

They are planning, therefore, to secure the election of a city government from which, when these ordinances are defeated, they can obtain what they want without the obstacle of a referendum. The one thing that would baffle their plans in this respect is the re-election of Mayor Dunne. Every agency at their command, therefore—physical, political, goo-goo and financial,—is now in requisition to assure Dunne's defeat. But it is evident that Dunne cannot be defeated at the polls. The only possibility of defeating him at all is to corrupt the Democratic primaries and prevent his nomination.

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The man chosen to lead the Pierpont Morgan interests at the Democratic primaries is ex-Mayor Harrison. As the primaries are practically under the control of susceptible politicians, and are so held as to make popular voting at them a farce, the Morgan manipulators expect to count Dunne out and Harrison in. Should they accomplish that purpose, the election contest would be between Harrison as the machine Democrat and Busse as the machine Republican, and Morgan wouldn't care which side won.

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Upon the Democratic nomination for Mayor depends the settlement of the traction problem. If Dunne is nominated, his inevitable election and the equally inevitable defeat of the pending Morgan ordinances, will put a quietus upon the Morgan schemes and leave the city in control of its streets; should Harrison be nominated, the Pierpont Morgan financiers, whether under Harrison or Busse makes no other difference than possibly to some confidential expense account, would own Chicago. Though they failed on the referendum they could then fall back upon Harrison or Busse, as the case might be, for a franchise without a referendum. The immediate demand upon the Democrats of Chicago, if they would protect their traction rights from the Morgan raid, is that they make Dunne's nomination sure by voting for him overwhelmingly at the primaries.

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Indecent Newspapers.

President Roosevelt is credited in Washington dispatches with an intention of prosecuting daily newspapers for publishing through the mails the indecent details of the Thaw trial. Since there is a law prohibiting the use of the mails for such purposes, it is to be hoped that the Federal authorities will enforce it impartially against the great dailies, as they have done with much less reason against defenseless weeklies. But postal

laws can do little to eradicate the evil. No law can force newspapers to rise above the level of the general decency. Of this the instance under consideration furnishes proof, for it is not "yellow journals" alone that are offending in connection with the Thaw trial. The offenders include papers of highly reputable tints. But who is there among their readers, their advertisers, or the patrons of their advertisers, that thinks of thrusting them and their vile reports out of his house? These papers do not come into homes by stealth. They are invited in—filth and all. So long as public sentiment is no more sensitive than that, the postal laws, though they continue to be operative against weak periodicals, will be impotent against great newspapers. Later dispatches indicate that this is also President Roosevelt's opinion. His intention to prosecute the great dailies is reported as having been abandoned.

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Capital Punishment.

An agreeable surprise came last week from the judiciary committee of the lower house of the Illinois legislature. One progressive member, Mr. Ton, had timidly proposed the abolition of the death penalty in cases of conviction on circumstantial evidence. To his astonishment, no doubt, the committee voted, 13 to 12, to abolish capital punishment altogether. One of the members, Mr. McGoorty, fortified the position of the majority by asserting that "every man who ever has seen an execution has been made an advocate of the abolition of the death penalty." This is probably too extreme a statement. While doubtless true of human men, it is probably erroneous as to brute men. To the instincts of the latter the capital penalty appeals, and the closer he gets to its infliction (until it reaches himself) the more he enjoys the horrible sensation. He revels in newspaper details of executions, he yearns to be an onlooker at the grewsome spectacle, and when he sees a hanging he wants to adjust the rope. Capital penalties are bad enough, in that they blot out the physical life of the victims; they are infinitely worse, in that they foster brutish instincts in the populace. The man who coldly demands the taking of another's life by law, is fit, and upon provocation is likely to be willing, to take another's life without law. Where lawful homicide flourishes lawless homicide is cultivated, and of the two the former is morally the worse. Driven by righteous wrath temporarily beyond control, men may lynch murderers caught in the act, without breaking down their own moral

