

dential chair—did he not thrust this feeble-meaning and amiable man, with his pre-eminent fitness for the use of such powers, into that very chair? Nevertheless, not until Mr. Taft got in Mr. Roosevelt's way on the greased pole with its coveted prize at the top, did Mr. Roosevelt disclose his knowledge of Mr. Taft's pre-eminent and dangerous weakness.



Mr. Taft's portrait of Mr. Roosevelt is as true as Roosevelt's of him. With reference to the trusts, for instance, who can reasonably dispute Mr. Taft's description of Mr. Roosevelt's anti-trust policy? He observes that Mr. Roosevelt "is going to smash the bad trusts and he is going to protect the good trusts," but "gives no other guide than that of Executive discretion." And who can deny the truth of Mr. Taft's characterization of such a policy as amounting "in the end to nothing but the establishment of a benevolent despotism"? A despotism Mr. Roosevelt's policy exactly appears to be, when the froth and fume are wiped off his utterances; and as for its benevolence—well, we have Mr. Roosevelt's word for that.



In this interesting even if repugnant contest, Mr. Taft shows to better advantage in point of form, Mr. Roosevelt in point of agility. Whether hypocritical or not, the former makes an effort at any rate at dignity. He appears throughout in the role of an amiable aristocrat, well meaning but obtuse; the latter is as frisky as a light weight champion sparring for a chance to punch a heavy weight under the chin. Mr. Roosevelt displays no more dignity than a circus monkey at feeding time. This might be pardoned, of course, if he offered anything in place of it; for dignity is not the most indispensable quality for a President. It should be held in higher esteem, however, than unconcealed egotism and unrestrained invective. It ought not to be of lower esteem than Mr. Roosevelt's plentiful output of what Mr. Taft fairly summarizes as "an iteration and reiteration of high purpose without offering any practical solution to the difficulties he proposes to overcome."



It is difficult to believe that the Republican party will be very keen now to nominate either Mr. Roosevelt or Mr. Taft. It could hardly expect to elect Mr. Taft in the face of the grave accusations against him of his own political sponsor, administrative confidant, personal chum and immediate predecessor in the Presidential chair.

What better campaign material against Mr. Taft could the Democrats desire than quotations from Mr. Roosevelt's Massachusetts speeches? And how much stronger would Mr. Roosevelt's nomination be in face of the exposures of him Mr. Taft has made? His friendly discrimination in favor of the Steel trust and the Harvester trust were known before, in a way; but they are known now in a telling way. Disgraceful, therefore, and disgusting as this conspicuous personal quarrel between Roosevelt and Taft has got to be, it may serve the highly desirable purpose of thrusting them both out of the running. No harm could come of that. To find a candidate in any party more feeble in well-meaning than Mr. Roosevelt describes Mr. Taft to be, or one with a concept of Executive responsibility leading more directly to despotism than both Taft and Roosevelt show Mr. Roosevelt to be, is almost impossible and quite improbable.



Benjamin Franklin and Free-trade.

When in the palmy Big Business days of McKinleyism, the doctrine of Protection traveled in seven-league boots proclaiming its patriotism with a loud voice; one of its stump speakers—the late Congressman Horr of Michigan—named Benjamin Franklin as a Protectionist. The announcement shocked some of Mr. Horr's auditors. They were sure that Franklin had never been a Protectionist, yet hesitated at drawing inferences derogatory to Mr. Horr, and one of them looked the matter up. Turning the index pages of a set of Franklin's works, what was his amazement to find a line that seemed fully to sustain Mr. Horr's ascription to Franklin of Protection doctrines. The line ran somewhat in this wise: "Protection encourages commerce." But upon referring to the text thus indicated in the index, it appeared that what Franklin had written was: "Protection *from pirates* encourages commerce." Of course that is true, but it is not Protection doctrine; it is Free-trade doctrine. There is no worse form of piracy against which commerce needs protection than Protection; for Protection is piracy under the sanction of law.



