

Chicago for its lack of a common meeting place. As an example of the disgrace of such a lack, he described the difficulties in finding a place for a people's funeral for Dr. Thomas and a people's memorial meeting. And he closed with a plea for a public building at the center of the city, "a cathedral, a chapter house, a folkmote house, where the poorest would be welcome and the wealthiest be at home." Why not? Boston has her Faneuil Hall, and New York her "Hall of the Union;" can't Chicago have this civic cathedral, this folkmote hall? To no more important purpose could she say "I will."

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THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT AND ARTHUR H. GRANT.

Burdensome exactions by the Post Office Department at Washington upon periodical publications of radical tendencies have been frequently complained of during the past ten years.

The complaints often relate to admission to second class mailing privileges.

This may need explanation.

The second class privilege consists in permission to the publishers of periodicals to mail them in bulk from the place of publication at the relatively low postage rate of one cent a pound. To obtain this privilege the publisher must apply for it formally, and until the Department grants it, he must deposit with every issue of his publication money enough to cover a very much higher rate of postage. The difference between the two rates is returned to him if he obtains the second class privilege. Otherwise he loses it. But as it is not returned until the privilege is granted, delay in granting the privilege imposes a financial burden which, increasing with each issue of a new publication, may eat so far into its capital as to be destructive to the venture.

Since the capital of radical publications is likely to be small, the Post Office Department may put them at serious disadvantage without directly discriminating in favor of plutocratic publications. The well capitalized periodical would not be even crippled by a delay that might mean death to the financially weaker one.

And there is reason to believe that this disadvantage is sometimes increased by postal authorities at Washington, through greater delays in the case of the latter than of the former.

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What seemed to us to be an instance of added discrimination by the department at Washington

was brought to our attention not long ago, and we commented upon it.

The apparent discrimination in that instance was against "The Twentieth Century," of which B. O. Flower, a well known radical, is the editor, and in favor of "The American City," of which the editor is Arthur H. Grant, whose principal editorial career has been plutocratic.

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Our comment appeared in The Public of March 25 at page 279, under the title of "Postal Subsidies and Postal Favors." Referring to the second class privilege as a "subsidy," a term adopted by the Post Office Department, that article stated that "whereas 'The Twentieth Century' had its subsidy withheld without explanation for five or six months after first publication, being required meanwhile to deposit large sums of money, 'The American City' got its subsidy promptly."

The truth of that statement was denied by Arthur H. Grant, in his own behalf and in behalf of the Post Office Department, in a letter which we reproduce below. Before going further, however, we beg indulgence for an explanation of the policy of The Public with reference to the errors it may make.

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Any periodical covering a field so wide geographically and so diversified in subject matter as The Public does, cannot be inerrant either in opinions or as to facts. Were it to express no opinion until the opinion expressed had become incontrovertible, and to publish no statements of fact not incontestably proved to it in advance, its expense bills for typesetting would be low and its usefulness at the minimum. The most that such a periodical can do or should be expected to do, is to form its opinions thoughtfully and in good faith, to make its statements of fact from information which it has good reason to trust, and then to alter such of its opinions as may prove to be unsound and to make frank corrections of its misstatements of fact if any occur.

From its first issue, therefore, The Public, while it has been careful both in formulating editorial opinions and in publishing statements of fact, to be faithful to the truth as its editors see the truth and to the facts as they are able to verify its statements of fact, has also been ready to alter the one and to correct the other whenever it has been in the wrong. We have not claimed inerrancy for The Public, but we have endeavored to be just.

Regarding editorial opinions, our policy has

sometimes involved us in misunderstandings. Having no "letters to the editor" department for expressions of opinion contrary to our own, we are held editorially responsible by our readers for the opinions we publish, even though set out in articles signed by contributors, and have therefore been obliged to reject expressions of adverse opinion. It has often been hard, however, to make contributors understand that on its editorial side The Public is a vehicle for editorial views and not a forum for multifarious discussions. But while rejecting contributions in opposition to the paper's opinions, we have never consciously hesitated to yield to arguments that have convinced us, or to publish opposing arguments along with editorial comment when they have raised vital points we had not theretofore considered.

As to statements of fact, we have not only never claimed inerrancy, but have acknowledged and been always ready to acknowledge error. Not invariably, however, do accusations of error prove upon investigation to be true. Quite the contrary. When they are mistaken, we do not as a rule trouble our readers with any restatement or discussion; but as the instance we now present involves much more than the accuracy of any disputed statement of ours, we depart from our usual rule.

This brings us back to the denial by Arthur H. Grant of one of our statements, and to his relations to the Post Office Department at Washington.

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Arthur H. Grant is the editor of "The American City." It is a new magazine published at New York, with an advisory board comprising several persons of excellent reputation and character with reference to the best possibilities of such a magazine, and some who might inspire less confidence in that regard. The magazine itself appears upon the face of it to be devoted to high civic purposes, though its editor is the same Arthur H. Grant who, until he started "The American City," was editor of the magazine called "Concerning Municipal Ownership," which was pretty generally regarded as a devoted organ of public utility corporations.