bulwarks; but the man who deliberately puts another to death, whether as hangman, juror, legislator, or citizen, has the making in his heart of a deliberate murderer. Cultivate this state of mind in him by retaining capital penalties, and if he does not kill to satisfy his blood-lust, it is either because no provocation occurs or he lacks the courage of his brutishness. The 13 men on the Illinois judiciary committee who voted to abolish capital penalties are to be congratulated, and it is to be hoped that they will yet be able to rid their State of its criminal law. The experience of other States proves that these penalties serve no purpose whatever in restraining homicide—the only possible excuse, if there be any excuse, that human men can offer for laws that take human life.

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Mallock on Labor.

Of W. H. Mallock, the English essayist, it has been said that he convinces by arguing platitudes elaborately and then jumping over a fallacy into his desired conclusion. For example: Says Mr. Mallock, "Twice two are four, and I will prove it." He does prove it, logically, and with delightful diction; the man's thought seems to be invincible. "Similarly," he continues, "twice four are eight, and I'll prove that." He proves that also, and one feels that his thought is indeed invincible. "Furthermore," he resumes, "twice eight are sixteen; I'll prove that, too." And so thoroughly does he prove it that confidence is completely established. Whereupon he concludes: "Whoever has followed me thus far will readily see that twice sixteen are forty-seven." Judging from the reports of Mr. Mallock's lectures in New York, he is arguing after that fashion. Having proved that all wealth is not produced by hired labor, he adds the assertion that the contention that "labor is the source of all wealth" is platitudinous "if labor be taken to include industrial effort of all kinds," and then concludes that in that case, "to say that all wealth ought to go to the laborers is like saying that all wealth ought to go to the human race." Mr. Mallock skips the important fact that all members of the human race do not join in industrial effort; but this skip is intended to be invisible. It is the jump from a demonstration that twice eight are sixteen, to the conclusion that therefore twice sixteen are forty-seven.

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Rockefeller's Donation.

Thirty-two million dollars is the munificent gift of John D. Rockefeller to educational pur-

poses, and the press is blessing his benevolent name. But what does this gift consist of? The question is asked by Tom L. Johnson, and he answers it, and answers it right. It does not consist of food, nor clothing, nor houses, nor any actually existing wealth that may be consumed in satisfying human needs. It consists of paper documents, which the labor of the future must perennially redeem, yet never cancel—of paper titles to railroad rights of way, to special privileges in city streets, and to legal monopolies of mineral deposits and other gifts of God to mankind. These documents are mere powers to levy taxes, to take tribute, to say to the worker of the future, "For every three units of energy you expend in wealth production, you must give the produce of one to me." What Mr. Rockefeller has really contributed to educational uses, therefore, is the labor of other men, yet to be performed, and to an annual amount that would capitalize into \$32,000,000. Estimating this amount at 5 per cent. and the labor at an average per worker as high even as \$500 a year net, the gift from Mr. Rockefeller resolves itself into a gift in perpetuity of 3,200 industrious men.

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But we are not quarreling with Mr. Rockefeller for having made the gift. His command over industrious men is, under existing economic conditions, at his own disposal. There is no direct way in which he could set those men free if he tried. The situation is not so simple as under the slavery regime, when the enslaved men could be identified by name or number. It is not 3,200 particular men that he gives or has to give. The particular men cannot be identified, and no particular man furnishes all the labor energy contributed. But particular men, it may be millions, will have to contribute each an indefinable part of this labor energy. Mr. Rockefeller, therefore, cannot manumit his slaves directly. What he can do, and all he can do, is to utilize their labor for purposes that will tend to change the economic conditions which shackle them with the invisible chains of a slavery that is none the less real for being intangible.

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Has he done that by his educational gift? This is the question the answer to which determines whether he is to be applauded for his gift or not. He cannot be applauded if his purpose is to perpetuate the very laws that give him dominion over the industry and tribute from the production of his fellow men. Yet such is said and widely believed to be his purpose. More than that.