

PART III.—Satan's Invisible World Displayed.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOODLERS AND THE BOODLED.

There is a story told of one of the early Caliphs which may well be recalled in this connection. When he succeeded to the dominion of the Mussulman world, he was asked by one of his friends, "Give me some money out of the public treasury." The Caliph looked at his friend in amazement and said, "What do you mean? You want some money out of the public treasury?" "Yes," replied his friend. "I have been your friend and would like some reward." The Caliph answered, "Come to me at sundown and I will help you to some money." His friend went away feeling that he had done well and that the Caliph had not forgotten that "to the victors belong the spoils." He came around that night punctually and found the Caliph in disguise awaiting him. He was provided with a pickaxe, a dark lantern and a spade. His friend was surprised and said, "I thought you were going to give me some money." "I said I would help you to get it," said the Caliph, "but you must also help me." So they crept through the by-streets until they came to the house of one of the wealthiest men in the city. "Now," said the Caliph, "Stop! I know where this man keeps his treasure chest. It is just on the other side of this wall, and if we only work steadily we shall be able to make a hole through the wall and you will be able to help yourself to the money." The man looked at the Caliph aghast and said: "Do you take me for a thief?" "Why," he replied, "I thought you said you wanted

some money." "But," said his friend, "it was public money I wanted." "Then," said the Caliph, "when you and I stand before the judgment seat of Allah, whether do you think it will be easier, for us to listen to the reproaches of one man whom we have robbed or to those of all the millions of the Faithful, whose money you propose to take?"

This saying of the Moslem Caliph, with his archaic ideas of the responsibility of man to his Maker, not merely for his dealings with the individual, but still more for his dealings with the community, was far in advance of the morality of the City Hall of Chicago. It is perhaps too much to say that Chicago is and has been governed upon a system of corruption, but whoever did make that statement would not have much difficulty in making out a very strong *prima facie* case in support of his assertion. The sovereign people may govern Chicago in theory: as a matter of fact King Boodle is monarch of all he surveys. His domination is practically undisputed, and the recognition of its existence is the basis of the limitations which are placed upon the taxing powers of the City Council. It being expected as a fundamental principle that the Aldermen will steal, the longer-headed, well-to-do citizens, acting under the guidance of Mr. Medill, the editor and proprietor of *The Tribune*, then Mayor of Chicago, limited the taxing powers of the city of Chicago to two per cent of the assessed value of realty and personalty of the city. In order to limit still further the amount of money liable to be stolen by the representatives of the people, they elaborated the most extraordinary system of assessment that ever bewildered a financier or shocked a moralist. All this was not done to any desire on the part of the reputable citizens to place their city in leading-strings, but simply because they knew by experience that the rule of King Boodle would be supreme, and the members of the Council, whether Republican or Democrat, could equally be relied upon to act as his venal courtiers.

As a result of these expedients, which so severely limited the financial resources of the city, the Aldermen were driven to forage for plunder in other fields. Unfortunately they were only too numerous and the pastures to be obtained lay in tempting profusion on every side. The powers of the city, although strictly limited in the levying of taxes, are almost unlimited in relation to the common property of the city. The streets, for instance, have furnished an estate of incalculable value, which could be sold wholesale or retail to the highest bidder. This estate was much greater than might appear at first sight. For, as it is said of freehold property, the owner possesses not only the surface of the ground, but all that lies between it and the stars on the one hand, and the molten core of the earth on the other. No one who proposes to cross the street in the air, either by an elevated railway or with telegraph or telephone wires or electric light wires, or any one who proposes to construct a balcony or bay-window overshadowing the roadway, is trespassing on the city's property. The surface of the streets of course affords an almost inexhaustible field for revenue. There is the right to lay down the street railways, and to permit railway corporations to cross the street or to run down a street, together with the right to make side tracks and connections with wharves and warehouses communicating with the streets,* to say nothing of the right to cumber the sidewalk with merchandise or advertising matter. All of these things of course belong to the city by right of its ownership in the streets. Below the surface it is the same thing. No conduit can be made for electric light wires, for gas or water pipes, for pneumatic tubes, to say nothing of tunnels for underground railways or subways, without infringing the right of the city in its streets.

*The permit for a switch track or the vacation of a strip of alley sometimes means more than a year's salary. There is said to be a recognized schedule of prices.

Switch track to a coal-yard.....	\$1,000
Switch track to a brewery.....	\$2,500

In the year 1892 the number of miles of streets was reported at over 2,000 miles. These streets are a portion of the civic domain, but only a portion. There are besides great portions of the city which belong to the Board of Education. These are what are called the school sections, which are set apart for educational purposes. In the whole of Chicago, the area of which is 180 square miles, there were originally eleven square miles held in trust for the purpose of defraying the cost of education of the people.

These two reserves, the streets and the school sections, constitute a civic estate of almost incalculable value. No multi-millionaire would hesitate a moment to abandon his possessions if he could exchange them for the real estate originally devoted to education or the right of ownership in the streets. Unfortunately this immense estate, was left to the uncovenanted mercies of the city fathers, in the case of the streets, and to the Education Board in the case of the school sections.

The greatest part of the educational estate in the city has long been frittered away. Instead of allowing the space as a sacred trust to be retained or let out on lease until such time as their real value could be utilized, the thriftless and corrupt authorities jobbed away section after section until only a beggarly remnant remained, which last year only yielded a rental of about a quarter of a million dollars. The *Tribune* building stands upon one lot which has escaped the general scramble. McVicker's Theater is another prominent building which occupies a school section, and here and there throughout the city there are still parcels of property which are still held for their original purpose. One of these, lying on the outskirts, was saved from sharing the general fate by the action of a public-spirited young school teacher. Any proposal to sell the school land must be approved by a plebiscite of the citizens, but as a rule the public was befooled and the trustees did just as they liked. On this occa-

sion, however, the job was frustrated by the teacher, who, hearing of the corrupt deal, quietly whipped up a contingent of citizens and when the matter came to the poll the scheme was voted down. The result is that the tract of land which would have been sold for a few hundred dollars is now worth as many thousands. Unfortunately there was not a young teacher to stand in the gap in other cases and now there is but a miserable remainder of what was formerly a magnificent estate left in the hands of the Board of Education.

Even this is by no means made the most of. On the day when the people of Chicago wake up and decide to look after their own property they will find that they will be able to realize a much greater revenue than they do at present from the school sections. One section was made over almost bodily to the railways for use as railway tracks at a mere nominal figure. A searching inquiry into the present status of the school sections, with full particulars as to the terms on which they are held by the present occupants, would suggest many lines of inquiry that might be profitably pressed home.

