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*Ohio: A Tale of Two Cities*

THE story of the latter-day politics of Ohio, as I understand the state, can best be told as a tale of two of her cities: Cleveland and Cincinnati; Cleveland, the metropolis of her Northeast, Cincinnati, the metropolis of her Southwest; Cleveland, the best governed city in the United States, Cincinnati, the worst.

Cleveland is, and except during one short period, always has been a business man's government. The *New York Sun* wondered once how it happened so often that in Ohio men who had spent the better part of their lives in business could step into politics up near the top and prove themselves first-rate politicians from the start. The explanation is simple. Those Ohio men came from Cleveland. If I remember aright, the *Sun* had in mind the sudden appearance of the late Mr. Hanna in national politics with the nomination of Mr. McKinley for president. Mr. Hanna had been in politics for years. Mr. Hanna is one type of the business men who have ruled the city of Cleveland. There are other types, as we shall see, but we must begin with Marcus A. Hanna. He is dead. I don't believe in "nothing but good of the dead"; I believe that true obituaries of our great men would do the living good. But I hoped to be able to tell about Ohio without saying much about Mr. Hanna. That is impossible. You can't understand Cleveland, and you can't understand Ohio, without understanding Mark Hanna. And you can't understand the American people and the United States without seeing Hanna as he was—good and bad, a delight and a danger, a business man in politics, a business man who dominated a city, became United States senator and the boss of a state, became national head of the dominant national party and was the choice of big business and bad machine politics for president of the United States.

*The Kind of Man Mark Hanna Was*

What sort of man was this? He was "our sort." Hanna was American. There are traits American which he lacked, but taken as he stood there was not a fiber of his make-up, not a fault, not a virtue, that is not of us. Of Quaker stock from the Virginias, he was born near Ohio's Western Reserve and the West made him ripe and rich. Hanna described himself once. In the campaign against Mayor Jones, who was running for governor, he got into a hall full of Welshmen. Jones was Welsh, and the crowd jeered at Hanna so that he could not go on with his speech. "There's a lot of American in me," he shouted. "There's some Scotch. Somewheres way back, there is Irish blood. But by —, there's no Welsh. If there was, I'd go down there and lick the whole lot of you." That won the Welshmen. They cheered and they listened while Hanna gave Jones and the Welsh fits.

That was Hanna, mixed, but well mixed, and, as the politicians say, a “good mixer.” He was the fighter who can laugh in his wrath, but won’t compromise. “Well, what is your bill?” he was heard to demand of two lobbyists in the Marble Room of the U.S. Senate one day. They murmured some reply. “Well, he don’t deserve it and he don’t get it,” said Hanna aloud, and he stumped off to leave them. Then he stopped. “Say, have you two cusses had your lunch? No? Well, I’ll give ye a good lunch, but that’s all you do get.”

Intimate, even familiar, Hanna was always Hanna, in all places, to all men. It is related that at the first inauguration of President McKinley, when he and Hanna rode together from the Capitol to the White House, Mr. McKinley pointed out of the carriage to the Post Office Building and admired it. “Well, that shows how little you know about architecture,” said Hanna. And when President Roosevelt spoke to the senator on the funeral train of Mr. McKinley, and said: “Come, old man, be my friend as you were his,” Hanna answered out of his grief, “I will, yes, I will, if you will carry out that man’s policy, and if, — it, you won’t call me ‘old man.’”

Such a friendship could not have lasted, however, for the dominant trait of Hanna’s character was domination. He was our aggressive type of the egotist. He may not have meant to be selfish. Hanna was our man of brains, not of mind. When he was a boy he showed some inclination to read books, but his father, Dr. Leonard Hanna, a sturdy man, noticed it. “Mark,” he would call up the stairs, “what are you doing up there? Reading, eh? Well, you come down here, and saw wood.” So the boy was cured of this taste; the man hardly read at all. When he wasn’t sawing wood, he was playing cards. He played in the daytime, and in the evening it was his favorite form of amusement to play a game with as many of his friends as he could get around him, and if no friends came, Mr. Hanna played solitaire.

### *Our Men Spoiled Like Our Children*

We admire self-sufficiency, we Americans, and no matter if they do trample upon us, we want to see the strong men win. We are like the American parent, who, because the baby is lusty and big, lets it pull off the table-cloth and break the dishes. Well, our young male was strong, and he began early to grab. When the family moved to Cleveland (in 1852) the father founded the wholesale grocery firm of Hanna, Garretson & Co. Mark went to school for a while, then he worked in the store, then he served as clerk in a Lake Superior carrying vessel. The Superior iron regions were opening and the Hannas saw things. They went into iron and steel and ships, as well as groceries and supplies. Mark married (in 1862) a daughter of D. P. Rhodes, fondly known as “Old Dan Rhodes,” a pioneer grown rich in the iron and coal trade. Mark joined the firm of D. P. Rhodes & Co. There were other sons and partners in the business, but by 1885 they all were out or reduced to M. A. Hanna & Co., mines, ships, coal, oil, iron-ore, and pig-iron. Then M. A. Hanna got into a stove company, other mining companies, banks, and shipbuilding, a newspaper, a theater. It’s a long story; it’s the good old story, oft told and never explained. I heard, from men with feelings sore after all these years, of quick turns, hard fights, and brutal force. But that was Mark having his way, and, I guess, that is the way of success. Certainly Hanna was the true type of our successful men of big business. They are men in whom a want is, not like yours, perhaps, or mine, humble, hopeful, and capable of dismissal unsatisfied; a want with the Hannas is a lust; no matter how big or how little, no matter how vicious or how innocent, it is Hanna’s want; it must be sated, and it must be sated now.

One of Hanna’s young wants was a street railway. He had largely of the earth, and of the waters under the earth; he had reached out far beyond Cleveland and Ohio for possessions, into

Minnesota and New York, Michigan and Pennsylvania; and his hands were full. But he had no street railway. Of course, he got one. He was let into the West Side Company of Cleveland, Elias Sims, president, and two years later (in 1882) Sims resigned and M. A. Hanna became president. And that's how Hanna happened to go into politics.

Mr. Hanna did not want to go into politics. He had to. It was necessary to his business that he should, and it was for the sake of his business that he did; not for the party, not for the city, not to better things, not even for the sport of it. As a young fellow, he had "batted around" some in his ward, for fun; but there was nothing in that for him, so he wasn't regular about it. I inquired closely into this, for I wanted to be sure that I wasn't on another "low down politician's" trail. Mr. Hanna went into politics as a business man, and he always called himself a business man in politics.

And, as a business man in politics he corrupted politics. Mr. Hanna boodled. He degraded the municipal legislature of Cleveland. I don't say he did it alone; I don't say he started it; I don't say he wanted to do that. All Mr. Hanna wanted was that horse-car line, and then some extensions, and then some more franchises. But these he did want, these and other valuable privileges. Since he wanted them he must have them, and since the business way to get a thing is to go and pay for it and get it, Mr. Hanna went and got his privileges. He bought and paid for them. I don't say he paid all this in bribes, nor do I say that he paid bribes with his own hands. That isn't the way a Big Business man does big business. That isn't the System.

### *Hanna in Cleveland Politics*

The System in Cleveland at that time was simple and imperfect. Business men supported it. There was no boss, and such leading politicians as the city boasted were nothing but business men's political agents. They depended largely upon the campaign funds contributed by the business men. In return the business men could get what they wanted out of the city, and they let the politicians do about as they pleased with the rest. The street railways and the other public utility companies which had the most to ask attended to this political business. Not all of them. Cleveland is in many respects an exceptional community. There are, and there seem always to have been, men of business there who disapprove of boodling and corruption, and one of the street-railway presidents, Mr. Horace E. Andrews, has refused always to aid corruption in any disguise. But Hanna and two others have had no such scruples. They kept men to do "dirty business" for them, and these men were the "bosses" for many years. Hanna's man was George Mulhern, an employee of the West Side Company. Hanna sometimes served as treasurer of the campaign fund, and, in hot fights, often directed the politics of the West Side and, indeed, of the whole city.

