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The beginning of a bloody war and the reports of a destructive fire, fill men's minds with conflicting emotions. They are stunned by the vast destruction of property in Baltimore, as but recently they were appalled at the awful loss of life in Chicago—accidental occurrences, both—while they face a savage prize-fight in the Orient, in which, not by accident but by design, there is to be an incomputably vaster destruction of property than at Baltimore and an enormously greater sacrifice of human life than at Chicago. To describe the emotions which these events engender would necessitate a descriptive catalogue of almost every human passion. We can only classify them as coldly selfish, thoughtlessly sentimental, or rationally just, and pass on.

From the overshadowing bigness of these events to the littleness of a municipal election in a Western city seems a very far cry; yet there is that in the approaching municipal election at Chicago which is prophetic of greater things in human history than the accidental destruction of Baltimore property (which, vast as it is, human labor will quickly reproduce), or the deliberate destructiveness of the Russian war in Asia. Once more (vol. v, p. 11) in Chicago the people themselves, upon their own initiative, are to be consulted, not merely upon their preference among candidates for office, but directly upon questions of public policy. This is the highest and most effective form of democracy.

As it gains ground, wars will have to be abandoned and even holocausts will be prevented. That sounds like a large claim for democracy. But when it is considered that holocausts are due to public policies which cause the congestive building that a democracy trained in voting on principles and policies would insist upon relieving, and that wars are but deadly games in which the common people are thought of only as pawns to be sacrificed for kings and queens and bishops and jackassly knights,—when these considerations are taken into account, the approaching referendum in Chicago can nowhere be fairly regarded as a little thing. If little its littleness is only as that of the grain of wheat, in which are all the potentialities of pampas of waving grain.

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It was no light work to set in motion the present cumbrous machinery for securing the Chicago referendum. When the Illinois legislature passed the referendum law it did so grudgingly and with a proviso which was intended and supposed to be a sufficient handicap to make the law a dead letter. This proviso required the signatures of 25 per cent. of the voters of any city as a condition of allowing the people of that city to vote directly on a question of public policy. In consequence, the leaders in the present movement were compelled to secure the enormous number of 93,310 signatures. Nor that alone. They were absolutely without newspaper aid, excepting only Hearst's two papers, the Examiner and the American. Every other local paper was gagged by the influence of the local traction interests, against the unrighteous demands of which this referendum is leveled. For their successful work against these odds, those leaders are entitled to the most cordial commendation; and in the distribution of special praise it would be churlish not to include the Hearst papers. Not only has the full quota of 93,310 signatures been secured, but there is a surplus of 37,937—the total number filed being 131,247.

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The questions thereby required to be submitted to popular vote at the municipal election in April are as follows:

1. Shall the city council, upon the adoption of the Mueller law, proceed without delay to acquire ownership of the street railways under the powers conferred by the Mueller law?
2. Shall the city council, instead of granting any franchises, proceed at once, under the city's police powers and other existing laws, to license the street railway companies until municipal ownership can be secured, and compel them to give satisfactory service?
3. Should the Chicago board of education be elected by the people?

There will, therefore, come directly before the people of Chicago at the Spring election three questions relative to municipal ownership of the local street car system. Two are quoted above; the third will be on the adoption of the Mueller law (p. 458), the enabling act on the subject of municipal ownership. The vote on the former will be advisory only, but the latter will be mandatory. That is to say, if the latter question receives a majority vote in the affirmative, the Mueller law will thereupon go into operation in Chicago; but a majority vote either way on the other two questions will not bind the city council.

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There are good reasons for believing, however, that an advisory vote in the affirmative will operate with the city councilmen as in the nature of imperative instructions. Not the least among these reasons is the fact that the mere

filing of the petition, with its 137,000 signatures, resulted in the disruption of the traction committee of the council, which, until then, the local traction interests had held well in hand. Under the influence of those interests, the Mueller bill had been colored to suit, in its passage through the legislature. Under their influence the city council had held back from presenting the Mueller law to the people for acceptance until whipped into doing it by popular demonstrations of unmistakable significance. Under their influence a "tentative ordinance," giving those interests another 20-years' franchise, with a vice-like grip on 20 years more, or 40 altogether, had been concocted in secret. Under their influence the committee had actually agreed to this whole ordinance in secret sessions, and then invited the public to discuss in open session the solitary question of the amount of compensation. Under their influence this "tentative ordinance" was about to be rushed through the committee and the council, when the filing of the huge petition startled the acquiescent committeemen out of their comatose condition and inspired them to break away from the two or three "business men" members who were dominating the committee. It is now evident that the "tentative ordinance" is tentatively dead. Let it be hoped that its demise may prove to be absolute.

