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LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

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The Chicago traction question (p. 236) again arises, and in a manner ill calculated to inspire confidence in the good faith toward the public of the local public officials and the local monopoly interests between whom the matter has been a subject of dicker for the past two years.

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The immediate cause of the present controversy is the recommendation to the city council by the transportation committee, of a compromise ordinance for the extension of certain street car franchises. It is the "tentative ordinance" proposed by the subcommittee nearly a year ago (vol. vi, p. 675), though with some important changes. The ordinance as reported is not a good one, but it is better than it was as it came from the hands of the sub-committee. It does bring the time for possible public ownership down from the positive 20 and probable 40 years of the original to 13; and unless there are as yet undiscovered "jokers" in it, it does place the city, as the original did not, securely in position to control the traction situation at the end of the term. Bad though it still is on its own merits, it may possibly be as good a compromise with the traction pirates as could be hoped for.

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What is exasperating about it is not so much the character of the ordinance, which may be defended as a compromise, but the contemptuous attitude of its promoters toward last Spring's referendum, at which by an overwhelming majority the people demanded immediate municipal ownership and no more franchises. Mayor Harrison is the principal known offender. He has issued a proclamation in which, after expressing his belief that the proposed ordinance "is the best practical solution of the traction question in the present circumstances," he notifies the people that "if a referendum is desired upon the proposition" those who oppose the ordinance should "immediately undertake the work of securing the signatures necessary to have the question placed on the ballot at the November election." The time for doing this expires September 9—only 26 days after his proclamation; but he promises that if by October 3d (nearly a month after the petition would become waste paper under the referendum law), it should have been signed by "a sufficient number to indicate a general desire on the part of the people" (whatever number that may mean) he will recommend that the city council defer action on the proposed ordinance; and "if the remainder of the necessary signatures" (about 100,000) are obtained by October 20, and the petition cannot then be submitted at the November election (as it certainly cannot) he will recommend deferring the ordinance until after the next Spring election. "Unless a petition with the necessary number of signatures is filed by October 20 next," he concludes, "it will be assumed that the ordinance meets with public approval and will be called up for passage in the city council." That is simply fooling, and not great fooling either.

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Mayor Harrison is entirely silent about the fact that at the municipal election last Spring the people of Chicago voted 120,744 to 50,893 (a majority of 69,851) in favor of immediate municipal ownership, and 120,187 to 48,056 (a majority of 72,131) against granting traction franchises. And well he may be silent. That vote was an overwhelming popular expression against the very kind of ordinance which he now proposes to regard as meeting "with public approval" unless the people petition to vote against it again. How many times must the people of Chicago go to the labor and expense of securing 100,000 signatures in order to express their opinion against the traction pirates—how many times must they do this before the business and social and professional and journalistic and official friends of these pirates will acknowledge that the people mean what their votes proclaim?

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Notwithstanding that the people of Chicago have within six months declared themselves emphatically against this kind of ordinance, Mayor Harrison asks them to do so now with immediate reference to this particular ordinance, and under legally impossible circumstances. If it is not fooling, what is it? No petition of 100,000 could be got by September 9, and after that the petition would be legally worthless and the difficulty of getting signatures consequently multiplied. But if the 100,000 were got under these difficulties, what then? Why, Mr. Harrison would recommend the council to postpone action on the ordinance! If the council didn't postpone, the work of getting petitions would have proved a farce though completely successful. If the council did postpone, the petition-getters would have secured the inestimable privilege of doing their work all over again for the Spring election. For if they failed in that, they could be sure that Mayor Harrison or his successor would then be ready to assume from this neglect a "silent referendum," as he jocosely calls it, and "that the ordinance meets with public approval."

And this ordinance regarding which Mr. Harrison makes such an amazing assumption as that a people who have but recently rejected the whole class of which it is a specimen, must be taken to approve it unless they immediately rise up 100,000 strong and reject the particular specimen, under extreme difficulties and with no assurance of anything more than the mayor's "recommendation" to the council—what stage of definiteness has this ordinance reached? It has only passed the committee stage. When it gets into the council, it may be amended. Suppose this should happen, what would Mayor Harrison assume? Would he assume that the "silent referendum" covered the subsequent amendment? or would he suggest another laborious crusade for 100,000 signatures? Or, suppose that all Mr. Harrison's conditions were complied with, and that thereupon the council should amend the ordinance. Would Mr. Harrison then regard the objections of the petitioners as removed, and the amended ordinance as meeting their approval, if they neglected to roll up another 100,000 signatures to another petition for another referendum? There is no end to the possibilities of this kind of fooling, if you once begin it, as Mayor Harrison has done.