All he wanted, however, was the right kind of a mayor, and his share of the councilmen. These he secured, he or Mulhern or both, by supervising nominations and paying individual campaign expenses. Other street railways did much the same. Usually they had among them enough councilmen to form a combine which controlled legislation. If they lacked some, if they hadn't bought sufficiently in advance, or if an unexpected emergency arose, they bought more. They didn't always use cash bribery. Mulhern, who picked the president and organized councils, came to control more and more departments, and he had the patronage of these to dispense to the friends and followers of pliable councilmen. But this was making the city pay for its own

corruption, and it not only saved Hanna and the company some costs, it strengthened the machine.

### *Cleveland in Hanna's Day*

This was a government by the public utility companies. These councilmen, elected as representatives of the whole community, represented in fact Mr. Hanna and the other holders of public franchises. Of course there was other "business" to be done. Mulhern with the other railway politicians handled it. They let privileges, legitimate and illegitimate, to their friends and Hanna's friends, and after these, to all comers. Citizens have told me how they were referred from the City Hall to the West Side Company offices, when they called on business. There was the head of the government, and it was not a very bad government, not in the Tammany sense. There was not much police blackmail, for example; it was financial, respectable corruption that prevailed, and "good citizens" do not resent that so much. It is quiet, it is convenient; it is theirs; it is the System. Hanna's government of Cleveland was a government of the people by politicians hired to represent the privileged class.

### *Hanna in National Politics*

This is the most dangerous form of our corruption; the most dangerous for this class as well. And yet the political greatness of Mr. Hanna was rooted in such corruption, and his political hopes were the hopes of this class. Hanna may not have thought so. Hanna wasn't a thinker, he was a man of instinct and action, and his unconscious selfishness hurt his effectiveness. The fate of his primitive machine shows that. He did not keep it up regularly. When he wanted something, he worked hard at the organization; when he wanted nothing in particular, he was slack about it. A business man in politics, he ran politics for business, not for political ends. Some political honors came to him. He went to conventions. He saw how governors were made, and presidents. A delegate to the National Republican Convention of 1888, he was for John Sherman, and he missed a hand in the making of President Harrison. Whether that humble failure suggested it or not, I do not know, but all the world knows that Hanna came to have a great ambition that was political. He wanted to have a president. He chose William McKinley, and he planned for years his nomination in 1896. That he succeeded, everybody knows. Hanna often laughed, in his merry way, at the "spontaneous demand" for McKinley, which swept over the country at just the right time. There was such a demand, and much of it was spontaneous, but Hanna organized it. He dotted the country with men primed to shout at a signal, and when he gave the word, the wave rose and rolled in upon the convention where Hanna was dickered for its enthusiastic reception.

And Hanna won with McKinley and money, Hanna and the System—in the United States. What of Ohio? What of Cleveland? When the organizer of the national Republican machine came home, he had no organization. Having wanted very little from the state, he had neglected the state machine, and it was in the control of the Cox-Foraker wing of the party. And he had lost also his own city. A group of common politicians, weary of the selfishness of his street-railway government, had set out the year before (1895) to organize the party along political, not business, lines. They made Hanna and the street railways the issue and, nominating an obscure young lawyer, Robert E. McKisson, for mayor, they beat easily Hanna's lopsided old

occasional machine. McKisson, dismissing his creators, built for himself; but he built on politics and political graft, and the McKisson organization was the best machine the Republicans have ever had in Cleveland. But it was an anti-Hanna machine.

### *Hanna in State Politics*

And thus began the making of the Ohio of Hanna, which is the Ohio of today. Whenever the forces of corruption are beaten in a city, they retreat to the state. Hanna had two wants which Cleveland could not or would not satisfy. He wanted to be a United States senator and he wanted an extension of certain of his street-railway franchises. All the traction interests of Cleveland had been combined into two consolidations, the "Big Con," Horace Andrews, president; and the "Little Con," Mark Hanna, president. Both had franchises expiring in the near future, and the state legislature had just enacted the Rogers law, which permitted cities to grant extensions for fifty years. This law was passed by the Cox-Foraker crowd for the Cincinnati traction interest, but it was good in Cleveland while it lasted. There was the rub, however. The people were indignant at this piece of legislation; it might be repealed. Hanna and his associates had to hurry; and that politician, "Bob" McKisson, would not hurry. He would negotiate, however, and there was some dickering. Just what the dealing was I do not know, of course. The McKissonites say a big offer was made to the mayor and that he refused it. The Hanna people say the mayor asked for money and that they refused it. This much is certain: Mr. Andrews was asked to meet Mayor McKisson at the Hollenden Hotel; telling some of his associates about it, he went there; when he returned he reported that he had entered the appointed room, and that there, in the dark, Mr. McKisson began talking about land to be had out near Andrews's country place. Mr. Andrews may have been mistaken, but he understood this to have been an approach, and he left the mayor abruptly. Soon thereafter a definite proposition of corruption was made, not, however, by the mayor, but the railway people certainly believed it was authoritative. The associates of Mr. Andrews wanted to accept it, and the Hanna people were eager for the deal. And when Mr. Andrews refused to countenance it, there was trouble in his board and he resigned. Why the subsequent negotiation fell through, I do not fully understand. James Parmelee, the president, now, of the lighting company, who was to take Mr. Andrews's place, considered making the deal; but, upon the advice of friends that it would be suicidal to put such business through with the whole city looking on and suspecting the purpose of his succession to Mr. Andrews, Mr. Parmelee decided against the job, and Mr. Andrews resumed his office. As for the other company, I was told that the McKissonites would not do business with the "Little Con" alone. However that may be, from that time on the Hanna Republicans cursed for a "Corruptionist" "Bob" McKisson, who prevented Hanna from getting his franchise extensions from his own city.

Meanwhile Mr. Hanna had been making mad rushes for his senatorship. There was no vacancy in the Senate from Ohio, but that did not matter. One was created. The president took John Sherman, the senior Ohio senator, into the cabinet. Poor old John Sherman! He didn't want to be secretary of state; his mind was failing and he wanted only to be let alone. But there was Hanna with a Hanna want; it must be satisfied, so Sherman was moved and the next thing was to get Hanna appointed. It was rather late to set about arranging this detail, but Hanna crossed bridges when he came to them. Governor Bushnell hated Hanna. Bushnell was a friend of the junior Ohio senator, Joseph B. Foraker, who hated Hanna who hated him. If Hanna had had control in Cleveland he might have forced terms, but he was powerful only at Washington. He had to go to Cincinnati, and Hanna went to Cincinnati. He appealed from Bushnell and Foraker

to the strong man behind both of them; with federal patronage in his hand, he went to George B. Cox, the laconic boss of Cincinnati, who, tradition has it, passed to the governor two words: "Name Hanna." And Hanna was named.

And thus it happened that Hanna first went to Cincinnati; thus was begun, in an emergency, the alliance of Hanna, the Cleveland business man, with Cox, the Cincinnati politician—an alliance full of portent for the state of Ohio. Hanna was building his system. Not that he knew it. Reputed great as an organizer, Hanna worked like a bird; all he knew was that he needed a straw; his genius lay in the sure instinct with which he found his straw. The nest happened. Cincinnati was a branch to build on, Cox a straw. So far as I can make out, when Hanna had his senatorship, he gave Cox some of the president's patronage and flitted off to Washington satisfied. But he had descended to Cincinnati and to Cox, and he was to go there again. Let us go there and see what it means to go to Cox and Cincinnati.