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That will depend upon the vote next Spring. If a pronounced majority for immediate public ownership is cast, the city officials and their professional counsel may be depended upon to make the same vigorous fight against the local street car capitalists that they are making against the Philadelphia outfit. If, however, the vote on these questions goes the other way, then the city's representatives will be justified in reviving their interrupted arrangements with the local company. This fight is between the people on one side and the street car monopolists on the other. If the people vote with the monopolists, now that the issue is squarely presented to them, their instructions should be obeyed.

A bombshell has fallen into the camp of the alert tax-dodger who would still further lighten his own burdens by taxing street car riders by the poll through a system of "compensation" from street car companies for the use of the streets. This bombshell is in the form of a judicial opinion in an Elevated railroad case, rendered on the 8th by Murray F. Tuley, one of the oldest of Illinois judges, and among the most respected as man, lawyer and judge. As Judge Tuley's judicial fame is national and the point he so ably argues affects most if not all American cities, we quote from his opinion:

> I am strongly inclined to the opinion that the city is without power, even by the joint action of the mayor and aldermen, to sell or barter away any franchise in the public streets for a compensation to be paid into the city treasury. While the city has the fee, it does not own the street as an individual owns his own property. It holds the fee and the control of the streets as a trustee for the public, and in its control of the streets its ownership is subordinate to its duties as a trustee. It is not a trustee for the inhabitants of the city, but it is a trustee for the public use. By the public use is meant the people of the whole State. The city as a public trustee is subject to the rule applied to all trustees, whether individuals or corporations, and that is, that a trustee cannot control trust property for his or its own benefit. The city has power to exact a reasonable license fee for compensation for the extra cost it may be put to, and the supervision and the use of the street, but it cannot speculate or make money for its treasury or its taxpayers out of its exercise of the power to control the public streets as a trustee for the public.

If the committee of the Chicago Citizens' Association for the suppression of crime intended to reflect upon the Chicago Federation of Labor by somewhat ostentatiously inviting its cooperation at a time when gentlemen of the same class are trying to indict its officers regardless of evidence—and that is what the Federation members have suspected—the Federation certainly handed back a Roland for the Oliver it received. Among other things in its reply the Federation said:

> The one thing that strikes us as peculiar in your movement is that your organization has existed for the past 36 years and that within the past ten years to our newspaper knowledge thousands of persons have been held up and scores of them wounded and killed, yet your organization betrayed no signs of life until a "millionaire lawyer and business man" fell victim.

Then, after expressing its willingness to cooperate in any movement aimed at suppressing the crimes of the rich as well as those of the poor, the Federation pointedly suggested—

> as a necessary move in view of our city's present financial condition, that you go after the tax-dodging individual millionaires and corporations who are continually demanding police protection while shifting the burden of taxation on their poorer fellow citizens. The first important step in this direction is to insist upon compliance with the law requiring the publication of the complete list of real estate tax assessments, including descriptions of property taxed, valuation and name of owner. If this law were complied with every real estate tax dodger would be detected easily, and the city would be sure of enough revenue to increase the police force, perfect the fire department and pay our schoolteachers.

In that declaration the Federation struck home. If the city were properly policed, vulgar crime could be suppressed. It cannot be properly policed because it lacks funds. It lacks funds because the class of which the anti-crime committee is largely composed devote their abilities and influence to the work of relieving their monopoly investments from taxation. The natural communal income of Chicago increases every year in consequence of the city's growth, but most of this income is appropriated to private use by the very classes who organize anti-crime committees for the pursuit of lesser though more violent offenders against public order and common rights.

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The criticism of the Federation of Labor is reported to have had a salutary effect upon the Citizens' Association. "Instead of tending to strain the relations between the anti-crime committee

and the Federation," says a newspaper report, "it was declared that the censure and criticism of the members of the latter organization would have the effect of clarifying the atmosphere and bringing the two closer together in the movement for universal law and order." There is truly a hopeful ring about that. But the resulting letter of the Association to the county commissioners is not reassuring. It is reported as follows:

> On behalf of the Citizens' Asociation of Chicago, I wish to urge upon your honorable body the publication of the real estate assessment list, including valuations, description of property and names of owners. It is the view of the Citizens' Association that inasmuch as the law provides for such publication its requirements should be fully complied with.

Considering that the county commissioners are required by the law to do what this Association demurely requests, the Association "sings small" indeed.

At the recent meeting of the Illinois committee of the Democratic party, Mr. James H. Eckels appeared with a proxy, and made a speech. One of the papers reported him as saying in this speech that—

> the Democrats who voted for Weaver and others are dead and in h—l.