That Benjamin Franklin really was a Freetrader is further evident from an anonymous tract entitled "Principles of Trade," which may be found in the Congressional Library. "A Well Wisher to His Country" is the only authentic signature; but there appears to be internal evidence of Franklin's own authorship. Following is the text of the tract:

Perhaps, in general, it would be better if Govern-

ment Medled no farther with Trade, than to protect it, and let it take its Cours. Most of the Statutes, or Acts, Edicts, Arets and Placaarts of Parliaments, Princes, and States, for regulating, directing, or restraining of Trade, have, we think, been either political Blunders, or Jobbs obtain'd by artful Men, for private Advantage, under Pretence of public Good. When Colbert assembled some wise old Merchants of France; and desir'd their Advice and Opinion, how he cou'd best serve and promote Commerce; their Answer, after Consultation, was in three Words only, *Laissez Nous faire*. Let us alone. It is said, by a very solid Writer of the same Nation, that he is wel advanc'd in the Science of Politicks, Who knows the ful Force of that *Maxim Pas trop gouverner*. Not to govern too strictly. Which, perhaps, wou'd be of More Use when aply'd to Trade, than in any other public Concern. It were therefore to be wish'd that Commerce were as fre between all the Nations of the World, as it is between the several Countys of England: so wou'd al, by mutual Communication, obtain more Enjoyments. Those Countys do not ruin one another by Trade; Neither wou'd the Nations. No Nation was ever ruined by Trade; even, seemingly, the most disadvantageous. Wherever desirable Superfluities are Imported, Industry is excited; and thereby plenty is produc'd. Where only Necessarys permitted to be purchas'd, Men wou'd work no more than Necessary for that Purpose.



An Ohio Judge on the Recall.

Judge Wanamaker of Akron, Ohio, spoke with great frankness to the gentlemen of his profession at Chicago last week on the subject of recalling judges. To the protests that judges should not be governed by the people, he retorted that "we have in this country" something worse—"a government of the people by the judges." To the plea that judges should be sacrosanct, his retort was that "our judges are chosen from the big lawyers, and the standard of the big lawyer is nearly always the big fee." And when he dealt with the pitiful point that under the Recall, judges would "keep an ear to the ground," he made a reply which unhappily goes to the heart of the question: "I would rather they kept both ears to the ground than that they kept one ear to the railroad track!" Men who honestly shrink from subjecting judges to the popular Recall, have only their own indifference in the past to thank for the now irresistible tendency in that direction. Had they been as solicitous for the judicial ermine when railroad lawyers were coming into wearing it to soil it, as they are now that popular distrust of the judiciary has been thereby aroused, the Recall might never have been demanded. As it is, the ordinary citizen finds it difficult to reconcile the unanimity, in opposition to the judicial Recall, of Big Business and the lawyers and judges thereof, with any other motive

than a desire to save to privileged classes this last resort of Privilege.



Municipal-Ownership "Failures."

We have our attention called frequently to announcements in subsidized periodicals or from subsidized news sources, that municipal ownership has, in this place or that, disastrously failed; but upon running down the facts have found them invariably so different from the reports that we are growing weary of the work.* Hunting down lies is not very good sport; the quarry is so little worth while after it has been caught. From our experience we think it fair to assume that every report of a failure of municipal ownership of municipal utilities is either an out and out falsehood or a gross and deliberate misrepresentation. There is at any rate no unfairness in so assuming until proof to the contrary appears from better sources and through better channels than the trade papers that cater to Privilege. Our latest experience in hunting down these agile lies has to do with the public telephone system of Manitoba adopted in 1908.† The results of this experience we now offer.



Inspired news articles and editorials—inspired by the Bell monopoly and its angelic horde—have fluttered over the country, full of misinformation to the effect that in Manitoba "government ownership has proved a flat failure," that "the angry protests of the people who use the 'phone throughout the Province" are heard, that "the government promised substantial reduction in rates but the reduction has never gone into effect," that "the rates are even higher than they were under the Bell regime," that "even the municipal ownership people who use 'phones are kicking," that "every telephone in the Province will cost more from April 1," and that "there is talk of organizing a new company to buck the government." This is one of those half truths that are ever the worst of lies. Prices *had* gone up, and so had angry protests; but the inference that government ownership of the telephone system in Manitoba has proved a failure, flat or otherwise, is absolutely false. Any one may learn this for himself by inquiries in Manitoba outside of Bell monopoly circles.

*As an instance, see the reports on the British telephone system in *The Public* of September 18, 1908, vol. xi, page 580; also *The Public* of December 29, 1911, vol. xiv, page 1307.

†See *The Public*, volume ix, pages 749, 991; volume x, page 1037.