### *Going to Cincinnati*

I shall never forget my first visit. Cities and city bosses were my subject then, and I thought I knew something about such things. I didn't know the worst. The train ran through the early morning sunshine up to a bank of mist and smoke, paused, as every train since has done, then slowly tunneled its way into the cul de sac where the Queen City broods in gloom. I wanted to see Cox. The etiquette of my work seems to me to require that I shall call first everywhere on the ruler of the people; if he is the mayor, I call first on him; if the mayor is a figurehead, I call first on the boss. Sometimes one is in doubt. In Cincinnati, immediately after breakfast, I sought out the sign of the "Mecca" saloon, went up one flight to a mean, little front hall-room. A great hulk of a man sat there alone, poring over a newspaper, with his back to the door. He did not look up.

"Mr. Cox?" I said.

There was a grunt; that was all.

"Mr. Cox," I said, "I understand that you are the boss of Cincinnati."

His feet slowly moved his chair about, and a stolid face turned to mine. Two dark, sharp eyes studied me, and while they measured, I explained that I was a student of "politics, corrupt politics, and bosses." I repeated that I had heard he was the boss of Cincinnati. "Are you?" I concluded.

"I am," he grumbled in his hoarse, throaty voice.

"Of course, you have a mayor, and a council, and judges?"

"Yes," he admitted; "but —" he pointed with his thumb back over his shoulder to the desk—"I have a telephone, too."

"And you have citizens, too? American men and women?"

He stared a moment, silent, then turned heavily around back to his paper. Well, I feel the same way now about the citizenship of this city; Cox, their ruler, and I have had several talks since; he doesn't say much, but I am sure he and I agree perfectly about them. But this, also, I never forgot, and let no one else forget it: Cincinnati is an American city, and her citizens are American citizens. Therefore, what has happened in Cincinnati can happen in American cities. What had happened there?

### *Tweed Days in Cincinnati*

We need not go into details. We know Philadelphia, and that is to know most of the truth about Cincinnati. An aristocracy once, the best people were decent about the graft, but selfish, and the criminal classes took over the government. Tom Campbell, a criminal lawyer, led the Republicans, and John R. McLean, the son of "Wash" McLean, also a sort of boss, led the Democrats; but there was no politics. The good people knew parties, not the party politicians. John R. McLean and Tom Campbell were great friends, and they ruled by buying votes and indulging vice and crime. Campbell controlled the criminal bench. He defended criminals, out of the ring and in it; there was brawling, robbery, murder; and, in open court, over evidence which the public was reading in McLean's newspaper, *The Enquirer*—over evidence which convinced all but the corrupt judges and the "fixed" juries, this politician-lawyer got his clients off, till, in 1884, upon the acquittal of two murderers who killed a man for a very small sum of money, the town revolted. A mob burned the criminal courthouse. The McLean-Campbell regime of Cincinnati, which corresponded to the Tweed days of New York and the McManes-Gas-Ring rule of Philadelphia, closed with the famous Cincinnati riots of 1881.

Tom Campbell moved to New York, and McLean soon took up a residence in Washington, D.C., but "better citizens" did not step into their places. The "best citizens" who led the "better citizens" were in gas and other public utilities; they were "apathetic," so other Republican grafters held down the Republican party while McLean, the Democrat, with his "independent" *Enquirer* and his contributions, kept a paralyzing hand on the Democratic machine. Since McLean was "active" only when he wanted something himself or when he wanted to keep anybody else from getting anything, this dog-in-the-manger weakened the Democracy, even as a graft organization; and gradually the "grand old party" established itself. Among the Republican leaders of this period the only one we need to know is Joseph B. Foraker. He is the senior United States senator from Ohio now, and we are asking what "our" senators represent at home. Mr. Foraker represented the young Republicans of his day. Enthusiastic over his party, passionate in the defense of the Union soldier, eloquent upon the rights of the people, this young orator was dubbed the "Fire Alarm," because of the courage with which he fought corporate greed and corruption. The people of this country need, and they are forever looking for a leader who is not a boss, and Foraker is no boss. He is a politician; he must have been almost a demagogue once; certainly he raised the hopes and won the hearts of a majority of Ohioans, for they elected him governor of their state, twice. What did he do for these, his own people?

#### *Another U.S. Senator Accounted For*

Governor Foraker "discovered" Cox. A saloon-keeper and councilman at the time, Cox ruled his own ward and was distinguished in his corrupt city as an honest politician; if there was boodle to divide Cox divided it "on the square," and if he gave his word, he kept it. Wherefore the world of graft trusted Cox. Governor Foraker, needing a boss for Cincinnati, made Cox an oil inspector and the dispenser of patronage in Hamilton County (Cincinnati). An oil inspectorship in Ohio is "good money" and, better still, brings a man into confidential relations with one of the deep sources of corruption in the state, Standard Oil. Foraker and Cox soon got in touch with other such interests. There are several instances to cite; one will do.

A while ago we spoke of the Rogers Law. Cox and Foraker managed that. The Cincinnati traction interests wanted a fifty-year five-cent-fare franchise in Cincinnati. Foraker wanted to go to the U.S. Senate. Public opinion out West is against long franchises, but the "Fire Alarm" expressed public opinion. It was charged in the public prints of Chicago and Ohio that Foraker

was paid an enormous “fee” (ranging from \$100,000 to \$250,000) for his services—as a lawyer. He did not sue for libel, but he denied the charge; he said all he got was a present of \$5,000 from an officer of the company. I say it doesn’t matter whether Foraker took a bribe, or a fee, or a present, or nothing at all. His firm has been ever since counsel for the Traction Company, and his son became an officer thereof, but that doesn’t matter. And it doesn’t matter whether the legislature that made Foraker a senator belonged to the company, or whether the legislature that passed the Rogers traction bill belonged to Foraker. The plain, undeniable, open facts are that the legislature of 1896 which elected Foraker to the U.S. Senate was led by the senator, a popular leader, to pass in the interest of the traction company a bill which granted privileges so unpopular that public opinion required a repeal in the next legislature of 1898. In other words, this man, who by his eloquence won the faith of his people, betrayed them for some reason to those interests which were corrupting the government in order to get privileges from it. That’s all any electors need to know about Joseph B. Foraker, that and the report that he hopes some day to be president of the United States.

Let’s turn to an honest grafter. Cox made the councils of Cincinnati act for the traction company under the Rogers Law, but he doesn’t pretend to represent the people. That isn’t his business. Cox’s business is to rule the people, and he does it. Cincinnati was enraged, and Cincinnati rose against Cox for this act. Cox was for licking them into obedience, but Hanna was back in Cincinnati again. Hanna had to be elected, in 1898, to the seat he had been appointed to. He wanted “harmony” in Cincinnati. He wanted Cox to hide and let some business men, such as used to rule Cleveland, run the 1897 campaign which was to elect his (Hanna’s) legislature. It was selfish of Hanna, but Cox was willing. He told me about it.

“Wanted good men nominated,” he said. “Wanted business men. Wanted business men to name the ticket and run the machine. Come to me, a committee of them, bankers and all like that. Said they’d name twelve men, and I was to name twelve. I was to pick six off their list, and they were to pick six off mine. Showed me their twelve and I took ’em all, all twelve, all business men, good people. Called ’em the dozen raw. Let ’em name the ticket and lent ’em the machine to run.” He paused. “Who do you think they nominated?” he asked, and he answered: “They nominated fellers they met at lunch.”

Cox’s scorn of “good business men” reminds me of Croker. Croker has never been able to understand just how “bad” he was; he really was puzzled as to himself. “But,” he said one day with assurance, “I know I’m better than them;” and he pointed off downtown toward Wall Street, where his business backers and clients were. And it is so with Cox. He doesn’t understand the standards of his critics, but he knows he is better than “them.”

