

The Public

Seventh Year.

CHICAGO, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1904.

Number 844.

LOUIS F. POST, Editor.

Entered at the Chicago, Ill., Post Office as second-class matter.

For terms and all other particulars of publication, see last page.

In referring last week (p. 464) to Thos. W. Lawson's unaccepted offer to contribute \$100,000 to the Democratic campaign fund if Patrick McCarren would publicly and explicitly deny that he is regularly employed as the trusted political agent of the Standard Oil "crowd," we inadvertently described Mr. McCarren as chairman of the executive committee of the Democratic national committee. This was a mistake. He is chairman of the executive committee of the Democratic State committee of New York.

The Presidential election, which will have been decided before another issue of this periodical appears, is of less importance in one sense than any national election since long before the Civil War.

One or the other of only two men can possibly be elected, and there is no reason for believing that it will make much difference which, so far as any public policy is immediately concerned. Parker's election would introduce less reckless dynamics into the public service, but that is all. The colonial policy would be practically unmolested, and robbery by "protection" would either go untouched and uncondemned or be slightly modified in percentage and in the personnel of the robbers. Nothing better could be expected from Parker than from Cleveland in his second term, and Cleveland's second term was pretty bad except from the plutocratic point of view.

Even such mild benefits as

might by any possibility be hoped for under Parker, are out of reach; for Parker cannot be elected, unless Lawson's story is verified by events and the Standard Oil "crowd" do buy up enough doubtful States to stultify in the Electoral College the overwhelming popular vote that apparently is certain to be cast against him. His election under these circumstances would not be particularly encouraging, even with reference to small things. But there is little possibility now of the success of the Standard Oil conspiracy if there has been one.

Whether there has been such a conspiracy the ordinary man, though a Solomon, can hardly guess. Such things are never concocted in the open, and Lawson's exposure may after all not be gospel through and through. Much of it may be only his guess. Of the sincerity of his contributions to *Everybody's Magazine* we have no manner of doubt. They ring true, even if they are flamboyantly literary in style and Barnumesque in exploitation, and even if there be purposes back of them other than the manifestly genuine purpose which Lawson professes. Nevertheless, Lawson cannot be personally cognizant of the facts he declares with reference to an arrangement between the Standard Oil "crowd" and some of Parker's managers. His facts must be well sprinkled with indistinguishable inferences. But there are many corroborative circumstances, not least among them being the distinguished consideration shown by the Parker management for such Standard Oil pets among trusts as the steel, the oil, the beef and the tobacco trusts. But neither have Roosevelt's managers been indifferent to the good will or the ill will of trusts. His managers are not fighting "single handed and

alone," as Bryan's were when the Standard Oil "crowd" turned on him. Roosevelt is backed by some of the giants of plutocracy. If there is any hope at all of Parker's election, it rests upon facts that are even at this late day in the campaign invisible to the naked eye.

But if in one sense there is little reason for democratic interest in this election, there is much reason in another sense. It seems to be marking time to the music of impending popular change in politics of great moment and magnitude. Readers of American history will remember that in the '20's, at that period known as "the era of good feeling," there was but one party, and that this party hatched factions which developed into parties. Somewhat similar were the conditions in the '50's, when new issues brought on new party alignments. They were significantly like that of the present time, when new issues are once more breaking up political crystallizations. The more overwhelming Parker's defeat may be, then (p. 465), in this period of lull in our political warfare, the more certainly and the sooner will the crash of battle it presages witness definite alignments; whether under new party banners or old ones, no one can predict and no one need care. The period is transitional. Under these circumstances, and as Parker cannot be elected, the more overwhelming his defeat the better for the future of genuine democracy. For it will tend either to give birth to a new democratic party, with the principle and the vigor to fight plutocracy; or, better yet, to make the present Democratic party really democratic through the drifting away from it, after the manner of the *Chicago Chronicle*, of its plutocratic elements, in hopelessness of ever again controlling it, and

the coming into it of masses of democrats from the temporarily triumphant party of plutocracy. How this defeat can be made most significant we have already suggested (p. 466), and we see no reason for modifying that suggestion.

There are Democratic candidates whose election in this campaign is of importance, of much importance in some instances, to the future of genuine democracy. First among these is Bryan. Although not a regularly nominated candidate for any office, his election to the United States Senate will result from the election of the fusion candidates—Democratic and People's party—to the Nebraska legislature. The good service Mr. Bryan could render to democratic Democracy, on the floor and in the committee rooms of the Senate, is incalculable; and no democratic Democrat of Nebraska should lose any opportunity to promote the success of the fusion ticket there.