Soon after the publication of our article under the title of "Postal Subsidies and Postal Favors" (p. 269), mentioned above, in which we called attention, as already stated, to what we then had good reason to believe the fact to be, that the Post Office Department had discriminated against Mr. Flower and in favor of Mr. Grant in allowing them second class mailing privileges, Mr. Grant favored us with his denial, also mentioned above, of

the accuracy of our statement. He did so in the following letter of April 1, 1910:

I had hoped that the many misstatements in The Public were due not to deliberate intention on your part, but to misinformation from your correspondents. Now, however, I am coming to the conclusion that you are just an ordinary liar, and not only that, but the worst sort of a liar, namely: one who uses his superior knowledge to play upon the ignorance of others.

In your editorial "Postal Subsidies and Postal Favors" the traits referred to above are exhibited to the best advantage. You tried to give the impression that we got our entry practically without any delay and without having to pay "large sums of money," whereas the Twentieth Century was subjected to unusual delay and that the difference was due to favoritism.

You, of course, knew that we, like all others, had to put up the regulation deposit. You could have ascertained, if you had wanted to tell the truth, that we made our application in September and did not get our entry until December, whereas the Twentieth Century, making application in October, got their entry in February (not five or six months, as you stated, but only four). In other words, your whole argument for unfairness is based upon the fact that it took them a month longer to get their entry than it did us. As a matter of fact, we had circularized tremendously before our first issue appeared and had a good paid subscription list before we applied for entry.

I should not have taken the trouble to write this except for the fact that you set yourself up as an apostle of righteousness and exercise neither charity nor discrimination in your condemnation of people who do not happen to agree with you in all details. It is therefore quite a satisfaction to be able to "catch you with the goods on," showing that you are inherently quite as dishonest as the men you rail at.

The source of our information had been so trustworthy that we were shocked less by the form of Mr. Grant's denial than by the denial itself, and we immediately set about an investigation. Meanwhile we assured Mr. Grant, in a courteous letter, that if we found, as we assumed we would, that we had been wrongly informed, we were going to correct our statement.

Accordingly we wrote for dates of second class entry, to the Postmaster at Boston with reference to "The Twentieth Century," to the Postmaster at New York with reference to "The American City," and to the Postmaster General at Washington with reference to both.

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The Postmaster at Boston made this reply under date of April 7, 1910:

In reply to your communication of the 5th instant, concerning the "Twentieth Century Magazine" of this city, you are respectfully referred to the Third Assistant Postmaster General (Classification Division), Washington, D. C., for the information which you wish.

To our letter to the Postmaster General, we got this response under date of April 12, 1910, from A. M. Travers, "Acting Third Assistant Postmaster General":

In answer to your letter of the 5th instant, which the Postmaster General has referred to me, and in which you request certain information regarding the applications for admission of "The American City" to the second class of mail matter at New York, N. Y., and the "Twentieth Century Magazine" to the second class of mail matter at Boston, Mass., you are informed that if you will direct your inquiries to the respective publishers, no doubt is entertained that they will furnish you the desired information.

Why the Post Office Department referred us to the publishers for official information of a public character, solicited of the Department, is for the Postmaster General and not for us to explain. There is probably some reason, good or bad, why a postmaster should refer you to the Third Assistant Postmaster General for legitimate postal information about a periodical, and the Third Assistant Postmaster General should pass you on to the publisher. This secretiveness appears, at any rate, to be in keeping with the new departmental custom at Washington as disclosed by the Congressional investigation of Secretary Ballinger, who, by the way, is a member of the advisory board of Mr. Grant's magazine.

We followed the instructions of the Acting Third Assistant Postmaster General, however, by writing to Mr. Grant. We had already written to Mr. Flower and received his reply.

Our letter to Mr. Grant was not discourteous. It expressed our surprise at the information we had obtained, and asked him to "kindly inform us, before we go further, if 'The American City' had to make a deposit to cover other than second class rates for more than its two issues of October and November."

In due time Mr. Grant responded to that request as follows:

Replying to your favor of 21st inst., I beg to say that in my letter of 1st inst., I gave you all the information necessary to make a correction. I am not, however, in the least interested in having you make such a correction, as nothing that you could say would undo the damage that your very nasty paragraph may have done. I would suggest, however, that in future, when you are moved to malign public officials or private persons, you make your investigations first instead of afterwards.

Mr. Grant probably misinterpreted our letter. We had no intention of implying in it, as he seems to infer, that we were surprised at finding him in the right. We had not found him so, but the reverse.

One thing that had surprised us was the Post Office Department's significant refusal to give us the official information which would have determined conclusively whether Mr. Grant's complaint was well founded or not.