It is not, however, with the school sections that I propose to deal, but rather with that other great urban estate, the streets of Chicago. The streets cannot be sold in small pieces so that the purchaser can take them away in his pocket. All that the city can part with is the right of way; but this right of way, whether over, on or under the streets, is a property the net value of which cannot be valued at less than \$5,000,000 a year, while it might very easily amount to twice or three times that sum. This estate yields \$5,000,000 a year in hard cash, not one penny of which would be earned except for the permission to use the streets. As this revenue, moreover, represents surplus profits, after paying all working expenses and the capital involved in the construction and maintenance of the plant, this represents the sum available for the purposes of boodling. Boodling is a euphemism signifying the corrupt disposal of

public property by the representatives of the people in return for price paid not to the public but to their dishonest representatives. It would have been cheaper for the city of Chicago to have paid every one of her Aldermen \$10,000 a year, if by such payment the city could have secured honest servants, than to have turned a pack of hungry Aldermen loose on the city estate with a miserable allowance of \$156 a year but with practically unrestricted liberty to fill their pockets by bartering away the property of the city. Sixty-eight Aldermen at \$10,000 a year would only cost \$680,000 per annum. That would have been money well spent if it could have saved for the city \$5,000,000 a year, which they have been flinging away in exchange for bribes which in no way correspond to the value of the property for which they were given. The Aldermen knew that they were dealing in stolen goods; they were fraudulent trustees who, in order to fill their own pockets, conveyed away the property of the city. Now it is an invariable rule that the thief is at the mercy of the "fence" or receiver of stolen goods. He cannot fix his own price. A \$100 watch will often fetch not more than \$10 when it finds its way to the "fence." It is just the same in relation to the purchasers of city franchises. The predatory rich, the unscrupulous corporations who are forever endeavoring to snap up bargains, never dream of paying to the Aldermen the full value for the franchise which they purchase. There is no exact proportion whatever between the value of the franchise and the bribes which are necessary to secure its passage through the Council.* The

*In the *Chicago Record* of February 19, 1894, I find the following information on the subject:

How much does it cost to pass a franchise ordinance through the Council? There is no set price, because one franchise may be worth more than another. The highest price ever paid for aldermanic votes was a few years ago when a measure giving valuable privileges to a railway corporation was passed in the face of public condemnation. There were four members of the Council who received \$25,000 each, and the others who voted for the ordinance received \$8,000 each. An official who was instrumental in securing the passage of the measure received the largest amount ever given in Chicago for a service of the kind. He received \$100,000 in cash and two pieces of property. The property was afterward sold for \$111,000. In one of the latest "boodles" attempted the Aldermen voting for a certain franchise were supposed to receive \$5,000 each. One of them, however, had been de-

Aldermen, like all thieves, are bad men of business and are compelled to take what is offered to them. Occasionally they make a struggle to raise the price of their votes from \$750 to \$1,500, but they never venture to value their support at the value of the privilege which their votes confer. Hence the city receives nothing, while the Aldermen get very much less than what ought to have been the fair market price of the boodler if the market had been open and the transaction had not had to be carried on in secret.

The method of boodling as prevailing in the City Council of Chicago for many years is very simple. Some man or some corporation wants something from the city. It may be some right of way or it may be a franchise for tearing up the streets in order to lay gas pipes, or it may be an ordinance sanctioning the laying of a railway down a street or to make a grade crossing across one of the innumerable thoroughfares of the city. He can only obtain permission by obtaining it from the City Council. Now the majority of the City Council consider that they are not in the Council "for their health." As each of them went into it "for the sake of the stuff" and for whatever there was "in it" for themselves; they think these favors should not be granted without the receipt of a corresponding *quid pro quo*. Hence it is necessary, if you wish to get anything through the Council, to "square" the Aldermen. The "squaring" is done discreetly and with due regard to the fundamental principle which sums up the whole law of the boodler, namely: thou shalt not be found out. If it is a small thing, such as an ordinance sanctioning a projection over the street, it is not necessary to square more than

received and was to get only \$3,500. When he learned that he had been "frisked" of \$1,500 he wept in anger and went over to the opposition, assisting in the final overthrow of the steal.

The "\$5,000 per vote" is the high-water mark in the Council for the last four years. During 1891 and 1892 there were a dozen ordinances which brought their "bits," yet in one case the price went down to \$300. In spite of what has been said of the good old times these two years were among the most profitable ever known in criminal circles.

When it becomes necessary to pass an ordinance over the Mayor's veto the cost is 25 per cent more than usual.

one Alderman. This can be done directly or through an intermediary. In all cases, however, the Alderman must be "seen." Remittances through the post are discouraged; bank checks are at a discount; the transaction takes place in the presence of no third party, but face to face. If it is a very small matter a trifle will suffice, for your Alderman is not above small pickings by the way. It is a very different matter, however, when the question is one involving a railway franchise or a new gas ordinance. Then much more elaborate machinery is employed. The Council is sometimes divided and redivided into various rings. In the present Council one Alderman, who usually can be found in the neighborhood of Powers & O'Brien's saloon, can control forty others. The head of the big ring is the boss. There is also a smaller ring of ten, subsidiary to the greater ring and working together with it. The support of both rings is necessary when an ordinance is to be passed over the Mayor's veto. The smaller ring, as the larger, has its own chief.

When a franchise is applied for, or in other words something is proposed to be stolen from the city, it is necessary to ascertain on what terms the Aldermen will consent to hand the stolen goods out of the windows of the City Hall. For carrying on such negotiations, the first desideratum is a safe man, one who can be relied upon to keep his own counsel and who can be depended upon not to take more than a certain proportion of the swag. This gentleman is usually outside the Council, but he commands the confidence of both parties to the transaction. He is the go-between, and all transactions are conducted by him by word of mouth. He seeks the head of the ring to ascertain whether the boys are hungry and with how little they can be induced to stand "pat." Into the conferences between the go-between and the boys the world is not admitted. The secrets of a papal conclave are not more sacredly preserved than the details of the conferences between the chiefs of the

corrupt ring in the City Hall and the corporations who are in for the deal. As both parties mean business they arrive at an understanding, and the money, whether it be \$500, \$750, \$1,000 or \$1,500, is agreed upon. The money is then put into the hands of the go-between and deposited in his own name in the strong room of a national bank. There it remains, the purchase price of the fraudulent trustees of the people's property. When the boys are assured that the money is banked in the name of say "Mike," "Pat" or "Billy," as the case may be, the safe man whom they have trusted many times in the past and who has never gone back on his word, they proceed to fulfill their part of the bargain. An ordinance, usually drawn up by the corporation which proposes the steal, is intrusted to one of the gang, who introduces it with such garnishings as he deems desirable. If the franchise is not very objectionable on the face of it, it usually goes through. Aldermen are bound to oblige each other and as the city property has been chucked away every month without any protest, it is quite possible for the ordinance to pass without serious debate. If, on the other hand, there are any of the Aldermen who do not consider that they have been properly treated or who have been left out in the cold in the promised distribution of the boodle, there may be a debate with heated discussion. Sometimes, of course, this opposition may be perfectly genuine and due to the natural indignation of honest men against a bare-faced swindle. But even when this is the case, the opposition is generally aided by one or more of the boodling Aldermen who oppose the ordinance with a view of putting up their price.

