

heresy must be incompetent or worse. But today, this judicial heresy draws out no serious criticism from the bar, stimulates no repugnance, excites no wonder. Even the newspapers, those that are not yet in danger of this mode of attack, are supine unless indeed they encourage the reaction. So far then have we gone on the backward road toward absolutism.

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Even as the injunction originated in despotically power, even as it was a device for overriding the law, so now is it passing back again from a regulative process of value within limitations—having overleaped those limitations—and asserting itself as a mandate of despotical authority. Originally a device of the king for usurping judicial functions, it is coming to be an instrument of judges for usurping kingly functions.

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Government by Commission.

As the wave of sentiment favorable to government by commission goes over the country, it is a hopeful sign that the tendency is more and more away from the Galveston and toward the Des Moines plan. The difference is wide. Essentially the principle of the Galveston plan contemplates a commission over which the people of the municipality have little or no control; whereas the Des Moines plan contemplates a commission over which the people of the municipality have absolute and continuous control. All the benefits of efficient service of which the Galveston plan may boast are secured by the Des Moines plan, with the added benefit of responsibility to the people to be served. The Galveston plan is autocratic; the Des Moines plan is democratic. The Galveston plan tends to make the commissioners responsible to a State boss or a financial class; the Des Moines plan tends to make them responsible to the inhabitants. The difference between the two is secured partly by the excellent mode of nomination and election under the Des Moines plan, partly by its reservation of the initiative and referendum, and partly by the right of recall.

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Water and Gas in Birmingham.

For their supplies of water and gas, the people of Birmingham, England, have long been dependent upon municipal administration, and it would be a hopeless undertaking to induce them to change. The system of municipal ownership and operation of these two public utilities was proposed by Joseph Chamberlain, as far back as 1874 for gas and 1875 for water.

In proposing a municipal gas system for Birmingham in January, 1874, Mr. Chamberlain predicted that there would be a substantial profit at once, and that this would rise to \$250,000 annually. This prophecy has been more than verified. There were then two gas companies in Birmingham. Following his advice, a meeting of local tax payers petitioned Parliament for authority for Birmingham to purchase and operate them. The authority was granted and soon afterward the companies were bought out by the town for \$10,000,000. Since this purchase about \$5,000,000 capital has been added, the price of gas has been reduced over 30 per cent, and extensions of plant have been largely paid for out of revenue; yet the Birmingham "blue book" for 1907-08 shows a net profit for the year ending March 31, 1908, of \$300,000, after meeting all obligations and deducting the share of the year for extinction of the debt. The total amount set aside for debt extinction down to that date was over \$4,000,000, leaving about two-thirds of the debt unpaid, with about two-thirds of its time yet to run. With all the rest, the town owns a gas plant which a private company could easily capitalize for very much more than the debt.

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The municipal water system was established in Birmingham soon after the municipal gas system. The town began in 1875 by buying up the two private water companies. From the start the policy has been against profit-making except indirectly "in the comfort of the town and the health of the inhabitants." Profits have therefore been absorbed by reductions of water charges and supplies of free water to destitute neighborhoods. The system has cost all told about \$40,000,000, and the obligations still outstanding are nearly as much—the reduction amounting to somewhat more than a million. But the amount set aside out of earnings for the year ending March 1, 1908, as shown by the Birmingham "blue book" for 1907-08, is an ample proportion to wipe out the debt when it matures. Meanwhile, the people of Birmingham are supplied with water at cost, and the town owns a plant which private corporations would capitalize at vastly more than the debt.

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Roman Catholicism and Woman Suffrage.

In gratifying contrast with the attitude of ultramontane ecclesiastics of his church in our country, is the subjoined declaration of Cardinal Moran, of Australia, where woman suffrage prevails. It appeared originally in his official organ,

"The Catholic Press," of Sydney, in the issue of April 4:

What does voting mean to a woman? Does she sacrifice any dignity by going to the poll? These are natural questions when we see so many Catholic women refusing to avail themselves of the franchise. The woman who votes only avails herself of a rightful privilege that democracy has gained for her. No longer a mere household chattel, she is recognized as man's fellow worker and helpmate, and credited with public spirit and intelligence. As a mother she has a special interest in the legislation of her country, for upon it depends the welfare of her children. She knows what is good for them just as much as the father, and the unselfishness of maternity should make her interest even keener than that of man, who is naturally more self-absorbed. It is natural for every woman to look forward to the day when she will mold the future of young children, and she should deem it one of the grandest privileges of her sex that she can now help to choose the men who will make the laws under which they must live, and exert her purer influence upon the political atmosphere of her time. How can she sacrifice any dignity by putting on her bonnet and walking down to the polling booth? Women think nothing of transacting ordinary commercial business, of working alongside men, of playing their part in the practical business of life. They do not mind going to the box office of a theater to purchase tickets for the play. There is very little difference between doing that and putting their vote in a ballot box. The men about the booths show them every courtesy, the officials are anxious to make things easy for them, and the whole business of voting will not occupy more than five minutes. The woman who thinks she is making herself unwomanly by voting is a silly creature.

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Abrogate the Russian Treaty.

It is not enough to refuse the extradition of Pouden and Rudovitz to Russia, important as that will be. In addition, the treaty itself should be abrogated. No extradition treaty should be maintained between this country and a barbarian government, such as has ruled over Russia since the people's Doumas were dispersed. Prisoners in Russia are not fairly tried, and they are barbarously punished.

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The ratification of this treaty was strenuously opposed by representatives of all classes in the United States when it was under consideration back in 1893. Such men as Jacob H. Schiff, Samuel Sloan, William R. Grace, J. Edward Simmons, A. Augustus Healey, William Dean Howells, Morris K. Jessup, Isidor Strauss, William Lloyd Garrison and John DeWitt Warner denounced it vigorously then—as appears from the New York Tribune of April 8, 1893—as a

"sacrifice of every principle of personal liberty and public justice which the United States represents." Their further declaration that "any extradition treaty whatsoever with Russia is unsafe" is now confirmed by the efforts of Russia to extradite from our shores Russian patriots on the false pretense that they are common criminals.

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Our method of enforcing extradition makes it all the more important that this Russian treaty be abrogated. When a civilized government, like that of Great Britain, asks the extradition of a fugitive from justice, it usually forwards the indictment of a grand jury and there is nothing for our extraditing magistrate to do but verify the authenticity and regularity of the documents and identify the prisoner. In such a case it makes little or no difference if the extraditing magistrate is selected and paid by the demanding government, for he has nothing substantial to decide. But when the extradition documents proceed from a despotic magistrate of a barbarous government, and the question of common crime or political offense is at issue, as is the case when Russia demands an extradition, it is not safe to trust the matter to one of our extraditing magistrates, selected as he is and paid as he is by the Russian government just as Russia's attorney in the case is selected and paid by that government. No matter how good the reputation of the magistrate may be, or how honorable his intentions, it is not to be lightly supposed that he will decide against his employer. This evil could indeed be cured by our own government. Congress might require extradition proceedings to be taken before a court and to depend upon proof in accordance with civilized rules of evidence. But so long as the present method of proceeding remains, extradition treaties with despotic governments should be abrogated for that reason alone. There are abundant additional reasons for the abrogation of the Russian treaty.

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THE CHICAGO MUNICIPAL LIGHTING PLANT NOT A FAILURE.

Recently a telegram was sent from Chicago to various newspapers indicating the failure of the Municipal electric light plant of Chicago, and that its costs were found in a recent investigation to be at the high figure of \$81.64 per arc lamp per year.

With some difficulty I have been able to secure a copy of this report made to Mayor Busse by