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EDITORIAL

Democracy and God.

"Democracy cheapens God," said a distinguished by professor the other day. So much the for democracy. God ought to be cheap—so that all can reach him.

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and Poor.

se words and true ones were those of the nor of Massachusetts this year who in his ural message admonished the people that

"the envy of the poor for the rich is a sinister influence, but so is the condescension of the rich for the poor."

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Self or Other Self.

"Life," which is usually sensible as well as humorous, thinks, apropos of Tolstoy's "Great Iniquity"—the monopoly of land,—that everybody agrees with the argument but hardly anyone is willing to see the conclusion enforced, because we are all selfish creatures. "Only when the majority are convinced," says Life, "that their last personal chance of a look-in is gone, will they seriously consider abolishing the game and inaugurating a new one." Is this true? Of course it is true of the selfish—wholly true of the wholly selfish; but is it true of mankind in the mass? In moving the mass is there not something more potent than individual selfishness? If not, how happens it that the world has gone forward instead of backward?

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Tom Johnson's Hard-Earned Triumph.

After six years' work of the hardest kind, full of perplexities, often disheartening, and sometimes apparently futile, Tom L. Johnson is now upon the threshold of complete success in his campaign for the establishment of municipal ownership in Cleveland. The reason he is only on the threshold, is because the law at present permits him to go no farther. But the traction combine of his city is at the end of its fighting possibilities and has offered to surrender. Nothing remains to be done, so far as it is concerned, but to appraise its property fairly and execute the documents.

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The Traction Issue in Chicago.

In Chicago the traction situation is still shrouded in shadow. Mayor Johnson's success in Cleveland remains to be accomplished in Chicago. It has taken him six years of constructive effort to win; Chicago has had but two years of opportunity for constructive effort. What Cleveland has done, Chicago can do. But one of the conditions is patience, which is just as important in moments of perplexity as activity and enthusiasm are at other times.

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The settlement ordinances which a City Council and a tricky press backed by tricky "business" combines, all devoted to corporation interests, are try-

ing to thrust down the throats of the people of Chicago, are devices for turning over the traction rights of Chicago to the same piratical crew that has exploited this city for years by means of somewhat similar franchises not altogether differently acquired. It is said that these ordinances effectuate the purposes of the "Werno letter," which outlined Mayor Dunne's plan of settlement. They do nothing of the kind. While pretending to follow the lines of that excellent letter, they are so drawn as to make the defeat of its purpose easy to accomplish. One particular is enough to name. They allow the companies to expend in rehabilitation without other limit than the check which Councils may from time to time interpose. They actually contemplate an immediate expenditure of some \$50,000,000. Add this sum to the agreed price of the present property, \$50,000,000, and we have \$100,000,000 as the sum the city must pay in order to take over the property. But the city has no other resources for this purpose than Mueller certificates, and the authorized issue of these is only \$75,000,000—\$25,000,000 less than the sum necessary to purchase. Nothing more would be needed, therefore, to balk municipal ownership and defeat the purpose of the "Werno letter," than to prevent, in ways well known to all traction managers and some aldermen, the passage of any ordinance allowing the people to vote on a further issue of Mueller certificates. But against this possibility the companies arbitrarily and without reason refuse to insert protecting words.

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The refusal to guard against that contingency is the best kind of circumstantial evidence of conscious and intentional fraud. Add this to the indefensible methods whereby all possibility of securing a popular discussion of the ordinances on their merits has been practically closed by a trick referendum clause, and we have a situation which calls for popular action against the traction combine more emphatically than it was ever called for before. No official can urge the passage of these ordinances as they stand, without risking his reputation for ability or integrity or both. To adopt them as they stand, is to put the city of Chicago again at the mercy of the Morganatic gang of Wall street; and no one will be able to plead innocence when, if the ordinances pass, the fraud becomes manifest.

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Personal Property Taxes.

In remarking that the prevailing method of collecting personal property taxes "would be a

serious menace to democratic institutions were it not so generally recognized as a howling farce," the New York tax commission has made a just comment by adding: "But it is not a farce to those who are fully assessed. These are chiefly the widows and orphans who are caught when their property is listed in the probate court, retail merchants and others, incorporated or unincorporated, with stocks of goods, and the small investors who are not skillful enough to make non-taxable investments. The tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. is equivalent to an income tax of 25 per cent. on a 6 per cent. investment. A general income tax of 10 per cent. would create a revolution, yet we take a quarter of their income or more from the most helpless class in the community." And this is done for the benefit of privileged classes—the classes that get their bread in the sweat of other men's faces,—and by authority of the votes of the victims themselves.

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Death of David Overmyer.

In the death of David Overmyer last week, the State of Kansas lost a citizen who was not only a popular lawyer of pronounced ability and enviable distinction, but a man of high social and political ideals, whose essential democracy was sensitive and whose courage was always at the call of his opinions.

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The Socialistic Ideal.

In a recent issue the Chicago Daily Socialist made a pointed reply to those critics of Socialism who object to it because it contemplates "common ownership of toothbrushes," etc., and in concluding its reply it presented a succinct statement of what Socialism does propose with reference to common ownership. "Common ownership is not advocated," it says, "by the Socialists as a scheme; it is simply recognized as the characteristic feature of the coming social stage," the characteristic feature of that social stage being "common ownership of the things whose private ownership at present enables a small portion of the population to exploit all the others." Thousands of things, the Daily Socialist explains, "would always remain privately owned, because their ownership interfered with no person's opportunity to produce and enjoy the product of his labor." Socialists who agree to this limitation upon common ownership under Socialism, would find many men not Socialists agreeing with them as to the wisdom of making the ownership of everything within those limits common. The only question is the analytical one as to what things in the Socialistic category of