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Assuming that the proposed traction ordinance is in reality a desirable compromise, the honorable course for Mayor Harrison and the city council to pursue is very simple. There is no necessity for disposing of the matter before next Spring. This is evident from Mr. Harrison's willingness to recommend its postponement until then if his petition requirements are complied with. The question of expedition being thus out of the way, the fundamental question of adopting a compromise contrary to the express mandate of the people at last Spring's election may be considered without the embarrassment of urgency. On this question the primary consideration is the fact that the people have voted overwhelmingly in favor of immediate municipal ownership and against any more franchises. This condemns the ordinance. But on the other hand is the fact that legal obstructions temporarily interfere with that popular mandate. This may justify a compromise. But can a compromise be made with the monopolists, and would the people approve it? If a reasonable one could be made provided it were executed at once, a question of hurry would arise. The city officials would then be confronted with the duty of acting immediately, on their own responsibility, one way or the other, according to their best judgment, and with ordinary man's courage. But, as we have already seen, there is no hurry. Mr. Harrison virtually testifies that the proposed compromise can be deferred until after the Spring election. This gives the city officials ample time and opportunity to go to the people for instructions on the question of compromise. Let the proposed ordinance pass its first and second reading, so that it shall be in the form in which the council is ready to enact it and the monopolists to accept it. Then let the council postpone final action until after the Spring election, meanwhile providing for a petition under the referendum law whereby the people can vote upon the ordinance at the municipal election. Thereby the mayor and council can be properly and fully advised as to whether or not the people of Chicago regard this ordinance as a necessary and desirable compromise of their demands. This is the only decent course, if the mayor and aldermen intend to pay any attention to referendum voting at all. It is the only honest course, from the standpoint of popular referendum. It is the only course whereby those who make themselves responsible to the people for the proposed ordinance can avert a growing suspicion that they are less loyal to the rights of the public than they are solicitous for the privileges and profits of traction monopolists. It is the only course consistent with Mayor Harrison's specific pledges to the people in his campaign for reelection a year and a half ago, in which he made this promise: "Any franchise ordinance the council may pass must be submitted to the people for their approval or rejection before I will sign it."

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In an editorial on this subject in the Chicago Examiner of the 17th, wherein the reasons officially urged in behalf of the proposed ordinance are reviewed seriatim and with apparent justice denounced as unsound, the Examiner makes the startling statement that—

> There are two men in Chicago of great influence in local politics, able heretofore to make and unmake mayors and aldermen. These two men are heavy stockholders in the Chicago City Railway company, and their fat dividends on watered stock are threatened by municipal ownership. Hence municipal ownership is to be killed to oblige these two men. And if the principle that the will of the people is supreme is killed also, no matter. These are the plain facts in the case, and there is no place where they are better known to be facts than in the city hall.

The Examiner either knows that statement to be true or it does not. If it does not know it to be true, it is as guilty of falsification as if it knew it to be false. If it does know it to be true it has no right to conceal the names of the two corrupt men to whom it alludes. The street railway company in which these men are alleged to be large stockholders is the beneficiary of the proposed ordinance, and if there is any evidence as direct as this of "grafting" in connection with that ordinance, the newspaper that possesses it should make it public circumstantially. There is good reason to suspect that some powerful influences are secretly at work with the authorities in the interest of the Chicago City Railway Company in connection with these traction negotiations. That suspicion can be turned into conviction if the Examiner will follow its ambiguous assertion with a specific personal accusation. And nothing else could serve so well at this time to defeat the conspiracy if there is one. If there is none, it is worse than folly to confuse the situation by vague or unfounded insinuations.

If our good friends the Christian Scientists have a reasonable share of "the saving sense of humor," they must appreciate an accidental juxtaposition on the editorial page of a recent issue of the Christian Science Sentinel. That interesting publication carries at the head of its editorial columns this standing notice:

> Mrs. Eddy Takes no Patients.—The author of the Christian Science textbook takes no patients, does not consult on disease, nor read letters referring to these subjects.