“Them,” in Cincinnati, were beaten. The “dozen raw” who, largely for Hanna’s sake, tried to give “front” to the Republican party, and save it with a respectable business man’s ticket, failed. McLean wanted to go to the United States Senate, so he lent the Democratic machine to the Democrats, who combined with the independents, and together they elected an anti-machine ticket. It looked so bad for Cox that he announced his retirement from politics, but the amiable old gentleman who was mayor proved so weak and the “Democrats” and “independents” such poor stuff that Cox recovered his courage. He bought some members of the administration, fooled others, and with the help of these set the rest to fighting among themselves. Cox so disgusted the town with “reform” that it came back to him, laid itself at his feet, and he proceeded at his leisure to, what a judge called, the “Russianization” of Cincinnati.



What that means we shall see when it is done. Hanna waits, his present want, the senatorship, unsatisfied. He thought he had it fixed; though the McKisson anti-Hanna Republicans had elected to the legislature part of the delegation from Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), and the anti-Cox movement had sent up independent Republicans from Hamilton County (Cincinnati). Hanna and his state manager, Major Charles F. Dick, assumed that all "Republicans" would be loyal to "the party." Loyalty to party means, to a boss, loyalty to the boss. Now Hanna wasn't yet the boss of Ohio, but he wanted to be, so he assumed that no one would oppose him. The capital was full of his enemies, Governor Bushnell, Senator Foraker, Mayor McKisson, Charles Kurtz, etc., but Hanna flitted off to Washington, and Major Dick "sat with his feet up on a table cracking jokes."

Secretly, those Republican enemies of Hanna formed a combination with Democrats to beat Hanna. They could do it. They had the votes. This they proved by smashing Hanna's legislative slate, and Ohio and Washington were thrown into a state of excited dismay. Hanna flew to Columbus and took personal charge of his own fight. With him came money, lots of money, and with this money came the influence of the president, of the railroads, the banks, Federal office-holders. Mass meetings were organized at the homes of lost or doubtful legislators, speeches were made, addresses drawn, and committees with petitions were hurled by special trains to the capitol. Columbus was a wonderful scene. The hotels were packed, crowds surged up and down the halls and lobbies. Wine flowed and there were loud rows and fist fights. Legislators were kidnapped, made drunk, and held prisoners. The wife of one member, sent for because of her influence over her husband, was held by one side while the other kept him hidden away in a room. Men carried revolvers and showed them, and witnesses tell me there was really a fear of sudden death. But under all this money was whispering; both sides used it. Hanna always denied that he spent any. The anti-Hanna combine settled finally on McKisson as their candidate, and McKisson says he hadn't any money. But these are technical denials. I don't know who handled the little money the McKissonites had, but after Hanna won (for, of course Hanna won) by one vote, specific charges of bribery were made. A committee took evidence on one case and reported (1) that "on or about Jan. 9, 1898, an attempt was made to bribe John C. Otis, a member of the House . . . to vote for Marcus A. Hanna"; (2) "that Major E. G. Rathbone and Major Charles F. Dick were agents of Marcus A. Hanna, and procured, aided, and abetted the crime."

The report, sent to the United States Senate, was not credited there, but that means nothing; it means no more than the report of a board of aldermen would mean of an investigation of graft charges against some fellow member. "Senatorial courtesy" seated Mr. Hanna. But if bribery ever was proved, it was on that investigation. The bribe agent, now dead, was followed step by step; he reported by telephone to "Dick," "Major Dick," and to others at Hanna's headquarters everything that he did; and these frequent telephonic communications were overheard by witnesses, with stenographers by to take them down. Hanna's declaration of personal innocence was borne out; the witnesses said the agent said he represented Eastern men and Eastern money; but "Dick" was certainly Hanna's state manager, and Hanna wasn't the sort of man such a lieutenant would be afraid to report to on the use of money. But waive all that.

Hanna rewarded with offices in the state and the United States service the legislators and agents who "stood by him." Hanna said on the stump afterward that he did this. That is enough. As we have noted before, people are often incensed over cash bribery, but bribery with offices is worse; to pay men who betray us by giving them salaries at our cost in our public service is the

worst form of bribery; that is systematic corruption; that is the System. For instance, Major E. G. Rathbone, afterward involved in irregularities in the Cuban postal service, was sent down there by Hanna because he had proven his character by helping Hanna in this senatorial fight. And there are others: When Mark Hanna died, the System decreed that Ohio should send his faithful lieutenant, Major Dick, to the Senate, and thus, by the way, another of “our” United States senators is accounted for.

But never mind; Hanna had his senatorship. There remained unsatisfied but one great want of this spoiled child of the American business-political system. That legislature of 1898, which gave Hanna “so much trouble,” as he expressed it, repealed the Rogers Law, and he had to begin all over again to get the extensions he wanted for his street-railway franchises. But he began right this time, at home. He went to Cleveland.

McKisson, beaten for the senatorship, was weakened, but he controlled the Republican party, so Hanna did what good people are so reluctant, what the politicians and bosses are so ready to do when the party fails to represent them—Hanna backed the other party. Yes, this same Republican leader who had pleaded so hard for “harmony” in Cincinnati where harmony was in his interest, now supported in Cleveland the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party in Ohio (and in many other states) is cursed by “Democrats” of the John R. McLean type, who believe in “protection,” privileges, and big business graft generally just as much as Republicans of the Aldrich stamp do. John Farley is such a “Democrat.” I had a talk with him once, and it was like talking to Aldrich; he is candid, able, and a cynic about America and its democratic republic. Farley was nominated by the Democratic Party; he was called a Hanna Democrat—and the Hanna Republicans helped the Democrats elect him. And he was elected to help the street railways get their franchises. Horace Andrews was out of the “Big Con” presidency and Henry Everett of the Everett-Moore Syndicate was in; and the two “Cons” came pretty near getting what they wanted. Farley, the Democrat, stood ready to do his part, the traction people to do theirs; but the business fell through, beaten by—Cleveland, by the citizens of Cleveland.

### *Finding “Good” in Cleveland*

Cheerful idiots who think themselves optimists often ask me why I don’t find something good now and then, somebody to praise. I do. I found good in Chicago; I praised Folk and LaFollette, A. R. Hall, and Governor Garvin, and Oliver McClintock; everywhere I have been I have found something good and somebody to praise. I notice, however, that while my evil reports seldom cause resentment, the moment I begin to speak well either of men or of conditions, my mail roars with rage and burns with sarcasm or sorrow. Then I am a fool or a liar. Naturally, therefore, it is with fear and trembling that I approach Cleveland now. There is something good there. The citizens of Cleveland know how to vote; they have a public opinion, and they make it count; they have two truly independent newspapers, and this free press speaks for them, with effect. Nominally Republican, when this city had by sheer force of public opinion stopped the trolley grabs, it turned around and elected to succeed “Democrat” Farley not a “Republican,” but Tom Johnson, a Democrat. Now this was the most terrible disappointment in the whole business-political career of Mr. Hanna. And Johnson’s administration has hurt “business” generally; it is a sore trial today to a certain kind of business man in Cleveland; and the results of the fight against this—this “socialist-anarchist-nihilist” (as Hanna called Johnson) has upset the charters of all the cities in Ohio and reversed the judicial policy of the state courts. Next to the “wants” of Mr. Hanna, nothing has had such an influence on the politics,

government, and “business” interests of Ohio as the policy of the mayor of Cleveland. Yet Cleveland re-elected Mayor Johnson. There is something good in Cleveland and Tom L. Johnson. Good? It seems to me that Tom Johnson is the best mayor of the best-governed city in the United States. This is no snap judgment. The first time I went to Cleveland, on the same trip that took me to Cox and Cincinnati, I knew all about Tom Johnson. He was a dangerous theorist with a dangerous ambition; that was the impression the System had spread of him in New York; and all I had to do was to prove it. Since, though mayor, he was the head of the actual government of the city, I called on him. His office was full, and it was a shock to my prejudice to watch this big jolly man do business—attention, reflection, and a question; a decision, a laugh; next. And so it went. But I wasn’t to be fooled. When my turn came, I asked him what his ambition was? He laughed.