Gov. Garvin's election is another of special importance. Although his candidacy is upon local questions, they are of a character to give national importance to the man and his campaign. Popular government is involved in it. Rhode Island is so organized that one town, for illustration, the town of West Greenwich, with a voting population of only 171, has the same voting strength in the Rhode Island legislature as the city of Providence with a voting population of 31,771. The Aldrich oligarchy is struggling to maintain this undemocratic system. Gov. Garvin is fighting to destroy it. In that connection Garvin advocates a constitutional referendum, under which a certain number of citizens might secure a popular vote at any election upon proposed constitutional amendments. Thus the constitution would be always under popular control. This reform should appeal to everyone everywhere who believes in popular government. It is especially distasteful to plutocrats.

In the neighboring State of Massachusetts the Democrats have nominated a man for governor whose campaign has proved his right to the confidence of democratic Democrats. We refer to W. L. Douglas, a man of national repute in business as a manufacturer of shoes. His letter of acceptance, from which we have published extracts (p. 477), indicates the strong democratic tendency of his opinions on public questions. In his speeches he has justified this estimate of his political character. The tariff issue is alive in Massachusetts, owing to protective interferences with normal trade between New England and Canada; and Mr. Douglas has advocated radical tariff reductions, radical in character as well as high in percentage, with more boldness than Democratic candidates have been accustomed to doing for years. He has in fact resorted without quibble to unmasked free trade arguments. If all Democratic candidates were as democratic as Mr. Douglas, the party would soon lose its bad name and be a congenial political home for all Jeffersonian democrats.

Robert Baker, of New York, has stirred up the dry rot of petty corruption in Congress, as only a thorough-going democrat could. By his public refusal of a railroad pass, he called general attention to the fact that this insidious form of petty corruption, and open sesame to all degrees of bribery from "entered apprentice" up to the self-perpetuating and all-dominant "33d," and from municipal buildings superintendents to President, is a prevalent, usually a cherished, perquisite of public office. Mr. Baker also did effective work in other respects in Congress. He was unique, as a thoroughly honest and independent man is certain to be in any body whose members, when not directly owned by corporations, are ridden by corporation-owned caucuses. Mr. Baker secured his renomination in spite of the opposition of his local party "boss," the Patrick McCarren whom Law-

son charges, without contradiction, with being the hired lobbyist of the Standard Oil trust. Should Baker be reelected from the Republican district in which he is now for the second time the Democratic candidate for Congress, it would be a distinct triumph for the policy of faithful public service and the principles of democratic Democracy.

Another candidate for Congress whose election is to be hoped for, and which seems to be assured, is John F. Shafroth, of Denver. Mr. Shafroth is the Congressman who startled the country by resigning his seat in the present Congress upon discovering that he had been fraudulently counted in. The simple honesty of this act, coupled with the marked ability with which Mr. Shafroth had served in Congress, should win him the support of every independent voter in his district.

In Illinois there are good democratic reasons for voting against the Democratic candidate for governor, regardless of his ability, regardless of his honesty, regardless of his democracy. The management of the convention that nominated him (p. 161-70) disgraced the party and discredited its nominee. Mr. Stringer might have been nominated had the convention been honestly managed, but there is no way in which the fraudulent and dangerous kind of politics that prevailed in that convention can be rebuked except by voting against him as its leading nominee. It is unfortunate for Mr. Stringer if he suffers for the rascality of the clique that nominated him; but the remedy was in his own hands. He could have denounced the fraud and declined to stand before the people as its chief representative and beneficiary.

In Chicago there is room for some choice on democratic grounds. Willis C. Stone, the Democratic candidate for Congress in the 3d district, is a democratic Democrat, a man of strong character, who measures fully up to

