

bloody-minded as ever. The scarlet trail of war meanders through this lecture. War, however, is no longer a good thing in itself. It is the justice of it that makes it good. Which would indicate that Mr. Roosevelt's bellicose temperament has become somewhat morally modified, were it not that he evidently still considers it a crime to doubt the justice of his own side in any war. Although Mr. Roosevelt mentioned no names, he clearly does not yet approve that "other cheek" doctrine of the One they called the Nazarene. Let us not forget, either, that in this lecture Mr. Roosevelt has now placed Abraham Lincoln so as to admit of worshipping at his shrine while flying in the face of his teachings. Lincoln's teachings usually it seems were a "mixture of idealism and sound common sense." Insofar as they were Rooseveltian they are "sound common sense;" otherwise they belong in the category of idealism, which being interpreted is molly-coddle.

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In his dogmatic utterances about the sacredness of property, Mr. Roosevelt still neglects to discriminate between property rights that may be one man's without automatically and perennially robbing other men, and those that have that peculiarity. To him all property looks alike. In Abraham Lincoln's day this indiscriminating vision might well have led him to say to the Negro, "Property, obey your owners!" And yet one may really discern in that Paris lecture a sign of clearing vision regarding the sacredness of property. We refer to this: "Ordinarily and in the great majority of cases, human rights and property rights are fundamentally and in the long run identical; but *when it clearly appears that there is a real conflict between them, human rights must have the upper hand.*" That is sound doctrine, no matter what tanglewood logic Mr. Roosevelt went through to find it out.

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Is It Aldrich & Taft, or Aldrich & Co.?

Senator Aldrich is reported from Washington to have gone into political partnership with President Taft, to put Mr. Taft's policies safely through Congress. Mr. Taft furnishes policies as capital for the firm, and Mr. Aldrich furnishes the experience, etc., necessary to put them through. Among the live assets of the firm is a railway bill of which Senator Dolliver (Republican) said on the floor of the Senate on the 25th that it would "put the transportation systems of the country into the hands of two managers of great industrial organizations." Senator Root replied with plausi-

bility that he had seen no evidence of any eagerness of the railroads for the proposed law, but this may be because their interests are in such safe hands.

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An Echo of the Des Moines Election.

In describing the recent municipal election in Des Moines (p. 318), the second under the "Des Moines plan," one of The Public's trusted and valued editorial advisers and contributors, a citizen of Des Moines who was efficient in bringing about the adoption of the Commission plan in that city, made this comment upon a re-elected commissioner, a man of national reputation:

John MacVickar, a former municipal ownership Mayor, of whom much was expected two years ago, but who completely reversed himself after he was elected commissioner, with Schramm, his co-adjutor or "me too," was re-elected by a large majority.

To that comment Mr. MacVickar promptly made this response:

Having learned to accept with more than ordinary consideration what is published in your journal, I am anxious to correct a statement made by your talented Des Moines correspondent. She does me the honor to mention my name and the injustice to charge that I have completely reversed myself on my former position which favored municipal ownership. I favor municipal ownership of public utilities today as earnestly as I have ever favored it, but experience has taught me that a municipality must first have the powers and second the ways and means.

Your correspondent also does injustice to the other members of the Des Moines Council, for there is no member who is justly entitled to the charge made, that of being a "corporation candidate."

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The final paragraph of Mr. MacVickar's letter alludes to a mention by our correspondent of two Councilmen, Mr. Ash and Mr. Roe, of whom she says that they "were also believed to be corporation candidates." That this belief did and does prevail among advocates of municipal ownership in Des Moines, we know from supplementary information. Whether it is well founded will be evident, one way or the other, when the public utility corporations of Des Moines come into collision with the municipal ownership mayor, Mr. Hanna. Should it then appear that the belief regarding them which our Des Moines correspondent reports is unjust, both she and The Public will be swift to set them right.