“My ambition,” he said “is to make Cleveland the first American city to get good government.” That was amusing, and he saw my skepticism, and it amused him. “And not only that,” he added, with a sober impulse of his tremendous energy. “I’d like to make it not only the first to get good government; I’d like to make it prove things, prove good government possible, prove municipal ownership possible, prove anything is possible that any community of American citizens cares to try to do.”

There was something interesting and intelligent about that. I often had wondered why all our leading citizens sought the same thing, money-power; why didn’t some of them pursue some other end; why didn’t someone seek the everlasting fame that would come to the man who first should achieve good municipal government? But I knew Johnson too well to be taken in by his “ambition.” I pried around a little. If a city is corrupt, there are signs of graft about it. The pavements show it and the police on patrol; reporters and certain kinds of businessmen will give you the rumors of it. Cleveland showed none of these signs, so I went away baffled to give Tom Johnson time to show what he was after. And, sure enough, the next time I visited Cleveland the mayor whose ambition it was to give his city good government was running for governor of Ohio! Unfortunately for my prejudice, however, my experience with Folk in St. Louis, with the reformers in Chicago, with reform in all cities, had taught me that no man can finish a municipal reform job without going to the state. Moreover, I had come to regard office-seeking as no worse a crime in a reformer than in a grafter; on the contrary it had occurred to me that one way to beat the grafting system was to promote honest men for giving good government, as the System (Hanna’s, for instance) promotes corrupt men for corrupting government. The question still was as to the goodness of Tom Johnson’s government. A year ago last winter, after a month of search, I was convinced that there was no graft worth speaking of in Cleveland; certainly if I had tried to make out a case of bad government against Tom Johnson, I should have made myself ridiculous. But how, in a brief space, is one to prove good government?

The best department in this best government is that of the law. Newton D. Baker, the head of it, is clear, able, and, best of all, fair. He has directed all the many obnoxious litigations for the city against “business,” and yet “businessmen” sneer at Johnson and all his men, except Baker, because while he fights for the city he “fights fair,” they say. But how is this to be shown? All I can say is: Ask any Clevelander about Newton D. Baker.

Mayor Johnson wanted to make his water-works prove that municipal operation was good. It was a political dive when he was elected, and the contractors for a water tunnel to reach far out into the lake had wrecked the job at both ends and given it up as hopeless. The mayor appointed Professor Edward W. Bemis superintendent. There was a howl from the party, for Bemis hailed from another state and had no politics, but Johnson stood his ground while the

“foreigner” threw out Republicans and Democrats alike, Protestants and Catholics; put in men without regard to politics; reorganized the department on a business basis; installed meters against another outcry; saved waste; reduced expenses to city and consumer alike, and altogether established a system that did prove things. Furthermore, the city completed that water tunnel. My colleague, Mr. Adams, said Cleveland water was not pure, but that meant either that the tunnel should reach farther out in the lake or that a filtration plant is needed. The Waterworks Department certainly proves that a man like Bemis, backed by a man like Johnson, backed by a citizenship like Cleveland’s, can run its waterworks better than a private company. But this is only my assertion; ask any Clevelander if it isn’t true.

The Police Department caused trouble at first. Tom Johnson is not interested in the police as a New York reformer would be, but there is but one man in this country who has solved the police problem more satisfactorily. The mayor, after some patient experiments, found on the force a junior officer who struck him as honest, able, and full of nerve. He made him chief of police. That caused more bitter feeling, for Chief Kohler is a Republican. Kohler cared, Johnson didn’t. Kohler declared he “wasn’t looking for trouble” and didn’t want the place. “I wouldn’t have given it to you, if you did,” said the mayor, and he gave commands. Chief Kohler obeyed the mayor’s orders. There is absolutely no graft among the Cleveland police that I could find, and, without any alliance with criminals, this young man handles his criminal problem. Mayor Johnson is a good judge of men, and Cleveland has the best chief of police that I have met so far.

One day a builder stopped me in the street to complain about the Building Department. Certain plans had been held up for three days, he said. That sounded like New York. “What for—graft?” I asked. “Oh, no,” he said, “they excused the delay by saying that the head of the department had bought a pair of shoes that hurt his feet. But the man isn’t up to his work, and Johnson won’t do anything about it.” Think of a complaint like that in your city. This builder was perfectly right; but before I left the town he said he and a committee had gone to the mayor, and I happened to hear several cabinet discussions of a rather thorough-going reorganization.

Mr. Adams says the Health Department is weak, and a remark of the mayor to me confirmed this criticism, and, perhaps, explained the condition. Mr. Johnson said he never had been able to understand the workings of the Health Department; he was an ex-officio member of the board, but couldn’t get interested in its doings. He has to be interested to do good work, and his interests are pretty wide; but sanitary science marks one of his limitations. Stealing is within his limits. A paving-brick combine that interested him when he came into office was broken up in a clever way, and the Public Works Department was turned over to a Republican, W. J. Springbom, who had proved his honesty and capacity in the city council. The efficiency and correctness of Mr. Springbom I never heard disputed. And the kindness and humanity of Harris R. Cooley, the director of charities and correction, will not be denied. The really remarkable results achieved under this gentle clergyman at the city prison and at Cleveland’s Boyville, a farm in the country where “bad boys” are proved to be the best boys in the slums—these works certainly are of good government. So with the parks. The rich men of the city had provided a beautiful, though broken, circle of parks, but they were only decorative till Johnson threw them open to the public. He ordered away the “Keep off the grass” signs, and the Park Department, by games and competitions for prizes, by winter sports and summer music, has taught the people of Cleveland to go out and use their parks. There has been some protest at this policy, but a sight of those parks in use makes the opposition seem mean. Moreover, the city has established playgrounds, and skating-rinks on public ground and in vacant private lots, and the police say these sports lighten police work in their neighborhood.

But this is not a third of the “proof” I gathered of good government in Cleveland, and it isn’t the best proof, either. The best evidence of the “goodness” of this government is the spirit of the men in it. They like their work; they like to talk about their work; theirs is a sense of pride and preoccupation such as I have never felt in any other American municipal government. The members of the administration are of all classes, but they get together, they and their wives, and they talk shop, shop, shop. The mayor’s levees are the most popular. Everybody goes there, evenings and Sundays, and it is Cleveland, Cleveland, Cleveland, till an outsider is bored to death. Say what you will, pick flaws as you may and as I could, Tom Johnson has proved what I never heard him say he hoped to prove: He has proved that it can be made a joy to serve one’s city.

Isn’t this good? Isn’t this what we mean by “good government”? There are men in Cleveland, and in Ohio, and in the United States, who say it is not good. They hate and they fear Tom Johnson and all his works. Why? They say he is a politician. I don’t think he is, not a good one, but I don’t care. And neither do his critics care: Hanna was a politician, and so are Cox and Foraker, and Johnson’s critics do not mind that in them. But they say he is not sincere, that he does the good he does to serve his own selfish ends. Hanna did the evil he did for selfish ends, and Tom Johnson’s enemies were Mark Hanna’s friends. Would they ask if Hanna was sincere, and Cox, and Foraker? But Johnson was a business man, and his old business associates say that while he was in business he was a corrupter of politics. This is true. Mr. Johnson denies it, but let us examine the facts and the denial.

### *The Truth About Tom Johnson*

Tom Johnson was a big business man; there is no denying that; he succeeded; he is rich. And his business was big business, street railways and steel. He was in street railways before he was twenty-one, and he operated in many parts of the country, Indianapolis, Cleveland, Detroit, Brooklyn. In Cleveland he measured himself with Hanna and beat him. I said earlier in this sketch that Hanna was our man of brains, not mind. Johnson has a mind; his brain is no mere muscle; it thinks. He discovered at Indianapolis a principle of street-railway operation. Most street-car lines run from the business center of the city out to the residence districts. They follow the heavy traffic, downtown to work in the morning, uptown home in the evening. Mr. Johnson believed that if he could run a continuous line across town he would catch not only the morning and evening crowds, but the all-day cross-town traffic. He did. This may seem a simple, obvious observation, but as we have noted so often, business men are not so great as they think they are, even at business. They are more often smart and knowing than wise and intelligent, and—well, it was the application of this simple principle that enabled Tom Johnson to come into Cleveland on a little jerk-water horse-car line and go out on the “Big Con,” while Mark Hanna was struggling behind with his “Little Con.”