the ideal standard of Congressional statesmanship. William Preston Harrison, the Democratic candidate in the 8th Congressional district, will be opposed by many democratic Democrats, as well as by others, and for reasons that appeal to every sense of good citizenship. A brother of the Mayor, he was forced into the nomination by peculiar influences and by means but little if any better than those which controlled the State convention. His democracy, moreover, is known only by the brand, which is a poor recommendation. Quin O'Brien, the Democratic candidate in the 9th district, is of a different type. His democracy, like Dr. Stone's, is Jeffersonian; and, like Dr. Stone, he would make an ideal Congressman. No democratic Democrat who supports either of these men will waste his vote. In the 1st district, Martin B. Madden, Republican, entered into a combination with the Democratic "boss" to prevent the renomination of Congressman Emerich, an able Representative and high order of Democrat. The object was to pit a weak Democrat against the notorious Madden. This was done. But the anti-machine Republicans and anti-machine Democrats have nominated David S. Geer, a Republican, as an independent candidate, and Mr. Geer is under the circumstances worthy of every democratic vote. For the board of tax review the Democrats have nominated Joseph Donnersberger, who, though he would hardly rank as a thorough-going democrat in the radical sense, is a man peculiarly well fitted for this office. His qualifications and his reputation for probity are such that he may be depended upon to enforce the tax laws impartially as they exist. And that is what a taxing officer ought to do. Reforms in tax systems must be sought of the legislature; a strictly honest and intelligent administration is what is properly required of taxing officials. For this reason we have no hesitation in recommending Mr. Donnersberger's present candidacy to democratic Democrats. In the long list of

Chicago candidates are seven for the bench. One is F. A. Windes, whose experience in the court of which he is now a judicial member, and the high reputation he has achieved, are ample recommendations of fitness. In politics he is not only a party Democrat; he is a democrat. Among the Republican candidates are two, already on the bench, who have conspicuously demonstrated their judicial unfitness. One is Jesse Holdom and the other Axel Chytraus. Holdom especially has identified himself judicially with the spirit of plutocracy. Excellent successors for these two judges may be found in Joseph O'Donnell and Charles H. Mitchell. O'Donnell was elected a year and a half ago to a place on the bench recently created by a law which the Supreme Court has since held to be unconstitutional. Both he and Mr. Mitchell are in regular legal practice. The fact that both are Altgeld Democrats is an assurance of the democratic spirit in which they would administer justice; their undisputed professional standing is a guarantee of their judicial fidelity in other respects.

There will be at this election a good deal of referendum voting in Illinois. Some of it is local to Chicago; as the question of adopting voting machines, the advantage of which over the present antique system needs no explanation. Another question is that of amending the State constitution so as to enable the city to secure a distinctive charter. While this is local to Chicago in effect, it is to be voted on throughout the State. An affirmative vote will be equivalent to a negative vote on the question of holding a constitutional convention. The amendment is sought by certain financial interests in Chicago so as to obtain what they want without risking the anti-monopoly constitution which a convention might make. Three other questions are to be voted on under the public policy law (p. 457), namely: direct primaries, popular veto by referendum, and local option in meth-

ods of taxation. Every proposition is meritorious, and should be carried by an emphatic vote. To make this popular vote effective, the Referendum League is pledging legislative candidates to act in accordance with it if they are elected.

The following extract from a conspicuous editorial in the Cincinnati Times Star of the 28th, makes an astonishingly accurate statement of a natural economic law which is not generally understood—the law, namely, of the incidence or point of pressure of taxation:

It is an accepted law of economics that the value of the structure is fixed by the law that governs the value of commodities the supply of which can be increased at pleasure; that is, it is equal in the long run to the cost of production, or rather of reproduction. The rent of the house proper is normally equal to the interest on the capital expended plus an annual sum which, when capitalized, will be sufficient, after paying all necessary expenses, to replace the capital by the time the house is worn out. The laws which govern the incidence of taxes on houses, or on house rents, are, therefore, analogous to those which govern the incidence of taxes on capital or on competitive profits—it is shifted in varying degrees to the tenant. On the other hand, the value of the lot is fixed in agreement with the general principles of economic rent, according to which the price paid is measured by the superiority of situation, or more exactly, the value of a lot is determined by the general law of price which governs all those commodities which are not susceptible to an indefinite increase in their supply; that is, the incidence of the ground tax is on the owner. He has no means of shifting it; for if the tax were to be suddenly abolished, he would nevertheless be able to extort the same rent, since the ground rent is fixed solely by the demand of the occupiers. The tax on the land simply diminishes the owner's profits.

Accepting this elucidation as true—and it is really so all the way down to the dotting of the i's and the crossing of the t's—what moral inference would a sane mind naturally draw? Would it not be that taxes ought to be laid upon lot values, so that the rent which owners "extort" from this class of property, common property in its nature, should go to the public good instead of enriching land mo-