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So also as to Mr. MacVickar, who opposes municipal ownership efforts in Des Moines upon the plea that "a municipality must first have the powers, and second the ways and means." This is not necessarily a false plea. It may be a per-

fectly true one, notwithstanding that it is the hackneyed excuse of men migrating from municipal ownership to corporation camps. Mr. MacVickar may not be such a man. We sincerely hope he is not. But our correspondent evidently thinks he is, and we have found her to be fair and reasonable as well as talented. Nor is she by any means alone among the municipal ownership citizens of Des Moines in thinking so. On the other hand, however, Mr. MacVickar is precise and emphatic in his declaration of continued fidelity to the cause of municipal ownership. Here, then, is an issue of intent, a question of purpose, which can be determined in only one way of which we know. When lack of powers or ways and means is an obstacle to municipal ownership, officials who really believe in municipal ownership place their emphasis upon the duty of overcoming or removing the obstacle, whereas officials who stand in with the corporations, place *their* emphasis upon the fact that the obstacle exists. Mr. MacVickar's intent must in fairness be tried by that test. With a municipal ownership mayor in the Commission, and not a single member who was a corporation candidate, a man of Mr. MacVickar's experience, acuteness and ability ought to have no difficulty in making visible those outward signs of the inward faith he declares, which might afford our Des Moines correspondent the opportunity we know she would welcome, of reversing her present unfavorable judgment.

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President Taft's Friends.

If it was right to judge Grover Cleveland by the enemies he had made, why not judge President Taft by the friends he has made? But maybe it would come to pretty much the same thing in the end.

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Excess Condemnation.

What is "excess condemnation"? It is a new name for a new thing, and few have heard about it. But a Constitutional amendment authorizing it is before the legislature of New York, and, according to the Civic Journal of the People's Institute of New York, it is in actual operation in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, Maryland, London, Paris and Berlin. It is very simple. When land is to be condemned for a public use, the adjacent land, which will be increased in value by this public use, is to be condemned also. "Excess condemnation" means condemnation of more land than is needed for the public improvement proposed, in order that the improvement may be paid for out of the consequent increase in land values.

Here is an illustration from the Civic Journal: "A great boulevard is to be cut. This will cost money to the city; it will add millions to real estate values along the boulevard. Politicians anticipate this, speculators get a 'tip,' there is heavy buying of land. The boulevard then adds an *unearned increment* of hundreds per cent to adjacent property. As things now stand, the speculators get all, the city nothing save what increased taxable values yield. Excess condemnation simply allows the city to buy this adjacent land, reserve part for subsequent public uses, and reap the profit on the rest. The boulevard costs nothing, for the city's profit covers this and allows for lavish public improvements besides." What objection can there be to this, except by grafters?

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Presidential Possibilities.

Among the candidates announced for the Democratic nomination for President in 1912 are Gov. Folk of Missouri and Gov. Marshall of Indiana. This is encouraging.

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JUSTICE BREWER'S JUDICIAL DEMOCRACY.

The recent death of David J. Brewer has removed from the Supreme Court a transcendent democratic influence. And such factors can not well be spared from that body in this day of acute warfare between the few and the many.

Brewer was to the Supreme Court what Murdock is to the House of Representatives, or La Follette is to the Senate. He was irregular. He had caught the spirit of revolt. The impenetrable dignity and solemnity clothing the body in which he sat did not blind his eyes to fundamental conditions of right and wrong. He did not carry with him to the Court on his appointment that corporation bias which others of the Federal judiciary are supposed to have from long and profitable schooling in that branch of the law.

Rarely did Justice Brewer hesitate to accept an invitation to speak in public, in violation of those ethics of the Court which have been evolved from its exclusiveness. And he always expressed himself frankly. He opposed the view of the Supreme Court as an invisible body of Elder Statesmen, necessarily far removed from the people by reason of such greater wisdom and superiority.

Abhorring convention off the bench, he was consistent when sitting, in that he dissented freely from the majority decisions. Some of his dissenting opinions are inspiring in their patriotism, and