But, because Hanna was so simply instinctive, we can excuse many of his evil practices; he didn’t know any better. And because Tom Johnson understands things, we can pin him to facts. What are the facts? He says he bought his franchises, not from councils, but from private and corporate owners of them. Yes, but he got extensions and other privileges from cities. How? He declares that he never bribed anybody, directly or indirectly. Very well, but Mr. Johnson says that he contributed to campaign funds, that he contributed to the funds of both parties when he had business to do, and he admits that he did this to influence votes on his business. And he adds, with a candor as honest as Hanna’s ever was, “I understand now that that is just as corrupt and

dangerous as cash bribery." It is worse. It is systematic. And Mr. Johnson understands what I mean by that. Mr. Johnson understands what perfect honesty is. He says Horace Andrews has it, and to prove it he told me once a story which illustrates perfectly the difference between himself and Hanna and Andrews. Both street-railway combinations wanted something from the city. Hanna went ahead and bought it; the cost was \$40,000. Then Hanna thought the "Big Con" ought to pay its share, and the "Big Con" directors, Johnson included, were willing. But Andrews refused absolutely, as his custom was. "Then," said Mr. Johnson, "I discovered that about \$20,000 of that \$40,000 was for legitimate expenses, so I said to Andrews: 'Here, Horace, is a way out of this. We can pay the honest half of that bill and let Hanna foot the other half.' But Andrews said that that was a flimsy subterfuge, and, of course, he was right." So I concluded that while Mr. Johnson had scruples unknown to the Hannas, he was willing to do things that Horace Andrews wouldn't do. In brief, Tom Johnson, in business, did what was necessary to the furtherance of his business.

But the men who wanted to make Hanna president, and who deal now with Cox and Foraker, Murphy and Platt and Aldrich—the clients and friends of such as these cannot tell me that they hate Johnson for the evil he may have done as a business man in politics. There is something back of all their charges. What is it? I think we are close now to a truth that we must see plainly if we are to understand why our governments, city, state, and national, are corrupt, and, also, why our reforms fail so regularly.

Tom Johnson is the "business man for mayor" that businessmen have been prophesying so long must come along some day to give us a "good business administration of a city government." Now that he has come, business hates him because he has given Cleveland not only good government, but representative government; not only clean streets, but clean tax lists; he has stopped not only blackmail, but bribery; he tackled not only low-down petty police and political graft, but high-toned, big, respectable, business graft, both legitimate and illegitimate. Tom Johnson is a reformed business man. His reform began at home; he reformed himself first, then he undertook political reform; and his political reform began with the reform of his own class. And that is Tom Johnson's sin.

### *Tom Johnson's Story*

One day, at the height of his money-making career, the newsboy on a train offered him a copy of Henry George's "Social Problems." He was pushing it away, when the conductor, happening to pass, said: "That's a book you ought to read, Mr. Johnson." So he took it, read it; it threw a flood of light, especially upon his business; and he read more of Henry George, met the man, became a disciple, and managed one of the great Single-Taxer's political campaigns. Convinced of the injustice of privileges, Mr. Johnson did not quit turning privileges into money; he was twitted on the point while he was a member of Congress in 1891; and his answer shows how he excused himself. Mr. Johnson moved that the duty on steel rails be removed. Mr. Dalzell, the Republican leader, interrupted Johnson to ask him if he, a manufacturer of steel rails, was not a beneficiary of the duty on them. Johnson said he was; that he got a higher price for his rails because of that duty; but that, as a member of Congress, he represented not himself, nor his mill, nor his stockholders, but his constituents; and that as a free trader he wished to commence his reforms along the line in which he was interested. So he continued his motion to put steel rails on the free list. In other words his position was that, while as a business man he would take advantage of the favoritism of his government, as a citizen and as a politician he would fight all privileges as economically unjust. Another amusing incident occurred at Detroit.

As the manager of the streetcar system, Johnson was seeking from the city a double-track privilege. Mayor Pingree was against the grant, "but," said Mr. Johnson, "Pingree didn't know why; he came to me and said he knew there was something the matter with the ordinance, and wouldn't I tell him what it was that was wrong? I laughed. I said I wouldn't tell him what he wanted to know, but I would tell him this much: 'If,' I said, 'I had the say for the city in this thing, I'd see Tom Johnson in hell before I'd let him have it.'" When the hearing was held, Pingree couldn't make his position very clear; he tried to, hesitated, and then he blurted out that he didn't understand the ordinance, but he pointed at Johnson and he said: "But I can tell you this. Tom Johnson there told me that if he was in our places he'd see Tom Johnson in hell before he'd grant it." Everybody looked at Johnson, who laughed heartily. "Yes, I did say that," he admitted, "but it is a dirty trick to tell it on me."

So he knew what he was about in business, but he kept at it till he had made his money. Then, when some men go in for yachting, or the Senate, and give money to charity and churches, colleges and libraries, Tom Johnson gave himself and his money to politics, to municipal reform as the mayor of Cleveland. And as a mayor he knew what he was about.

His platform as a candidate was equal taxation and "three-cent fares with universal transfers" on the street railways; "good" government was a side issue; he threw that in. His idea was to make that city government represent and serve all its people. That doesn't sound bad, but applied by an expert big business man, who knew just where the System lay and who reached for it with ability and humor, Mayor Johnson's simple idea had mixed and terrible consequences.

His first move was at the inequalities and favoritism of the tax lists. He had Peter Witt organize a Tax School. Peter Witt loved the work. It consisted in finding out the assessments of real estate, block by block, or ward by ward. Great maps were made, and on these each piece of property was plotted, and in each plot Peter Witt wrote the assessment on it. You can imagine the result. But when this was done, Peter Witt asked all the property owners to come together to see that result, and you can imagine the effect of this "first view." There were inequalities, and, with the property owner by to agree, they were straightened out against the next year. Now wasn't that a good thing to do? No. The System got out an injunction and stopped the "unlawful" expenditures on the Tax School.

The next reach, at about the same time, was for the undervaluation of steam railroads. Now the railroads in Ohio had long since got through corrupting the state. As we have seen everywhere, when the railroads have had all they want out of the state in the way of privileges they keep up only enough steam to keep the government corrupt. They are there, though you can't always see them. Mayor Johnson could see them. He, Professor Bemis and, later, Carl Nau, an expert accountant, produced figures showing the gross and ridiculous undervaluation of railroad property as compared with other property in the state and with railroad property in other states. These figures, laid before the auditors by the mayor and his assistant, produced no results. Railroads owned the boards. Detectives who shadowed the auditors found that all the auditors traveled on passes and wined and dined with the railway counsel. Mr. Johnson appealed from the local to the state Board of Equalization, but that board also refused to act. Mayor Johnson appealed next to the Supreme Court to compel the state board to act; the court held that the legislature alone could remedy the evil. Mayor Johnson went to the legislature of 1902, and the legislature adjourned without action. It was not till 1903 that the state tax on railroads was increased from one-half of one to one per cent, on the gross receipts, just about doubling the tax, and then only with railroad consent and in fear of "socialistic" agitation.