Another thing that had surprised us was the evidence in support of our original statement which the following letter from the Postmaster at New York had revealed in response to our inquiry of him:

In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, I have to state that application for admission of "The American City" to the second class of mail matter was filed at this office September 29, 1909. The publication has not been formally entered as second class matter, but the acceptance of mailings at second class rates of postage was authorized by the Department under date of November 24, 1909.

So far, then, as Mr. Grant's magazine is concerned, the so-called "subsidy" of second class privileges was authorized not quite two months after the application, and it required—although the Postmaster General and Mr. Grant withhold the information—a higher than second class rates for only two issues of the magazine. This may be called prompt action, we think, in comparison with the action regarding Mr. Flower's magazine.

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Regarding his magazine, Mr. Flower, whose high and just reputation for veracity has been won in a quarter of a century of devoted public service, writes us as follows:

Mr. Grant's "American City" and "The Twentieth Century Magazine" both started in October. It may be true that Mr. Grant made his application in September. We took up the matter with the Post Office Department in September, but the formal application was not made until the first week in October. Mr. Grant published his October and November numbers, and then his December number he dated January. On page 21 of his January number he calls attention to the fact that he had not been able to get out the December number by the first of the month, stating, "In order, therefore, to make the date of publication the first of the month, as was originally intended, it has been deemed best to date this issue January instead of December." This January number was, as you know, really his December number and it carried the formal entry. We did not get ours in December and had to put up our money for that edition. Then we had to put up money for the January edition, and it was not until after the February number was printed that we got news of the second-class rates having been granted us. When we went to press on our February number, after holding the forms as late as we possibly could, hoping to hear favorably from the Post Office Department, I called your attention to the fact that though "The American City" and our publication both started in October, and "The American City"

had received their second-class rates in December, we were still waiting for a favorable answer. The first month it was possible for us to put on "Entered as second-class matter" was in March, though the acceptance was received by us shortly after I wrote you. I think we received our notification of the acceptance on Jan. 24 or 25. I know it was not till our magazine for February was out, and certainly was not received by us before the 24th of January.

To Mr. Flower's magazine, then, the second class privilege was delayed not merely a month longer than to Mr. Grant's, as Mr. Grant asserts, but nearly two months longer.

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Calculated in months, Mr. Grant got his second class privilege in a little less than two after application (from September 29 to November 24), whereas Mr. Flower was delayed for three and a half at least (from the first week of October to the 24th of January). Calculated in days, Mr. Grant got his privilege in 56, whereas Mr. Flower was delayed 109, or 53 days longer. Calculated by magazine issues, Mr. Grant got his privilege in time for the third, whereas Mr. Flower did not get his until after his fourth had been mailed and his fifth had been printed.

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The correspondence quoted above will, we think, satisfy any reader of the fairness of these conclusions:

(1) That the statement of fact in our editorial which Mr. Grant denounces, was justified by the source and character of our information.

(2) That in our investigation, when the truth of that statement had been denied by Mr. Grant, we sought the best evidence.

(3) That in allowing second class privileges to Mr. Flower and Mr. Grant, the Department delayed the application of the former and expedited the application of the latter.

(4) That we were mistaken in saying that there had been five or six months' delay in Mr. Flower's case; but it was something more than three months and a half, and long enough to affect four issues of his magazine financially, besides depriving him of his entry notice in the fifth.

(5) That we were not mistaken in saying that Mr. Grant got his mailing privilege promptly. He did get it promptly, compared with Mr. Flower. For he got it in less than two months after application, instead of three months and a half, and after only two issues of his magazine were published instead of four.

(6) That it is a reasonable inference—at least until the Post Office Department at Washington

shall be less reticent and make a reasonable explanation—that in comparison with Mr. Flower's magazine, Mr. Grant's was consciously favored by the Department. What legitimate explanation can there be for having withheld Mr. Flower's mailing privilege 109 days, and yet allowing Mr. Grant's in 56?

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article, on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before, continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Tuesday, May 3, 1910.

Adoption of the British Budget.

The Lloyd George Budget for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1910 (p. 394), has, without alteration, now become law in Great Britain. It passed its third reading in the House of Commons on the 27th by a majority of 93. Going immediately to the House of Lords it passed the usual perfunctory first reading there on the same day, and its third on the 28th. It was signed by the King on the 29th.

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The vitally important feature of this bill, that which makes it revolutionary and radical, and consequently of world-wide interest, is its provision for an immediate valuation of all the land of the Kingdom as of April 1, 1909, and for perennial revaluations hereafter. No capitalized valuation of the lands of that country has ever been made. The machinery for this, now in process of organization under the direction of Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer, is to be a permanent institution, and upon the basis of the records it makes and revises, the Imperial government will, simply in consequence of the growing necessity for revenues, to say nothing of growing radicalism, develop a system of land value taxation in accordance essentially with the ideas of Henry George—that land values are public values and should be devoted to public uses.

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When the Budget had become a law Parliament adjourned until May 26th.

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The Outlook in British Politics.

British politics will now center about the question of the Lords' right of veto (p. 368.) There