

he happened to need it, and you couldn't be ungrateful enough to disappoint him.

Go a step farther. What do you suppose the traction stock jobbers would expect of your alderman in return for their favor to him in giving you or your friend a job upon his "recommendation"? No more than aldermen, do stock jobbers do favors for anybody's health. They would expect your alderman's vote in the city council whenever they might need it. The alderman knows this, and his constituents ought to.

Political "spoils", indeed! "Graft", forsooth! What possible political "spoils" or "graft" under municipal ownership and operation of the street car system could be worse than the political "spoils" and "graft" under the corporation ownership and stock jobbing operation which now prevail?

None could be as bad. Under public ownership and operation, street car employes would come within the rules of the merit system of civil service. Their appointment and retention could not be used either to strengthen the political fences of corrupt aldermen nor to promote the schemes of yet more corrupt traction stock jobbers.

Nor is the use of appointments by street car corporations for the purpose of bribing aldermen and voters the worst "graft" of traction stock jobbers. Were the whole truth about political corruption in cities known, we should see that it is caused for the most part by the devious methods of public service companies and their stock jobbing managers. City officials cannot be corrupted unless some outsider has an interest in making their corruption profitable. Where there is no "graft" there are no "grafter". But the richest "graft" of the present time in cities, is that which flourishes in private ownership of public property and private operation of public functions—especially when nurtured by stock jobbers, as is the great street car "graft" under which Chicago has suffered for half a century.

The day in politics of the mere "tax eater" has passed; that of the franchise grabber and manipula-

tor is at high noon. Corruption in politics is no longer due in any great degree, to the corrupting influence of office "spoils" and party "spoils-men". It is now due chiefly to the corrupting methods of "business interests" in franchise privileges. As ex-Mayor Low, of New York, recently put it: "The day of open robbery is gone, but an era of intrigue has replaced it. Tweed's ring stood brazenly in the old days for open robbery; public service corporations and their stock jobbing managers stand for the secret corruption of the new era of franchise intrigues."

Abolish public-service franchises, and you abolish the most powerful and subtle of all the existing causes of political corruption. It is by getting rid of these franchises, not by perpetuating and fostering them, that good government is to be secured.

An opportunity to do this will be afforded the people of Chicago at the coming municipal election. If it is allowed to pass, no opportunity as good may occur in many years. If the questions then submitted are voted down, the city officials would be warranted in assuming that the public opinion of Chicago is favorable to the stock-jobbing schemes of the traction interests, and in therefore settling the whole matter in accordance with the demands of their representatives.

## NEWS

Week ending Thursday, March 3.

The strict censorship by both Russia and Japan makes it impossible to give any clear and full idea of the situation at the seat of war (p. 743), but reasonable confidence may be reposed in the reports that some kind of naval demonstrations were made at Port Arthur on the 24th, 25th and 29th. On the 24th the Japanese made an attack. According to the Russian official report this was done with numerous torpedo boats, and was repulsed, two Japanese vessels being wrecked and their crews saving themselves in small boats. The official Japanese report of the same event is to the effect that four old vessels, escorted by some

torpedo boats, were run into the entrance of Port Arthur by the Japanese for the purpose of blocking the mouth of the harbor, and that this object was accomplished. On the 25th there appears to have been a three hours' general engagement brought on by a Japanese naval attack; and on the 29th, according to Japanese reports, there was a similar engagement. The probabilities are that all this fighting is merely part of occasional skirmishes, demonstrative rather than destructive, between the Russian fleet in the harbor and the Japanese fleet which is watching it from without. The situation is not dissimilar to that at Santiago while the American fleet held Admiral Cervera in the harbor; and the event of the 24th is likened to Hobson's exploit in sinking the Merrimac.

A diplomatic reply was made by Japan on the 1st to the diplomatic complaint of Russia (p. 743) charging Japan with violation of the fundamental rules of international law in her manner of beginning the war. Japan's reply asserts that the answer to Russia's charges may be found in the action of Russia herself. It proceeds:

That her government never entertained any sincere desire for peace can be clearly seen from its own conduct. Throughout the whole course of the negotiations Russia persistently refused to meet the proposals made by Japan in a moderate and conciliatory spirit. By delays that could not be construed as otherwise than wanton and unnecessary, she put off the settlement of the questions at issue, while at the same time busily extending her naval and military preparations. Her warlike preparations in the far East since last April, when she failed to carry out her treaty engagement to evacuate Manchuria, are in full confirmation of these statements.

Then follows a lengthy statement in detail of the action of Russia in strengthening her military and naval forces at points menacing Japan, and thereupon the reply continues:

In view of these facts who can say that Russia had no warlike intentions or that she was unprepared for war? Seeing that the situation had become so critical that it admitted of no further delay the Japanese government was compelled to break off negotiations that had proved abortive and to take the necessary steps for self-protection.