Another simultaneous move was “against” the local public utilities companies. The mayor appoints the City Board of Equalization; and Johnson’s board added \$18,000,000 to the tax valuation of the street-railway and lighting companies. Now it was the System’s turn to appeal. They went to the state auditor, and they did not go in vain. The state Board of Tax Remission remitted, without any given reason, the entire increase, and the legislature empowered the Republican county auditor of Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) to destroy the City Board. Johnson appealed to the Common Pleas Court to restore his board’s valuation; denied; to the Circuit Court; denied. Meanwhile, however, the citizens were interested, and they elected Robert C. Wright (Dem.) county auditor over Craig (Rep.). Now the biggest item in this fight was a claim by Johnson for \$2,000,000 back taxes from the public service corporations, and Wright was to collect it. When he entered his office he found Craig had settled secretly with the companies for \$113,000. And when Wright began to investigate the returns the state auditor ordered him off. Wright proceeded, nevertheless; he added back values amounting to \$1,858,000; the state board remitted them, and the case was taken into court, where it still is pending. As in the case of the railroads, in spite of this succession of defeats, the public service people have consented to increased assessments from \$3,520,245, in 1900, to \$7,814,120, in 1904.

### *Judicial Anarchy of Big Business*

All these, however, were mere skirmishes around the great central fight which raged over “three-cent fares and universal transfers.” The street railways wouldn’t hear of it. Horace Andrews said they couldn’t live; Johnson said they could; Hanna, who had been calling Johnson a socialist, now added “anarchist-nihilist.” I believe Horace Andrews has proved to Johnson since that universal transfers are not practicable in so large a city, but the mayor still believes in three-cent fares, and when the railways showed no disposition to budge, he and the city council established routes for competing three-cent lines and, advertising for bids, induced street-railway men from out of town to bid. Now, business men apply such methods to one another, and they are all right then; but when this ex-street-railway magnate used them in the interest of a city, Big Business went mad. The first move was made by Johnson on December 9, 1901. Two days later, the state system, through Attorney General Sheets, brought an ouster suit against the City of Cleveland, a suit, that is, to oust the whole administration. This sounds “socialistic-anarchistic-nihilistic,” but it wasn’t; it was Systematic. There was a run on Hanna’s “Savings Bank,” as he called his street railway, and something had to be done to save it. And something was done. On June 26 the Supreme Court of the state of Ohio ousted the Board of Control of Cleveland. Why? It had been created by special legislation. But all the charters of all the cities in Ohio were creations of special legislation, and the same court had upheld such special legislation from time immemorial. No matter. That court, to check Tom Johnson and help the Hannas, did declare unconstitutional all the city charters in Ohio. Oh, it was arranged so that the cities could do business, all but one; but that exception points to the whole moral of this supreme act of the corrupt, misrepresentative System that rules the United States today. The exception was Cleveland; Cleveland could not grant, or consider granting, any more franchises.

### *Going to Cincinnati Again*



But “they” were not through, not yet. Having torn down, they—and by “they” I mean the Hannas, the public-service corporations and their political machinery, their banks and their courts—they had to build up something in the place of the ruin. They had to pass a general act giving one and the same city charter to all the cities in Ohio. Where did they go for a model? They went to Cincinnati.

Let’s run down there again to see what Cox has done since 1898 to make Cincinnati the model Ohio city. He has “Russianized” it. His voting subjects are all down on a card catalogue, they and their children and all their business, and he lets them know it. The Democratic Party is gone. Cox has all the patronage, city, county, state and federal, so the Democratic grafters are in Cox’s Republican Club. That club contains so many former Democrats that “Lewie” Bernard, John R. McLean’s political agent, says, happily, that he is waiting for a majority, to turn it into a Democratic club. And “Lewie” Bernard’s machine remnant is in touch with Cox when “John,” as Cox calls McLean, doesn’t want anything, either office or revenge. Conventions are held, and Cox plans them in detail. If he has been hearing mutterings among his people about the boss, he is very ostentatious in dictation; otherwise he sits in his favorite beer hall and sends in to those of his delegates whom he wishes to honor slips containing the motions and nominations each is to make. But there must be no nominating speeches. “Takes time; all foolishness; obey orders and get done.” He picks ward leaders, and they deliver the votes. The citizens have no choice of parties, but they must get out and vote. Cox is good to some of them. If they knuckle under, he puts respectable men up for the school board. He has little use for schools; not much graft in them; except to cut down their appropriations in favor of fatter departments, and as a place to try respectable men. If these take orders on the school board, Cox tries them higher up, and he has aplenty. The press is not free. The *Post* and the *Citizens’ Bulletin*, the last a weekly organ of the smallest but one of the most enduring groups of reformers in America—these are the only papers that speak out honestly for the public interest. Official advertising, offices for the editors, public-service stock and political prospects for the owners, hold down the rest. It is terrible. The city is all one great graft; Cox’s System is the most perfect thing of the kind in this country, and he is proud of it.

“What you think of it?” he asked, when I had finished and was taking leave.

“Pretty good,” I said.

“Pretty —!” He was too disgusted to finish. “Best you ever saw,” he retorted, firmly.

“Well, I can’t tell,” I said. “My criterion for a graft organization is, How few divide the graft? How many divide it here?”

“Ain’t no graft,” he grumbled.

“Then it’s a mighty poor thing.”

He pondered a moment. Then, “How many do you say divides up here?”

“Three at least,” I said. “You and Garry Herman and Rud Hynicka.”

“Ugh!” he grunted, scornfully, and, wagging one finger slowly before my face, he said: “There’s only one divides up here.”

Of course, that isn’t true. He must mean only political graft, the campaign fund, police blackmail, contracts, etc., etc., and even that goes partly to others. Cox admits owning two millions, but some of his followers are very rich also. Cox wouldn’t lie about a point like that; but he is growing vain and hates to see other men stand up like men and to hear them admired. They tell how once, in a beer hall, when Herman and Hynicka, his two chief lieutenants, and some others, were talking to some outsiders quite like free, independent men, Cox, who had been

poring over his beer, broke in hoarsely, "But when I whistle, you dogs come out of your holes, don't you?" They were still. "Don't you, Garry?" the master repeated. "That's right," said Garry.

But there is lots of graft besides political graft in Cincinnati, bankers' and business men's graft. Cox is reaching for that, too. Some Cleveland and Cincinnati financiers organized a trust company in Cincinnati, and they took Cox in for his pull and the public moneys he could have deposited there. A quarrel arose, and Cox, taking one side, told the others to buy or sell. They sold, of course, and Cox, becoming president, wrote a letter to officeholders, inviting them to use his bank; the letter to school teachers was published. Certain financiers of Cleveland and Cincinnati got up a scheme to take over the Miami and Erie Canal. They gave Cox stock for Cox's pull on the legislature, and his letter to the legislators was published. The bill was beaten; business men all along the canal were grafting the water for power, and they fought for their graft. The company had floated its stock and bonds, and the failure of the legislature threw the "canal scandal" into a receivership. Some of the financiers are in trouble, but Cox is safe, and the scheme was to go through next year. Cox was in the scheme to sell or "lease" the Cincinnati Southern, the only steam railroad under municipal ownership. Leading citizens of Cincinnati concocted this grab, but the Germans beat it; and, though it went through later, the city got much better terms. So, when Cox says only one divides the graft in Cincinnati he probably means that one man can dispose as he will of all of it, police, political, and financial, as the examples cited indicate, but he has to let all sorts of men in on it. And he does. And that is his best hold on the graft. They talk in Cincinnati, as they do in Philadelphia, of apathy. Apathy! Apathy is corruption. Cincinnati and Philadelphia are not asleep; they are awake, alive. The life is like that in a dead horse, but it is busy and it is contented. If the commanding men, of all the natural groupings of society, were not interested in graft, no city would put up with what satisfies Cincinnati. For Cincinnati is not unhappy. Men like Elliot H. Pendleton, Rufus B. Smith, and a dozen others, are eating their hearts out with impotent rage, but as for the rest—