This maneuver is very familiar in the City Council. It is discounted by the manager of the ring, who knows the price of his boys as well as the farmer knows the price of his hogs. Sometimes, however, the recalcitrants are formidable enough to endanger the passage of the ordinance, especially if the Mayor vetoes it and the

requisite two-thirds majority is required to pass it over his veto. Then it is necessary that the boss "should be seen," with the usual result. Aldermen will reverse their votes with the most extraordinary facility, and this occurrence is so familiar as hardly to call for a passing comment. A story is told of a very well known boodler in the town, who was at that time a member of the City Council, and is now an aspirant for a federal office. A railroad corporation was endeavoring to secure a franchise to give it the right of way into the heart of the city. The Alderman in question had not been offered, so the story runs, so much for his vote as he deemed it worth. He made an eloquent and impassioned speech against the tyranny of the railroad corporation, dwelt upon the devastation which it would make coming into the city, and he voted against the ordinance. The ordinance was passed, however, and vetoed by the Mayor. It was therefore necessary to secure the necessary two-thirds majority. The gentleman in question was to all appearances unshaken in his opposition. He had previously intimated to the ring that they would have to pay him his price or he would vote to sustain the Mayor's veto. As they made no sign before the debate opened, he took part in it and began a denunciation of the railroad company and expressed his strong determination to defend the rights of the people. While he was speaking the chief of the ring laid an envelope before him, on the corner of which was written "\$1,000." Hastily thrusting it into his breast pocket he continued his speech, when suddenly, to the great amusement of those who were in the secret, he wound up with the declaration that, notwithstanding his detestation of railroad tyranny, and his reluctance to see the streets interfered with, still, under the present circumstances, seeing the great advantages which would accrue from having another depot in the center of the city, he would vote for the ordinance which he had previously opposed. The ordinance was passed and the Alderman was warmly congratulated by his new allies

upon his conversion. When the Council broke up they crowded him so that he did not have a chance of examining his \$1,000. When he returned home that night he said complacently to his wife, as he produced the envelope from his pocket, "See, dear, I have made \$1,000 this day," and handed her the envelope. She opened it and found a \$100 bill! The Alderman was sold. His vote was recorded and the ordinance was passed and the boodler was boodled. But as a rule, unless an Alderman plays very fast and loose, he is dealt with on the square.

Of course every boodler swears that he has never touched boodle and as a matter of fact boodle is seldom distributed until after the campaign is over. It would never do for any Alderman to so far compromise his conscience as to give a corrupt vote in the Council. In most instances the Aldermen have never fingered a red cent on account of the ordinance for which they have voted. It is only after the ordinance has been passed and the stolen goods duly placed in the hands of the receivers that the division of the boodle takes place. The degree of secrecy which is observed in distributing their respective shares depends upon the degree of caution on the part of the boys or the amount of fuss there has been in the papers.* As a rule the distribution is managed with discretion. The stipulated sum is sometimes placed in blank envelopes addressed to the Aldermen in an unknown handwriting, who find them in some mysterious way in the pockets of their overcoats. In some instances, notably one in which a late mayor was said to have been involved, the money was said to have been placed under the pillow, for the virtuous man refused even to touch it—at least until his visitors had left the room. By this means the needs of the Aldermen are satisfied, their consciences escape any pangs of remorse and there is no legal evidence of money having passed.

*In the distribution, the men are graded on a ratio of "one," "one and a half" and "two." The man who handles the funds and the bright gentlemen who indulge in the "con" talk would get \$2,000 each. Another half-dozen or so would get \$1,500 each and the price of a plain, untrimmed vote would be \$1,000.

The fact that money does pass is not disputed even by the Aldermen themselves. There are some members of the Council who are professional Aldermen, that is to say, they have no other profession except that of being an Alderman. They certainly do not live on the three dollars a sitting which is paid them for their loss of time. Aldermen of the city of Chicago have some special privileges which are denied to meaner mortals. On the production of their aldermanic star they are allowed to ride as dead heads on the street railways and enjoy all the conveniences of locomotion which have been secured by the corporations by the votes of themselves or their predecessors. They have also free entrance to all places of amusement, a privilege which they share with policemen and other servants of the public, but none of these recognized and legitimate privileges can explain the sustenance of a full bodied Alderman and his maintenance in style befitting a city father on three dollars a week. Where the money comes from is not known. It is not well to ask too many impertinent questions, but that it comes from somewhere and somebody may be taken for granted. "In a fruitful year," says the *Record*, "the average crooked Alderman has made \$15,000 to \$20,000."

The precise number of boodlers in the City Council is a question upon which there is often much discussion. A lawyer of a railway corporation, speaking on the subject the other day, said, "There are sixty-eight Aldermen in the City Council and sixty-six of them can be bought. This I know because I have bought them myself." This was probably a little exaggerated bluff on his part. No other authorities put the percentage of non-boodling Aldermen so low as this. I have gone through the list of the Aldermen repeatedly, with leading citizens, both inside the Council and outside, journalists, ministers and men of business. The highest estimate of non-boodlers that I have heard was eighteen out of sixty-eight. Between the minimum of two and the maximum of eigh-

teen it will probably be safe to strike an average. We shall probably not err on the side of charity if we admit that there are ten Aldermen on the Council who have not sold their votes or received any corrupt consideration for voting away the patrimony of the people.

Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom ; but ten righteous Aldermen out of sixty-eight are not sufficient to save the City Hall from the reproach of being under the dominion of King Boodle. This is the abomination which maketh desolate set up in the Holy of Holies, for the City Council is the machinery through which the Kingdom of God should be established in Chicago. It is the agency by which, if at all, progress will be made towards a happier and juster social state. The City Council is the direct heir and executor of the Christian church, and holds in trust many of the great Christian duties which in the earlier ages were exclusively performed by the Church. Yet here in this innermost Temple of the Lord we have this supreme infamy—swindlers and scoundrels sitting in the center of the whole machine and treating their duties and their trust as means by which they can fill their own pockets. Since Antiochus Epiphanes slaughtered a sow on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of Holies there has seldom been a more authentic fulfillment of the prophecy which speaks of the abomination which maketh desolate being set up where it ought not to be.

These boodling Alderman are indeed the swine of our civilization, but unfortunately there is no Antiochus to offer them up as a sacrifice to the offended gods.* It is a constant amazement to me that secrets which are in the possession of at least fifty mortals, most of whom

*The *Chicago Herald* is the leading Democratic paper in Chicago. This is how it describes the Democratic Aldermen of the existing Council:

"The average Democratic representative in the City Council is a tramp, if not worse. He represents or claims to represent a political party having respectable principles and leaders of known good character and ability. He comes from twenty-five or thirty different wards, some of them widely separated, and when he reaches the City Hall, whether from the west, the south or the north division, he is in nine cases out of ten a bum and a disreputable who can be bought and sold as hogs are bought and sold at the stockyards. Do these vicious vagabonds stand for the decency and intelligence of the Democratic party in Chicago?"

are married and many of whom are given to their cups, should continue to be secrets, or that such a system of organized plunder can go on, without any authentic legal proof being attainable. To unearth such scandals, to bring them to light, to clear out the Augean stable of the City Hall seems to be an enterprise peculiarly inviting to the indomitable genius of an American newspaper. Unfortunately, whether it be, as I am frequently assured, because there are so many in it whom the newspapers dare not offend, or because of simple lethargy of conscience and indifference to the welfare of the town, which seems hardly less credible, or to some other cause, there is no doubt as to the fact. Every newspaper man in Chicago will tell you first that the system of government by boodle is going on all the time and in the same breath he will tell you that no newspaper has ever been able, excepting on one occasion, to secure legal evidence as to the actual passage of money.