A denial of the use of this language was hardly necessary. Mr. Eckels has not the personal manners of a blackguard. It has been denied, however, by Mr. Eckels himself, who makes an explanation which goes to show that he may possibly have been guilty of a worse offense than blackguardly manners. He says:

> That which I did say was, "I have no quarrel with Mr. Bryan, but why have his friends the right to dictate the Democratic nomination when their candidate voted for J. B. Weaver and did not vote the Democratic ticket?" At this point I was interrupted, and somebody in the rear of the hall called out about the issues of 1896 and 1900, and I replied: "Those are past issues, dead, damned in hell. Let us turn to the living for what the Democracy may be in this year of our Lord.

Mr. Eckels's opinion of political issues, past or present, is of little importance except as it reflects the views of the bi-partisan group of financiers to which he belongs. But his assertion that Mr. Bryan "bolted" the Democratic ticket when he voted for Weaver instead of Cleveland in 1892 is made either in ignorance of the truth or in defiance of it.

Mr. Bryan's explanation of the circumstances to which Mr. Eckels either ignorantly or mendaciously alludes, has been recently published, accompanied by proof. Mr. Bryan writes:

> In 1892, many Democrats in Nebraska voted for the Weaver electors at the request of the Democratic national committee. That request was delivered in a confidential letter sent out by James E. Boyd, then governor of the State of Nebraska, and since then one of the prominent members of the gold contingent. Gov. Boyd's letter follows:
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> "Lincoln, Neb., Oct. 17, 1892.—(Personal and confidential.)—Dear Sir: I have just returned from the East where I was honored by a consultation with the national committee and leading men of our party, with regard to the best policy to be pursued in Nebraska this fall in dealing with the electoral ticket; and they agreed with me that the wisest course would be for Democrats to support the Weaver electors; the object being to take Nebraska out of her accustomed place in the Republican column. Information has reached me that a number of independents who were formerly Republicans contemplate voting for the Harrison electors. With the Republican strength thus augmented it would be impossible for the Democrats to carry their own electors' ticket to victory. It is therefore the part of good judgment and wise action for Democrats to support the Weaver electors in as large numbers as possible. For Democrats to do this is no abandonment of principle; on the contrary, it is a definite step toward victory, and the ultimate triumph of Cleveland and Stevenson, and the principles they represent.

Thus it appears beyond dispute that Mr. Bryan's so-called "bolt" was made by request of the highest authority in the Democratic party, and through the medium of the very faction that did "bolt" four years later. That the arrangement Gov. Boyd mentions had been made by the national committee was so well known in New York at the time, that it is hardly possible Mr. Eckels should not have heard of it.

This arrangement was not confined to Nebraska. It was the committee's general policy with reference to Republican States which had become Populistic. In Colorado (vol. v, p. 258) the Democratic convention nominated Weaver electors, and the minority left the hall and nominated a straight Democratic ticket. The national committee thereupon instructed the State committee of Colorado to ignore the action of the minority and to put the Weaver electors on the Democratic ballot. A similar course was followed by the national committee with reference to Nevada. Here is the story as related a year or more ago by W. L. Knox, a lawyer of Reno, Nevada. Referring to the above-described action in Colorado, Mr. Knox writes:

> I will call your attention to my own State, Nevada, where this wise policy was pursued, and its vote cast for Weaver, when, had a different policy been carried out, its vote would have gone to the Republican candidate. After the nomination at Chicago in 1892, the member for Nevada of the Democratic National Committee, R. P. Keating, and other leaders of the party, had a conference with Mr. Cleveland, and knowing that there was no hope of carrying the State of Nevada for the Democratic candidates, it was arranged that an effort should be made to carry it for Weaver, who was very strong in the State. It was also agreed that Democrats should not lose status in the party in consequence of their voting for the Populist candidates, but should be considered in good standing and eligible to appointment to office. The Democratic State Central Committee of Nevada, by a vote of 18 to 9, voted not to put a Democratic electoral ticket in the field, but the minority revolted and met as a State Central Committee and nominated an electoral ticket. It received less than 7 per cent. of the votes, to 66 per cent. for Weaver and 26 for Harrison. After the inauguration in 1893 Mr. Cleveland inclined to repudiate the arrangement entered into before election, and to consider only the claims of those Democrats who voted for the Cleveland electors. It required some vigorous remonstrances from Wm. C. Whitney, who was a party to the arrangement, to induce Cleveland to keep his word. He did eventually appoint to office in Nevada some Democrats who had voted for the Populist candidate; but he also appointed some of the "bolters" whose factious opposition endangered the movement to carry the State against the Republicans. R. P. Keating is dead, but these facts are known to many prominent Democrats of Nevada. I think J. W. Adams, ex-governor of Nevada, was one of the persons present with Keating when the conference was had with Cleveland and Whitney in 1892.