has long been a factory town, and as Mr. Flaherty's par-

\*A portrait of Mr. Flaherty accompanies this issue of *The Public* as a supplement.

ents were hard workers in the cotton and woolen industries there and consequently, according to the social conditions which identify poverty with industry, were poor people, the boy himself was compelled at an early age to help eke out their scanty wages by leaving school and becoming a child laborer for long hours in unsanitary factory surroundings and at grinding pay. He worked in a "protected industry." Like scores upon scores of thousands of other children in that factory town and in other "protected" towns, his intellectual development was hampered by denial of educational opportunities and by severity of toil, but unlike most of them he was gifted with a physique that enabled him to break through the barriers by which the minds of so many of his fellow workers were weakened and dwarfed.

Young Flaherty was favored also with a taste for music and a natural aptitude for the cornet. To the extent that their narrow means permitted, his parents promoted the development of the boy's musical faculties, and in spite of the enervation of his toilsome work he had mastered technique sufficiently in his later youth to secure employment in a local band. It was in connection with this employment that he became a labor unionist.

Labor at Cohoes was not and never has become strongly organized; but early in his career as a professional musician, Flaherty succeeded in interesting enough of his fellow musicians to organize the Cohoes Musicians' Union, and not long afterward he was chosen its president.

At the age of 26 he left Cohoes and settled in Brooklyn, then an independent city but now a borough of the City of New York. Here he became active in the Knights of Labor, in which he was continuously a delegate to District Assembly 220 from 1887 until well into the 90's.

In the Fall of 1894, Mr. Flaherty first appeared in the Central Labor Union of Brooklyn as a delegate from the musicians' organization. The same definiteness of purpose, continuity of effort, faculty of making friends, and ca-