For the purpose of uncovering frauds which cost the city millions, it ought not to be impossible to purchase the confession of a boodler. Boodlers, according to the dealers in boodle, are divided into two categories, the honest and the dishonest boodlers. The honest boodler is the Alderman who, when bought, "stays bought," and does not sell out to the other side; the dishonest boodler is perfectly willing to take money from both sides and dispose of his vote, not according to the first bid, but the last. Among these dishonest boodlers who are for sale all the time, it ought not to be impossible to make a deal for a squeal, although the price might run high. Then again public-spirited citizens at the coming elections might find a much worse use for their money than to spend it in securing the election of an experienced detective to the aldermanic chair, with a mandate to take care to be in everything that was going, with a view to a timely exposure of the secrets of the gang. If such a competent representative did his work well, he

would probably not have much difficulty in landing forty or fifty of his fellow members in the penitentiary at the end of the first twelve months.

Discussing this question with a leading editor in Chicago, after he had put forward the usual futile pleas as to the difficulties of getting evidence, I suggested to him that nothing was easier than to obtain evidence as to the identity of the boodlers. All that it was necessary for him to do was to apply to the Council for a franchise, and he would soon be approached by the guilty parties. At present it might be somewhat difficult, owing to the fuss which has been made on the subject, but last year there would have been no difficulty whatever; for the boodling was carried on with such comparative recklessness that there would have been little or no difficulty in landing the boodlers.

A gentleman who had applied to the Council for a franchise a short time ago and who had met with no success because he would not part with the needful, told me that he had been approached by an Alderman who intimated to him that he was the center of a group of ten who acted together in the Council, and he was able to communicate with another Alderman, whom he named, who was the head of a ring of forty and who could be got at, with the whole of his men, on the same terms that the Alderman and his ten were willing to dispose of their votes. The price, which he stated with business-like directness, was \$1,000 each, with probably an extra \$1,000 for the Alderman who arranged the business. My informant said that he had taken no steps to carry the matter further, inasmuch as he was determined not to bribe.

"But," said I, "why don't you carry it a step further, and obtain legal evidence as to the identity of the Aldermen? Get two or three persons if need be behind a screen or in a closet, who will be able to hear the whole of the conversation and who can confirm your testimony."

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"All very fine," said he, "and what would become of any hope of my getting a franchise hereafter? I might, no doubt, as you say, convict one boodler, possibly two. Even if I had the whole of the witnesses' statements taken down and sworn before a justice of the peace, even if they had furnished me with the lists of the forty and ten for whom I had to provide \$1,000 each, that would not be legal evidence against anyone but the two persons with whom I had business. I might get two men sent to Joliet, but forty-eight men would remain in the Council, every one of whom would regard it as a personal question to refuse me my franchise if I wanted it. Even if half of them were rejected at the coming elections, the rest would still regard me with implacable hatred. A boodler never forgives a man who has shown up a brother boodler. You cannot expect me to do anything in the matter unless I am prepared to give up all hope of getting a franchise, or unless you reformers, on your part, would undertake to clear out the whole boodling gang from the City Hall. As for me I shall lie low and say nothing."

That conversation brings out very clearly the difficulty of obtaining evidence from the people who are approached. It is equally obvious that those who are receiving bribes are not likely to give evidence against themselves. Therefore, if anything has to be done, a detective Alderman should be elected, or a dishonest one should be bought up, or someone should promote a franchise for the express purpose of being approached. One of these methods would suffice to let daylight in upon this particularly discreditable section of Satan's invisible world displayed. If one or other of these methods are not adopted, boodling is likely to remain the chief motive power of the City Council of Chicago.

CHAPTER II.

THE TYRANNY OF THE ASSYRIAN.

The first impression which a stranger receives on arriving in Chicago is that of the dirt, the danger and the inconvenience of the streets. Those accustomed to the care that is taken in civilized cities to keep the roadway level and safe for teams and carriages stand simply aghast at the way in which the thoroughfares are corduroyed by ill-laid, old-fashioned street car lines, the flange of which projects so much above the body of the rail on which the traffic runs as to be perpetually wrenching wheels off the axle. The civilized man marvels and keeps on his way. But from marvel he passes rapidly to disgust and indignation when he comes to the steam railroad tracks. Here indeed is the climax of reckless incompetence in city management, the supreme example of the sacrifice of public safety, public property and public convenience to the interests of great corporations. The Pope has always clung to the title of Pontifex Maximus, but Chicago seems rather to aspire to be known as Pontifex Minimus. For instead of bridging her railroads or making them bridge her streets she has avoided bridge making wherever possible and allowed the railroads to run along and across the public thoroughfares of a crowded city at the street level.

If a stranger's first impression of Chicago is that of the barbarous gridironed streets, his second is that of the multitude of mutilated people whom he meets on crutches. Excepting immediately after a great war, I have never seen so many mutilated fragments of humanity as one finds in Chicago. Dealers in artificial limbs and crutches ought to be able to do a better

business in Chicago than in any other city I have ever visited. On inquiry I found that the second salient feature of Chicago was the direct result of the first. The railroads which cross the city at the level in every direction, although limited by statute and ordinance as to speed, constantly mow down unoffending citizens at the crossings, and those legless, armless men and women whom you meet on the streets are merely the mangled remnant of the massacre that is constantly going on year in and year out.

"Can nothing be done?" you ask in amazement, and you are told that the Mayor is trying to do something but that it is very doubtful if he can succeed, the railroad corporations are so powerful. "But what about these infamous street car tracks with their murderous flanges? Can nothing be done to substitute more civilized tracks?" Another shake of the head, a shrug of the shoulders. "Ask Baron Yerkes! He owns Chicago." So you go from one to another and always meet the same despondent, hopeless reply. Everywhere it is the same story. The corporations have grabbed or stolen everything. The citizens have not even a miserable revenue from the franchises which gave the corporations their power. They have barely a right-of-way in their own streets. It did not begin all at once, this usurpation, but now it is complete.

It is the old story of the Arab and the Camel. That camel was the ancient prototype of the modern American corporation. The citizens are crowded to the wall by the corporations which they permitted to occupy their streets. If the citizens don't like it they can quit.

