

less the zinc consumers of this country are forced by law to pay more for zinc than they can buy it for of other producers. If God enjoys a joke, as some good people think, he must have enjoyed those zinc-tariff prayers. We can hardly conceive, at all events, of his being wrathful at such poor dupes of a plutocratic regime as those preachers. Yet there was room for indignation. Here is a generous God, filling the earth round about Joplin with zinc, and his own worshippers, ignoring the fact that a few land grabbers who call it theirs, and put so high a price on the right to dig that it can't be dug profitably in competition with other zinc deposits, pray God to move Congress to make the digging locally profitable by protecting it from general competition! It surely is to laugh, if it isn't to swear.

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The Chicago Traction "Settlement."

More than eighteen months have passed since J. Pierpont Morgan and his gay crew of stock-jobbing pirates were given a pretty free hand with the traction service of Chicago (pp. 731, 733), and the condition is as bad as ever or worse. Not only is the city tied hand and foot by its "settlement" franchises, so that escape from stock-jobbing exploitation, when the time for it comes, will be almost or quite impossible short of a revolution, but the only excuse for this surrender to Morgan is proving to be the bunco that Mayor Dunne predicted. Good service was to have been immediate. That was the reason given for rushing the franchises through the Council in a suspicious all-night session, and for the strenuous efforts of all concerned on the franchise side to prevent a referendum. Yet service is worse today than ever. This fact has been studiously suppressed by the local newspapers. Every one who suffered knew it, of course, but there was no method of communication whereby the sufferers throughout the city could realize that the grievance was general. Now, however, for some occult reason or another, the Record-Herald—chief organ of the movement of two years ago for surrender to Morgan—has broken out with repeated exposures.

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Here is one quotation from the Record-Herald which testifies at once to the failure of the "settlement" and the disappointment of the newspaper which engineered it. At last this newspaper expresses the indignation of the people whose denunciations it has for months helped to gag. We quote from its issue of the 29th:

The spirit of Charles T. Yerkes still animates the

management of a majority of Chicago's surface and elevated transportation lines. His historic motto, "Make your dividends out of the strap-hangers," still adorns the wall. With creaking, dirty and ill-smelling cars in many sections of the city, overcrowded cars in all parts of it and apologies and general promises about the only satisfaction vouchsafed to those who protest, a climax to the long strain upon public patience came yesterday morning when thousands of passengers on West and Northwest Side surface cars were compelled to walk miles to their work because of a tie-up due to the breaking down of a generator. It was but a repetition of a condition from which the Chicago public has suffered for years and similar in many respects to the situation created only last Wednesday evening, when Oak Park and Northwestern elevated trains and cars on several of the lines of the Chicago City Railway Company were stopped for nearly an hour because of the breakdown of a generator in the plant of the Commonwealth Edison Company. How long will it last and when will the outlay of a nickel mean a ride attended by a measure of comfort instead of a feeling akin to misery? These were the questions asked yesterday by patrons of the carrying corporations. There were promises a-plenty and explanations galore, but in the meantime the strap-hanger remained at his old occupation and the average patron continued to suffer. The Chicago Railways Company was roundly scored for the service which it continues to give in several parts of the city. Only one-third of its rehabilitation work has been completed, and its ramshackle trailers still groan wearily as they are pulled over long stretches of dilapidated roadbed with the crowded passengers wishing that they had not been forced to take the ride.

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Miss Tarbell and Chicago Traction.

The American Magazine for December completes Ida M. Tarbell's articles on "How Chicago Is Finding Herself"—in so far, at any rate, as they relate to the traction question. Miss Tarbell has done so much good historical work that we should find more satisfaction in passing over in silence than in condemning these articles; but the connection of The Public with the episode of which she writes was so intimate that silence on our part might justify an inference that we acquiesce in her summing up of the situation. To go over the matter in detail would require more space than we can give to a subject that has passed out of current controversy, especially as all the important facts may be found in our files, and with ease by means of our page references. It should be said, however, that the spirit of Miss Tarbell's articles is distinctly partisan, and that misstatement and non-statement alike contribute to the general effect. Her implications that the local transportation committee of the City Council was disposed to co-operate with Mayor Dunne, until he denounced the Council in his speech at