The rest are in it for profit or—fear. The bums get free soup; the petty criminals "get off" in court; the plain people or their relatives get jobs or a picnic or a friendly greeting; the Germans get their beer whenever they want it; the neighborhood and ward leaders get offices and graft; "good" Democrats get their share of both; shopkeepers sell to the city or to politicians or they break petty ordinances; the lawyers get cases, and they tell me that the reputation of the bench is such that clients seek lawyers for their standing, not at the bar, but with the ring; the banks get public deposits and license to do business; the public utility companies get franchises and "no regulation"; financiers get canals, etc. (they "get blackmailed," too, but they can do "business" by "dividing up"); property owners get low assessments, or high; anybody can get anything in reason, by standing in. And anybody who doesn't "stand in," or "stand by," gets "nothing but trouble." And there is the point that pricks deepest in Cincinnati. Cox can punish; he does punish, not with physical cruelty, as a czar may, but by petty annoyances and "trouble," and political and business ostracism. The reign of Cox is a reign of fear. The experience that made my visits there a personal humiliation was the spectacle I saw of men who were being punished; who wanted to cry out; who sent for me to tell me facts that they knew and suffered and hated; and these men, after leading me into their back offices and closing the door, dared not speak. It was rumored that I was shadowed, and that made them afraid. Afraid of what? They were afraid of their government, of their czar, of George Cox, who is not afraid of them, or of you, or of me. Cox is a man, we are American citizens, and Cincinnati has proved to Cox that Americans can be reduced to craven cowards.

### *Russianization of Ohio*

And Ohio proves that the kind of men that rule us would be willing to see us all Russianized like this. When, in the fall of 1902, the legislature of Ohio met in special session to adopt one uniform municipal code for all the cities of the state, the men who dominated that state and its legislature—Hanna, Foraker, Cox, Dick, and the rest—sent to Cincinnati for their bill. Now, I don't believe that charters make governments good or bad; I believe the character of the people of Cincinnati makes Cincinnati what it is; and I believe the citizenship of Cleveland makes Cleveland what it is. But the federal plan of concentrated power and responsibility, on which the charter of Cleveland was drawn, helped her citizens to rule themselves, and the so-called board plan of scattered irresponsibility which has been built up in Cincinnati helped Cox to rule Cincinnati. At any rate, the citizens of each place think so, and so do the grafters, big and little. And, with the citizens of both these cities and of the other cities protesting, the big grafters who ruled Ohio took from Cox's men, who drew it, a code modeled on the Cincinnati board plan; and they made their legislature adopt it for Cleveland and Ohio!

For the Cleveland of Tom Johnson and the Ohio of Hanna, what does it all mean? It means what Hanna means. Hanna is dead, but the spirit of Hanna lives. What does Hanna mean? Unless I have failed to do that man full justice, I have shown that Hanna meant no evil. He was not a bad man. He was the kind of American we all like, the kind that, wanting something, goes after it, fighting, destroying, hurting other men, and, if necessary, corrupting and undermining the government and American institutions, but—winning. They do not mean to do harm. Hanna did not mean to injure the government. When he attended that special session he was there not to make the men of Cleveland what the men of Cincinnati are, not to make the government of Cleveland as bad as the government of Cincinnati. He wanted a street-railway franchise; the Cleveland of Tom Johnson wouldn't give him one. He tried to get one from that special session; his control was so absolute that his friends say they had a hard time making the old man understand why a special legislature, called for another purpose, could not give him a perpetual grant to the streets in Cleveland! No, Hanna saw only that down in Cincinnati a business man who wanted a franchise could have one; he might have to pay Cox, but he would get what he wanted in his business. People called Cox a boss, but what of that? He wasn't a "socialist-anarchist-nihilist" like Tom Johnson. Mark Hanna was a good man spoiled by the privileges our government let him steal; he came to think that, not only his franchises were his very own private property, but our government, also.

Now, is it clear why Mayor Johnson came to run for governor of Ohio? He had to. The System, beaten in Cleveland, had retreated to the state, and there, with its legislature, its courts, and its other cities, it was preparing to crush him and conquer Cleveland. Hanna, Cox, and the Cox-McLean Cincinnati "Democrats" beat Johnson that time. They elected a "good" banker, Myron T. Herrick. Poor Governor Herrick! I saw him soon after he entered office. He is affable, but weak; everybody spoke well of him then, and he would have done very well, but they gave him the veto, and then his boss died. Banker-fashion, he tried to please everybody, made incompatible promises, tried to escape, but was caught naked in his weakness, and now everybody is too hard on him—except the System. The System leaders make a wry face, but they found him "safe." He carried out a bargain Hanna had made with the brewers. Without knowing that there was a System, he signed a bill to transfer city elections from the spring to the fall; after telling me that he believed the Cleveland School System was the best in the country, he signed, against the protest of all the earnest educators in the state, a bill which put upon Cleveland and

all the other cities Cincinnati's plan, modified a little, but making possible a big, irresponsible board. Herrick was to be renominated, therefore, and he may be re-elected. The System has a strong hold on Ohio. "We have the fanners always," said one of its leaders. But Ohio will escape.

### *Cleveland or Cincinnati?*

The signs of promise? The boss is dead, the throne is empty, and there is no heir in sight. The people are beginning to see things. Even in Cincinnati (Cox scoffed when I told him so) there is some discontent, and the nucleus of veteran reformers are finding recruits willing to line up against Cox, "just Cox," for a fight, not to throw out the slot machines, not to ameliorate particular evils, but to restore representative government and be free, wholly free. Dayton is bad and glad of it; "we hope to be as 'good' as Cincinnati some day," one of its rulers told me. Southern Ohio is pretty low. But the spirit of the late Mayor Jones lives in Toledo, and though its citizens have to present "petitions in boots" to get it, they do get representative government. And in Cleveland we have, as I write, this spectacle: Two street-railway men. Mayor Johnson, representing the city. President Andrews for his stockholders, negotiating in public for the disposition of the street-railway system. There is no excitement, no bad feeling, no suspicion of boodle or corruption. Some franchises have expired, others are falling in; all must be renewed. Mayor Johnson opposes any renewal except upon terms which will bring to the city two things: First, the removal of the street railways out of politics; second, the benefit, in the form of reduced fares, improved service, or profits, of all that increase of earnings which will come with the natural growth of the city. Mr. Andrews says this is fair, so it is all a question of terms. Mr. Andrews wants par for his stock. Mr. Johnson points to the market price, 78, and offers more—to be fair. But he will not close a deal without a vote of the people.

"And they will be fair," Mayor Johnson told me, and Mr. Andrews said: "Oh, they will be fair."

So the cynics lie who say that capital has to corrupt a democratic government to get a "square deal" from the people. Such men as Horace Andrews, an honest conservative, and Tom Johnson, a patient liberal, could settle Cleveland's street-railway problem, they and the people they both trust. But will they? Their spirit would settle all our political problems. But will it? See now the other side of the picture: Back of Johnson lurk the red radicals, sneering, eager to throw a brick; and back of Andrews sneaks his big stockholder, who also sneers, and, like the anarchist that he is, stands ready to throw—a bribe. And this other spirit, the spirit of the Hannas, who cried "down with the nihilist-anarchist-socialist," and annihilating all city charters, waded through municipal anarchy to the class socialism of Cincinnati, this same spirit was corrupting councilmen in the interest of the lighting company while I was in Cleveland, and it was holding at the state capital a bill to take away from the cities, and give to a state board, the power to deal with all the franchise questions in Ohio, state and country, too.

The forces of evil, beaten in the city, hold the state. The forces of good, winning in Cleveland, fighting in Toledo, hopeful in Cincinnati, to hold their own, must carry Ohio. Ohio—the whole state—has to make the choice, the choice we all have to make: Cleveland or Cincinnati. The Herricks and Dicks and false "Fire Alarms" won't do; we cannot "stand pat." It is the square deal, or bribes and brickbats; Horace Andrews or Mark Hanna; Tom Johnson or George Cox, all over the United States.