The novelty, the wonder of all this is bewildering to an Englishman. His old ideas about the sovereignty of the American citizen, the free and independent way in which the denizens of the great Western Republic were believed to vindicate their rights, the traditions of liberty associated with the American people, all combine to obscure the truth. He cannot believe that things

are as bad as every one he meets tells him they are. Even after many disillusion he clings to the fond delusion that he is sojourning among a free and self-governed people where the rule, "of the people, for the people and by the people," is universally recognized. It is only after a long time that he begins dimly to discover that upon the ruins of popular liberty and republican theories there has been established a plutocratic despotism as sordid, as tyrannical and as lawless as ever was permitted to scourge a people for its sins.

I have watched the rapid evolution of Social Democracy in England. I have studied Autocracy in Russia, and Theocracy in Rome, and I must say that nowhere, not even in Russia, in the first years of the reaction occasioned by the murder of the late Tzar, have I struck more abject submission to a more soulless despotism than that which prevails among the masses of the so-called free American citizens, when they are face to face with the omnipotent power of the corporations. "Wealth," said a workman bitterly to me the other day, "has subjugated everything. It has gagged the press, it has bought up the Legislature, it has corrupted the judges. Even on the universities it is laying its golden finger. The churches are in its grasp. Go where you will, up and down this country, you will find our citizens paralyzed by a sense of their own impotence. They know the injustice, they know better than any the wrongs which they suffer, they mutter curses, but they are too cowed to do anything. They have tried so often and have been beaten so badly they have not the heart to try again."

What this man said, I have been hearing on every side, in all classes of society. There is the most helpless hopelessness, utterly strange to me. The Russian peasant, suffering under a corrupt tchinovnik, who bows his head with the fatalism of his race, does not submit more abjectly to illegal exactions than the American citizen to the endless tyrannies of his plutocratic task-masters. The Russian peasant at least has faith in God and in the

Tzar, and though, as he says, "Heaven is high and the Tzar is far off, still who knows but that some day the wicked tchinovnik may meet his deserts?" But the American, if he is religious, does not think the affairs of this world interests the Divine Being who is chiefly concerned with chants and prayers and sermons; and if he is irreligious, he does not think of God at all. As for the Tzar, there is no Tzar; the only substitute on this side of the Atlantic for such a deliverer is the far-off, semi-mythical conception of arousing of public opinion. "If public opinion were aroused," say some more sanguine citizens, "something might be done." "When or how?" sneer the pessimists. "You forget that the country is not governed by the opinion of its citizens, lawfully expressed at the ballot box. It is controlled by the Dead Hand. Read our Constitution and the Constitution of our State, and see how cunningly the money power is intrenched behind constitutional battlements. Think you that in a country where it is unconstitutional even to pass a truck act to save workmen from being plundered by their employers, you can do anything? If you carry your reformers at next elections, the corporations will buy them up. If by some miracle they proved incorruptible, their legislation could be declared unconstitutional by the courts. And if you want to amend the Constitution, you have a very long row to hoe."

The root of the whole trouble is lack of faith in God. If there be no God, or if He does not heed such trivialities as mundane affairs, if there be no law, invisible but eternal, which is the silent but secret ally of every forlorn fighter for justice and for liberty, then it is not surprising that men's hearts fail them for fear and they refuse to rouse them for the fray.

The citizens have acted each man of them upon the principle of "each for himself and the devil take the hindmost." They have made their fortunes if lucky, or they have failed if they were unlucky, but the devil has taken among other hindmost things the government of

the city. Instead of seeing to it that the authorities were just men, upright, fearing God and hating covetousness, they left the worst elements in the community to convert the city government into a joint stock corporation for the spoliation of the people and the promotion of perjury, corruption and all unrighteousness. And now, having accepted Cain's gospel and lived up to it, they are reaping the consequences.

The more I look into the operations of the laws which have reduced the city of Chicago to this present unendurable position face to face with the spoiler in the streets, the more I am reminded of the old familiar story of the fate of the Children of Israel after they had established themselves and had waxed fat and comfortable in the Land of Promise. As it was then, when the hosts of Moab and of Midian and of the Mesopotamians fell upon the chosen people and smote them and spoiled them, so it is to-day in the city of Chicago.

Just before the French Revolution, Gibbon, on concluding his history of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, complacently congratulated civilization upon the fact that there were no longer any hordes of barbarians on its frontiers who might repeat the havoc of Attila the Hun, or Alaric the Goth. But a few years passed and the Reign of Terror proved that civilization could breed her own savages within her own frontiers, and that in the slums of her capitals were hordes as capable of devastating the land as any of the hosts that followed Attila to the sack of Rome. The American Republic, in like manner, although too strong to be in any danger from without, is now learning that democracies can breed tyrants and that the conquerors of old who overran empires for the sake of plunder, and impoverished whole nations to fill their treasuries, have their legitimate heirs and successors in the coalesced plutocracy of the United States.

Chicago is as much under the rule of the Assyrian as were the Jews in olden time. Only our Assyrians seem

to come not from the Euphrates Valley, but from Philadelphia. It is a great mistake to imagine that the Assyrian or any other Eastern conqueror established the minute despotism of the modern state. What these ancients wanted was not so much to interfere with the liberties of their subjects as to plunder them and to deal with them as they pleased. They killed a few, not more than they wished to, the rest they spared to earn the tribute money. Their interests were solely selfish. They left like the Turk of this day the local tribal or national organization, almost uninjured. All that they wanted was plunder, and in collecting that plunder they were as indifferent to the comfort and life and convenience of their luckless subjects as any street railway company or railroad corporation or gas trust in the whole United States.

As the Assyrian crushed Israel as the direct result of the misgovernment of the country and the indifference of its rulers to the welfare of the poor among the people, so the present plight of the citizens of Chicago is the direct result of their past indifference to honesty and justice in their elected representatives. Hence it is that Isaiah's words apply almost without an alteration to the present situation:

1. Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed ;

2. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless!

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?

4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

6. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.

That, at least, it must be admitted, is exactly what our Assyrian has done and is doing. He takes the

spoil, he takes the prey and he treads us down like the mire of the streets.

To those who have never visited Chicago, and to many who have grown up and become accustomed to the condition of things as they exist, the comparison between the great corporations and the Assyrian who oppressed the children of Israel may seem rhetorical or far-fetched. But anyone who will take the trouble to look into the facts will see that the comparison is strictly just, and after due allowance is made for the fervor and vivid imagery of the Jewish seer, no language can more exactly express what the corporations are doing in Chicago than the verses in which he addresses the Assyrian.

