

# The Public

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## EDITORIAL

### Responsibility for Railroad Homicides.

Terrible in its magnitude as was the railroad wreck of the Pennsylvania "flyer" at Conemaugh

last week, not a single life was lost. The train was a vestibuled Pullman. Had it been a train of ordinary day coaches, the loss of life would doubtless have been appalling, even though the train had been going at lower speed and the other circumstances of the accident more favorable. It was the vestibuled Pullmans that saved life. What, then, is the necessary inference when day cars are wrecked and lives are lost?

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### Silencing Railway Postal Clerks.

Washington dispatches announce that railway postal clerks whose trains are wrecked must not talk about the wreck except to the Department. "In that way," remarks the second assistant postmaster general, "we shall be able to adjust our troubles with the railroads without much friction." Quite so. But isn't it queer that the post-office department enjoins the same kind of silence upon its railway employes that the railway companies enjoin upon theirs?

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### Destructive Suspicion.

Truth, it has been said, is to be found at the bottom of the well, but it is sometimes discovered in deeper and darker places. For instance, the Chicago Tribune has found this nugget in its editorial rooms: "A deep distrust of all whose political or economical ideas do not coincide with one's own, a readiness to ascribe unworthy motives to all opposition, is no basis upon which to rear an enduring civic structure." Excellent. But the Tribune might vastly improve this preaching by occasional efforts at practice. While it preaches eloquently against "setting class against class," it works diligently at that very objectionable practice. If it differs in this respect from those it rebukes, the difference is not in setting class against class "in the abused name of Liberty," as it says they do, but in the honored interest of masterful parasites.

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### Mayor Dunne's Candidacy.

There has been no other reasonable ground for doubting that Mayor Dunne will succeed himself as Mayor of Chicago than the uncertainty of his nomination. As the primaries were to be of the old-style type, a well founded fear existed that the machine bosses of the party, in collusion with the financial interests, all a unit against Dunne, would defeat him either by trickery at the pri-

maries or by treachery at the convention. But the primary vote was so large, and so overwhelming in its majority for Dunne, that the financial interests and their newspaper organs were struck dumb and the political bosses yielded without a murmur. So complete was the victory that a platform ringing true throughout was adopted with the same unanimity as his nomination. Of Dunne's re-election in April there is now no reasonable doubt. The public opinion of "the loop," where everything respectably base congregates, is of course against him. But the public opinion of Chicago is not represented by the public opinion of "the loop." This was proved by the great spontaneous petition against the traction ordinances, which "loop" opinion regarded as impossible. It was proved again by the Dunne vote at the Democratic primaries, which bewildered "loop" opinion.

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Dunne has commended himself not only by his attitude toward the traction question, and his achievements in administration, but also by his straightforward honesty. This quality even his bitterest enemies are obliged to grant him. Throughout the city the word has gone forth from all sources, and been accredited everywhere, that whatever else may be said of Mayor Dunne he is an honest man. Little have his adversaries realized the popular power there is in that reputation. Against such a reputation the equally widespread reputation of a popular "sport" will not avail the only adversary now left to contest Mayor Dunne's re-election.

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Mayor Dunne's administration on the financial side speaks for itself. In comparison with the results of previous years, the balance sheet for the year 1906 makes an exhibit that demands at least an explanation from the easy-going critics who complain of "the Dunne administration." The balances since 1902 are as follows:

Dec. 31, 1902 (Mayor Harrison), surplus	\$1,533,103.59
Dec. 31, 1903 (Mayor Harrison), surplus	75,062.86
Dec. 31, 1904 (Mayor Harrison), deficit	218,503.51
Dec. 31, 1905 (Mayor Dunne), surplus	889,872.90
Dec. 31, 1906 (Mayor Dunne), surplus	4,291,103.37

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#### A Comical Adjudication.

The Court of Appeals of New York decides that the diversion by life insurance officers of life insurance money held by them in trust for life insurance purposes, is not criminal! The reason given by the majority of the court for this decision seems to be that if a trustee puts trust

money where he honestly thinks it will "do the most good," he has taken his "immunity bath" in advance. Such is certainly a reasonable inference from this language of Judge Gray, who wrote the prevailing opinion: "The innocent motive of indirectly promoting the corporate affairs through the supposed advantage of the continuance in power of the Republican administration purged the act of immorality, and it lacked the criminal intent." The moral and legal idiocy of this view of trust obligations is brought into bold relief by Chief Judge Cullen's dissenting opinion, in which he says: "The meritorious character of the objects to which the money was appropriated has no bearing upon the question of larceny. The gist of that offense is not the application of money to a bad purpose, but taking money that does not belong to the taker, to appropriate to an object, good or bad. It is the fraudulent deprivation of an owner of his property that constitutes larceny. It is a crime to steal, even though with the intent to give away in charity and relieve distress."

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#### "Tainted News."

Collier's Weekly has put another feather in its editorial cap by beginning a crusade against "tainted news." Its first article is on the "tainted news" which subsidized correspondents send out from Washington. Of this it says in an explanatory head note to its exposure of that kind of fraud upon the public, that "corporations and large business interests employ 'publicity agents,' 'press bureaus' and subsidized Washington correspondents. The purpose of these is to get into the news columns of papers all over the country matter favoring the cause of the corporation. Very often the newspapers are deceived and print this matter in good faith, believing it to be legitimate news." The reading public suffer from no worse evil than the "tainted news" of the press. This is to journalism what sanded sugar used to be to the grocery business, but infinitely more deceptive, more injurious and more criminal.

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#### Watering Railroad Stock.

An interesting story of stock-watering was that which E. H. Harriman told the Interstate Commerce Commission on the 25th relative to his purchase and sale of the Chicago and Alton railroad. He bought it for \$40,000,000 and sold it to the Union Pacific for \$89,000,000, after having burdened it with a \$22,000,000 mortgage which he and his associates divided among themselves.