the Jefferson Club's farewell banquet to Bryan, are specimens of misstatement; her silence about the indefensible rushing through of the "settlement" franchises at an all-night session of the City Council, is a specimen of misleading non-statement. While her laudations of Walter L. Fisher do not overstep the bounds of legitimate partisanship, and in very many respects appeal strongly to our own sympathy, her correlative condemnations of Mayor Dunne do overstep the bounds of impartial criticism. The unfair attitude toward Mayor Dunne, of which those condemnations are examples, is quite in harmony with the spirit of the whole. As a bit of fiction founded on fact, Miss Tarbell's articles would be suggestive and interesting, but as history they misrepresent and mislead. In making this criticism we intend no reflection upon her abilities or good faith as a historian, for the circumstances were not so simple as to be readily grasped by any investigator, however able and fair minded; but if she had been deputed to make a partisan "write-up," and had accepted the commission—something which we should not willingly regard as thinkable—she could hardly have made a sorrier failure in historical balance.

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Municipal Failures in Electric Lighting.

At the present moment Chicago is referred to by the plutocratic press as having made a failure of municipal electric lighting. It isn't true. But that makes no difference; it's "a good enough Morgan" till after the grab. The misrepresentation means no more than that the Commonwealth-Edison Company, which is "in cahoots" with the Busse-Sullivan bi-partisan machine, wants a monopoly contract to furnish all the electric power for the city of Chicago. The first step necessary to that end was some kind of deceitful report showing that municipal service is expensive. Hence this misrepresentation which is being exploited all over the country. These reports of municipal failure are usually made in behalf of private monopolies and not in the public interest. The Chicago instance is a case in point.

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Russian Extradition.

It is little wonder that Raymond Robins lifted his audience to the highest pitch of enthusiasm at the political refugee defense meeting in Chicago on the 29th, when he said:

There is a very powerful influence in this country that would desire the extradition to Russia of Rudovitz. These are individual bankers that own bonds

of the Russian government floated in this free land of ours. I hope that the bankers in this country when they clip the coupons of their Russian bonds realize that they are clipping the blood and the earnings of thousands of human beings suffering under the bloody despotism of the Czar. Every man in Russia who is not a revolutionist is a traitor to the cause of human freedom, and no man in America is in sympathy with the Czar of Russia who is not also a traitor to human freedom. I denounce that government and denounce that Czar in the language of one of Russia's greatest men, Tolstoy, who denounced Russian rule as "a government by execution and murder."

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Ex-Mayor Dunne, who presided on this occasion, was right in presenting the matter judicially. After saying that—

Oppression is most often the mother of insurrection and rebellion, and the child is always bathed in blood. This country had such a bloody birth, and the life of many a tory and rebel was snuffed out in open battle. We have read in recent years and months of such insurrections and revolts in Russia. With the right or wrong of these insurrections we have naught to do, but we know that lives have been numerous sacrificed on both sides of the controversy. These catastrophes were political homicides incidental to internecine warfare. We deplore and regret them, but after the smoke of the conflict has cleared away those who have fled from the fields of death and escaped to our shores should be allowed, under the policy which prevails among progressive nations, the right of sanctuary and safe-keeping—

he continued:

I know little of the merits of the Rudovitz case. If he be charged with the commission of a political offense he should not be extradited. If he be charged in good faith with the commission of a non-political crime of heinous character he should be extradited, but if he is charged with the commission of a non-political crime with the sinister design of getting him into the custody of the Russian government so as to enable it to wreak vengeance upon him because of a political crime, this government should firmly refuse to be a party to such duplicity.

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But while that distinction which Mayor Dunne made between extradition for crime and extradition for political vengeance is perfectly sound, as applied to civilized governments, it may be fairly questioned with reference to Russia under its present uncivilized government. We behold in these Russian extradition cases what seems like a systematic effort to bring our government into cooperation with the oligarchy of Russia in a bloody crusade against patriotic Russians. We are asked to give up to the merciless and lawless government of the Czar men whose offenses are that they have defied its despotic authority and resisted its licensed assassins. What matters it that this is de-