Chicago has not yet a patron saint. Considering the intense feverish restlessness which characterizes the city, an unkind wag suggested that St. Vitus, of St. Vitus' dance, would be the most appropriate selection. Those, however, who take a bird's-eye view of the city, looking down on it, say, for instance, from the Auditorium tower, would have no hesitation in deciding that Chicago is the living prototype of St. Lawrence, who was stretched upon a gridiron and whose torture is one of the familiar horrors of Catholic picture galleries. This great city with a million and a half of population is stretched over a gridiron of rails which cross and recross the city and form a complex network of tracks, every mesh of which is stained with human blood. It is not for nothing that the dismal bell of the locomotive rings incessantly as it tears its way into the heart of Chicago through the streets. In England the locomotives use the whistle, not the bell, and this solemn weird tolling of the bell is very impressing to the imagination of the visitor who hears it for the first time sounding every hour, year in, year out, summer and winter. As regularly as the sun rises these great engines slay their man in and upon the streets of Chicago. No other great city in the world has allowed its streets to be taken possession of to a similar extent, and the massacre resulting there-

from is greater than that of many battles. We in England have always one or more little wars upon our hands on our frontiers where they impinge upon the lawless tribes in Africa and Asia, but I do not think that it is too much to say that in the last five years we have had fewer soldiers killed in our wars all round the world than have been slaughtered in the streets of Chicago at the grade crossing. The figures are: in 1889, 257; 1890, 294; 1891, 323; 1892, 394; 1893, 431. As might be expected, the number of these railroad murders steadily increases with the growth of the population. In the city of Chicago there are under 2,500 miles of roadway, but there are 1,375 miles of railroad track within the same area. The railroads traverse the streets at grade in 2,000 places. Under Mayor Washburne a commission was appointed to investigate the matter, and an effort was made to ascertain the obstruction to traffic caused by this system. Mr. E. S. Dreyer, speaking at the Sunset Club, where the subject was discussed on February 1, said:

Our terminal commission caused to be taken, by careful enumerators, a count at thirty-six of our most dangerous crossings on a certain business day, from the hour of six in the morning to seven in the evening, and their report showed that there passed during that time over the thirty-six crossings 68,375 vehicles, 9,145 street cars, 221,942 street car passengers and 119,181 pedestrians. The gates at these crossings were lowered 3,031 times, and the total time the gates were closed on the thirty-six crossings was over twelve hours, delaying 15,000 vehicles, 2,320 street cars with 51,367 passengers and 18,212 pedestrians.

These figures, be it noted, have only regard to thirty-six of the 3,000 crossings in the city. For years past the city has protested, but protested in vain. The railroads ride roughshod over the convenience, the rights and the lives of the citizens. Sisera with his 900 chariots of iron never tyrannized more ruthlessly over the Hebrews than the railroads with their fire chariots of steel have lorded it over the city of Chicago.

Every week in Chicago you read of grade crossing accidents, and it is very seldom that you hear of anything being done to saddle anyone with the responsibility for the loss of life. The evidence before the jury is usually to

the following effect; the gates were not lowered, the watchman was not in attendance, no whistle was sounded, no bell was rung. The deceased was crossing the track all unwitting of any danger, when a train dashed up with the inevitable result. In many cases the bodies are mutilated out of all human semblance. The nightmare imagination of those gruesome artists who exult in describing the torture and mutilation of helpless victims could depict nothing more terrible than the human sacrifices which are offered up daily on the altar of the Railway Moloch by the city of Chicago. Very rarely is anyone saddled with responsibility. On February 2 a jury returned a verdict against one of the division superintendents of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad, but nothing seems to have come of it. The only redress is to prosecute the railroad company for damages. This often involves a law suit with the casualty companies with whom the railways have contracted for all liabilities for injury to life and limb. The railroads have taken the precaution of protecting themselves by law. By an infamous act, boodled through the Illinois Legislature by railroad influence, no jury is allowed to award more than \$5,000 damages against the railroads for causing the death of any citizen.

The usurpation of the streets of the city is none the less a usurpation because it was achieved by gold and not by steel. In many cases railroads have laid their tracks through the streets without even going through the formality of asking for a franchise. They have treated Chicago as a conquered territory. The strolling Tartar, who in the Middle Ages wandered absolute lord over Russia, was the prototype of the railroad corporations in the capital of the West. For the use of the streets the railroads have not paid a cent into the City Treasury. Whatever payment they made was made corruptly and went into the pockets of the Aldermen, and sometimes of the Mayor. If they paid \$100 a mile for way-leave that would bring in the city a revenue of nearly \$200,000. So far from

doing any such thing, the railroads have imposed upon the city an expenditure which is estimated at \$30,000 in the salaries of twenty-five policemen and other employes, paid by the city for the purpose of raising and lowering the gates and of warning citizens to escape slaughter. Further, they have put the city to the expense of millions in the building of viaducts over their tracks where the expenditure of life became too great even for Chicago to tolerate. In 1892 the cost of maintaining these viaducts was no less than \$146,000. For the privilege therefore of keeping the annual total of human sacrifices down to a victim a day the city pays blood money amounting to \$176,000 a year.

But, it may be urged, the city has in its own hands the power of taxation and it can recoup itself from the enormously valuable property within its limits. Here again we are confronted with another specimen of the way in which the citizen goes to the wall. Mr. Washburne, when Mayor of Chicago, stated publicly that the value of railway property in the city was not less than \$350,000,000. It is to-day assessed at less than \$19,000,000.

The steam railroads are the worst oppressors from the point of view of human life, but from the point of view of plunder and of injury to health and happiness the street railways leave them far behind. In a city like Chicago, where the distances are so great as constantly to occasion the regret that the building of the city had not been postponed until the race had developed wings, street railways are as indispensable as the streets, and they should no more be handed over to speculative corporations than the highroads. From the practical point of view it is pretty much the same thing, for the owner of the street railway has not only the railway but has also the street. He breaks up the driveway and treats the road as though it belonged to him. The arguments against municipal ownership of street railways would have more force if the speculative corporations who are in possession of the monopoly of streets

could be kept up to mark by competition. In the necessity of things this cannot be. The street railway is a monopoly, and a monopoly of service for the whole people should be in the hands of the representatives of the whole people. The usual result has followed in Chicago. There is nothing about which there is more clamor than about the infamies of street railways.

The overcrowding of the cars is little less than a public scandal. The city railway companies have plenty of cars, and plenty of power, for the cables run just the same whether there are few cars on the line or many, but in order to save conductors' salaries they cynically compel one-half of the traveling public of Chicago to travel without seats. A Chicago car at the rush time, in the middle of the day or early in the morning or late at night, is a sight which once seen is not easily forgotten. Every seat is filled and all the space between the seats is choked with a crowded mass of humanity. The unlucky individuals are holding on by a strap from the roof. At the platform at each end of the car a crowd is hanging on by its eyelids as thick as bees when they are swarming. The first time I saw it, it reminded me of one of Doré's pictures of a scene in Dante's hell. When appealed to to give better accommodation those companies which are paying from 9 to 24 per cent reply that their dividends come from the people who hang on by the straps, and that things are to remain as they are. The cable service, especially on the North Side, is perpetually breaking down, the horse cars are miserably slow, badly horsed and most inadequate. It was quite recently that the tyrants of the car scouted the idea of heating them in winter time and compelled their luckless travelers to shiver for an hour at a time in unwarmed vehicles. The rails are laid in such a fashion that they provoke the incredulous comments of a stranger, and some of the busiest roadways of the town are crossed and recrossed by a corduroy of steel inconceivable to anyone who has ever lived in a civilized country. When the snow comes the companies simply

sweep it to either side of the track; and notwithstanding the city ordinances compelling them to remove the snow, they leave it lying on the streets with the result that this winter the indignant citizens retaliated by piling the snow over the tracks and stopping traffic. Scrimages ensued which threatened on more than one occasion to end in serious riots. Even if they could not run more cars, the South Side cable could follow the universal custom of the Old World and carry passengers on the roof, where in five days out of six it is much pleasanter than the inside. Mr. Pullman has devised an admirable double-deck car, but as its adoption would require the changing of the rolling stock that is not to be thought of; for nothing is bad enough for those who use the street cars in Chicago so long as it does not fall to pieces on the line of track. And this right to compel the citizens to endure all these costs and exactions was obtained by bribery of the most barefaced kind.