Immediately under this notice appears in the issue of the 13th an editorial which begins as follows:

> Jesus' success in healing the sick and his exhortation to his followers to do the works that he did, point to the true test of Christianity, and it is only as Christian Scientists are able to measure up to his standard that they know that they are his present-day followers.

Another horrible burning of Negroes at the stake in Georgia, under circumstances indicating collusion on the part of the military who were ostensibly guarding the prisoners, testifies to the lawless savagery of the whites. The crime of the Negroes was brutal to the extreme, but they were common criminals and the long arm of the law reached out for them and was about to exact the legal penalty for their crime. The mob, on the other hand, was composed of "best citizens," who have become as lawless as common criminals, but against whom the arm of the law is paralyzed; and it was worse than brutal, for it was not only indifferent to human suffering but was malignant in producing it. There was no excuse in this case on the plea of the law's delay. The criminals had been convicted and were to be hanged September 9 for a crime committed July 28. Neither was there the flabby excuse that the crime was "nameless." It was a ruthless homicide for robbery. No excuse for this mob is possible. It was actuated simply by insane race hatred and hunger for the enjoyment of human agony. To call it savage is to slander the instincts of the savage.

It is agreeable to observe in some of the daily papers a disposition to return, at least in theory, to axiomatic morality. Among the instances we note the following: "No cause is so good as to justify assassination." But this may not be as axiomatic as it sounds. What does "assassination" mean? If it excludes excusable or justifiable homicide, then the "axiom" is meaningless, as may be seen at once by throwing it into that phrasing, thus: "No cause is so good as to justify man-killing without excuse or justification." Of course not. But if "assassination" means the intentional killing of a human being, whether with or without excuse or justification, then the axiom condemns several things that are not yet disreputable, whether they are wrong or not. What about "assassination" in self-defense? What about "assassination" for crime, commonly called capital punishment? What about war? Is it axiomatic that the "assassination" of a tyrant out of war is not justified, and yet that the "assassination" of thousands of persons in war is justified? If so, perhaps some one can explain at what point between retail assassination, which is wrong, and wholesale assassination, which is right, the principle of justice begins to distinguish.

MORE ABOUT THE PROTECTIVE SPIRIT AND ITS OPPOSITE.

We owe to Henry Thomas Buckle the term "Protective Spirit" and the conception of its application in affairs political and social. This—although it may appear to be a mere incident in his argument—will in time be recognized as perhaps the most original and valuable contribution which his book has brought to modern thought. And yet reviewers and commentators have hardly mentioned it. It is a dangerous subject, and to many a most disagreeable one. It goes to the root of modern contentions. It forces into consciousness an irrepressible conflict.

The Protective Spirit makes much of inequality. Its underlying conception is that the many are dependent upon the few. In the ordination of things it thinks it right that the many should be drawers of water and hewers of stone. It persuades itself that the best welfare of the masses lies in the guidance and protection of the more favored classes.

If the Protective Spirit were to formulate its honest creed, its first article of belief would be: "I believe in special privilege." It demands special privilege in order to maintain ascendancy. It believes in landlordism and in all commercial processes whereby wealth can be concentrated. It believes in monopoly and big dividends. It winks at lobbies, silent favors, railroad passes and subtle bribes, whereby legislators and public officers are kept in line with the established order, and are nourished with the hope of keeping themselves in the favor of favored classes.

The established order, even in this so-called democratic country, is fully imbued with the Protective Spirit. A century ago one might talk of the independence of a free American citizen. True, we had slaves, but the average white man was in truth far more independent than the average white man to-day. There was less monopoly; there was more opportunity for self-employment. The decrease of independence marks the growth in America of the Protective Spirit, which has all along been dominant in Europe.

Mr. Ghent's clever book, "Our Benevolent Feudalism," is the witness of this fact. No one can read this book, taking with him the thought of the Protective Spirit, without seeing how true it is in its main argument, and how truly it shows the growth of the ideas that have upheld the ancient regimes of the old world.

Ghent did well to use the word "benevolent"; for benevolence is a necessary adjunct to the maintenance of the Protective Spirit. This benevolence is for us—as indeed it was for vassals and underlings of medieval kings and lords, and as it is for vassals and underlings of kings and lords to-day—the very flower of the Protective Spirit. It is perfume to our nostrils. We worship in its incense. We educate our youths to breathe its sweet odors.