It is not only the surfaces of the streets which were handed over to the street railway companies by boodling Aldermen. They are in possession at the present moment of two tunnels under the river, both of which have been handed over to them without any adequate return. The Washington tunnel, which it would have cost the companies thousands to build, was given them on condition that they moved the Madison street bridge to Washington. This cost them a bagatelle. A similar preposterous agreement handed over the La Salle tunnel to Mr. Yerkes' company on the North Side. Two bridges were put up, at Clark Street and Wells Street, which cost the company about one-tenth one-fifth of what the tunnel cost the city, and much less than what it would have cost the company to construct the tunnel at the time they took it over. The city was plundered in the matter of the tunnels to the extent of at least one million dollars and it would have cost the railway corporations twice as much again to have built the tunnels themselves.*

The financial result of these privileges would make the

mouth of a Turkish Pasha water. The following are the figures :

	Capital.	Dividend.	Net earnings after paying interest on bonds, 1894.	Paid to the City.
North Chicago	\$ 8,000,000	11 1/2	\$1,600,000	22,687
West Chicago	10,000,000	9	2,340,000	20,874
City of Chicago		24	8,500,000	11,811

Five or six years ago the street railway companies secured by the usual means an extension of their franchises for another fifteen years; the net result of which is that they will continue to enjoy the undisputed monopoly which brings them in these enormous dividends until 1904. If the franchises, instead of being renewed six years ago, had been allowed to lapse, as they would have done about the present time, it would have been possible for the city to have possessed itself of the car lines upon terms which would have been equitable to the company and would have yielded the city a net annual income of at least four million dollars. That is to say that the city has been robbed by its corrupt Aldermen of nearly twice as much as the total sum raised every year by the pew rents, collections and by all the machinery of church finance. Or to put it another way, the tax upon real and personal property in the city of Chicago does not amount to more than \$4,800,000 a year. Almost the whole of this sum might have been raised by the city railway corporations in the hands of an honest City Council.†

*See an admirable article in the *Chicago Tribune*, April 4, 1892, on this subject. It is reprinted in a most useful pamphlet by Barton A. Alrich, entitled, "How Should Chicago be Governed?"

†On this point I may quote the published statement of Mr. W. J. Onahan, who for two years was Comptroller of the City Treasury. Mr. Onahan says:

"If the city, since it became a city, had received proper annual compensation for all the franchises that have been ignorantly and corruptly disposed of for nothing, Chicago would today have income enough to run its affairs without levying a dollar taxation on real estate or personal property. I can prove it if called upon. Consider the privileges that have been given the steam railways from the Illinois Central to the last to come in. In connection with these steam railways look at the countless private switches and tracks—all given away. Then the street railways, the gas companies, the electric lighting companies, the telephone companies, the water privileges, dock privileges, and I don't know what all. Why, every one of these favored interests, which secured their privileges by bribing Aldermen and corrupting officials, ought to be millions in annual tribute to the city. I repeat that if our rights in this regard had been looked after in the beginning and been carefully guarded ever since, there would be no need now to talk about taxes or their injustices and inequalities."

Instead of this sum the city railway companies pay over to the city a license tax amounting last year to \$50,000. Even here there is a swindle into which Mayor Hopkins is making diligent inquiries. The companies pay a tax of \$50 a year upon the cars in service. But no car is held to be in service by the companies unless it makes thirteen round trips every day. As half the cars do not make thirteen round trips a day, they do not pay the license, and the city loses \$50,000 a year in consequence.

The total capital of the street railway companies, as shown by latest published account, is only \$26,500,000. If all the working expenses were unchanged and the company received five per cent upon its stock, this would still leave a balance available to the city of \$4,000,000, the sum which the Assyrians levy upon the citizens of Chicago.*

The third of the oppressors under whose tyranny Chicago is groaning is the Gas Trust. To begin with, there ought not to be any gas trust in Chicago. By the law of the State of Illinois, trusts are illegal, and have no legal rights. The seven companies, however, who form the Trust, keep their accounts separate, and swear that they are no trust—for subterfuge and trickery are among the weapons of the oppressor in every age. Among the other limitations of the prerogatives of the city of Chicago it is not allowed to own or operate its own gas plant. It has therefore tried to get cheap gas by encouraging competition. Franchises were granted to various corporations, but they always amalgamated and combined in order to plunder the

*The fact is that in a city like Chicago a street railway franchise is worth more than most gold mines, and if a good bargain is made the cars will not only carry the citizens, they could also carry the cost of governing the city. Take for instance the case of Philadelphia. Ten Street Car Companies in ten years, ending 1891, on a paid up capital of \$5,840,000, drew out in dividends \$15,000,000, an average of 26 per cent. The market price of their stock in February, 1893, was \$38,500,000. If the city of Philadelphia had invested the original capital on behalf of the citizens had charged 5 per cent interest and had applied the balance to the city treasury, it would have made an annual profit of \$1,200,000 plus an actual investment in the value of the property amounting to \$3,250,000 a year. Philadelphia therefore lost nearly \$4,500,000 a year because the city did not run the street cars.

public for the benefit of the share-holders. Instead of being a check on each other, they are now all united in maintaining their monopoly. They stayed prosecution by virtue of an illegal agreement executed under the Washburne administration, by which they were able to purchase the acquiescence of the city in their illegal position, in consideration of a reduction which has brought the price of gas down to \$1.15 per thousand, and secured to the city three and a half per cent of its gross income which amounted in 1891 to \$150,000. Before the companies amalgamated Chicago paid \$1.00 per thousand feet. After the amalgamation the price was raised immediately to \$1.25, from which it is to be reduced each year at the rate of five cents until it reaches the old level of a dollar. As the cost of manufacture is not more than 33 cents per thousand feet, and the cost of distribution, leakage, etc., does not exceed 33 cents, which is a very liberal allowance, that leaves at present prices fifty cents available for profits and dividends. Before the Gas Trust the Gas Light and Coke Company, using the old processes, could not manufacture the gas at less than 65 cents per thousand feet, but it was nevertheless able to sell it at a dollar a thousand feet, and pay a dividend of seven per cent on its capital stock, besides putting an additional two per cent into an expansion fund. By the introduction of water gas and new and improved processes of manufacture, the cost of production was cut in half, the figures for the last year on the North Side being 30.13 cents, and on the South Side 29.16 cents. Thus the immediate result of the illegal monopoly formed by the combination of the seven gas companies has been to raise the price of gas to the consumer at the very time when the cost of its production was reduced fifty per cent to the producer. In order to profit by this the Gas Trust has watered its stock to an extent almost inconceivable. According to the best authorities in the gas making business, there ought not to be a greater

capital expenditure for every thousand feet of gas supplied than \$3.00 but three years ago the capital of the Gas Trust was \$10.65 per thousand feet. The process of inflating, or watering, or whatever the term is which implies the creation of fictitious capital value, has gone on apace since then, and it probably reaches now near \$12 per thousand. The watered stock and outlying bonds mount up to between fifty and sixty million dollars. Now the whole of the city of Chicago could be supplied with gas, and a brand-new plant, at an expenditure, taking the present consumption of gas at four thousand million feet, at a capital expenditure of \$12,000,000, interest upon which at five per cent would only be \$600,000 a year. If you add \$400,000 for a sinking fund, you would have a net charge of a million dollars a year as sufficient to pay interest upon capital, and extinguish the whole debt in twenty years; whereas the Gas Trust is at present distributing from two millions to two millions and a half in interests and dividends every year. A sum, therefore, between one million and one million and a half represents the enforced tribute extorted from the oppressed citizens by this illegal monopoly, under virtue of an illegal agreement made two years ago, in order to evade a law suit.

If the Gas Trust had supplied ideally pure gas, and if in every respect it ministered to the convenience of the consumer, the hatred with which it is regarded would be considerably modified, and it is probable that the citizens would not object to pay a dollar for their gas rather than face the inconvenience of tearing up their streets. But the consumers complain bitterly of the quality of the gas and of the rule by which the trust compels every consumer to deposit \$10 before a meter is placed on the premises, only \$7 of which is ever returned. By this means the trust obtains possession of a capital of at least a million dollars, and, what is much more serious, it practically shuts gas out from all the smaller householders,

who might be willing to pay even \$1.15 for their gas, but who are not able to put up \$10 in advance. Besides this the Gas Trust is as arbitrary as any Persian Satrap in its dealings with the citizens. No matter how much the gas may be called for in various regions to which it has not yet laid its mains, it turns a deaf ear to all appeals. It has got a very good thing as it is and it does not see why it should trouble itself merely to please consumers, who, after all, are as the mire under its feet.

There is only one way out and that is for the city to own and operate its own gas plant. When that comes to pass the Gas Trust will be confronted with the alternative of handing over its mains and its meters at a fair valuation, which ought not in any case to exceed the sum for which the plant could be duplicated, or if it refused these terms, then the city would be obliged to bring it to terms by introducing municipal gas. This could be supplied at 75 cents per 1,000 feet. It would be a great nuisance tearing up the streets, a nuisance which should not be incurred excepting when the work was done by the municipality for the municipality. It might, however, be worth while doing it in order to rid the town of the garrote of the Gas Trust.

Compared with those great oppressors other minor monopolies hardly deserve notice, but it is worth while illustrating the tyranny of the Gas Trust by the interdict which it succeeded in placing upon the development of municipal lighting. At the present moment the municipality owns and operates its own electric light plant. This was permitted by the Legislature on the strict condition that no private consumers should be supplied by the municipality. The result is that the municipal plant is idle half its time. Even as it is the introduction of municipal electricity into the town enabled the city to reduce the cost of each arc lamp from \$175 to \$100 a year, and if the plant could be still further utilized that would be reduced still further by \$25 per annum. That is the fine imposed upon the city by the

Gas Trust and other monopolies to check the legitimate development of municipal enterprise. For private illuminating purposes electricity is far too dear and the price would be cut at once if the municipality were allowed to use its engines, which are standing idle. So little does the Gas Trust care for the interests of the citizens that, instead of lighting the streets for nothing, as it might well be expected to do, it actually charges the city 25 per cent more for what is consumed in the street lamps than it charges the private consumer. The charge for street lamps is \$25 a year, and this amounts to a charge of at least \$1.42 per thousand feet as against \$1.15 charged to the private consumer! Twenty-six cents a thousand feet is the extra charge levied upon the city for all the gas which it consumes. That is the gratitude of the Gas Trust for its franchise. It is a kind of Gessler's cap, the last crowning insult which exulting tyranny inflicts upon its victims.

Another monopoly which owes its existence to a franchise recklessly disposed of is the telephone company. This is in possession of the field. Its prices are fixed at an excessive rate, and in return for this privilege to plunder, it pays the municipality a peppercorn rent upon its net receipts. But as it publishes no accounts and gives no information, the municipality is obliged to take whatever the Company pleases to pay. This, however, will be looked into.

When once an honest Council is established at the City Hall it will be found a matter of comparative ease to check the tyranny of the Assyrian. That at least is my belief. At the same time I must admit that the opinion of the majority of those who have spoken to me on the subject is that it is hopeless. I have talked until I have been tired to one citizen after another and have received from them the most despondent and discouraging replies. "It is no use," they say, "do what you please, they will best you in the long run; there are too many in it to hope for any success," and so forth and so

forth. It is as if they were Christian Rayahs in a Turkish province and I was a Pan-Slavonic emissary endeavoring to rouse them to a struggle against the oppressor.

There is always the despairing shrug of the shoulder and the remark that it is no good putting a man up to be slaughtered. The others are too strong. Fortunately Mayor Hopkins does not seem to think so and behind Mayor Hopkins are the awakened intelligence and the aroused moral consciousness of the city.

It is no use pretending that these tyrants are so strong that they cannot be grappled with. They have franchises, no doubt, and many legal privileges, and they are in possession; but a resolute Mayor backed up by an honest City Council could very soon bring them to their reason. It is the old story of the Normans and the Jews. The nobles after the Crusades were practically helpless in their hands. Their estates were mortgaged and the astute money lender of those days had taken as much pains to complete the ruin of his victim as Mr. Yerkes, the corporations and the trusts have taken to secure their hold upon the vitals of Chicago. At last the tyranny became intolerable. The noble, being a practical man was indisposed, after fighting the infidel in the Holy Land, to submit calmly to the exactions of the Jew at home. He replied to the protests of his creditor, who pointed to his bonds and his papers, by saying, "It is true, you have my bond, but I have got your person, your property and all that is yours." When the Jew did not at first appreciate the significance of this argument, the noble clapped him into his dungeon and used strong and piercing arguments in the shape of the extraction first of one eye-tooth and then of another until such time as he consented to be reasonable and make fair terms with his jailers. Herein lies a hint for every city administration which lies prone beneath the heel of the oppressor. The corporation may have franchises, but the right of enforcing new conditions lies in the hands of the City Council. And, moreover, they can

soon bring the corporations to reason if they insist that no further concessions under any conditions shall be granted to any existing railroad, street railroad or gas company until it has delivered the citizens from the present tyranny. No railroad ought, for instance, to be allowed to lay another rail within the limits of Chicago until it has undertaken to elevate the tracks. By imposing new conditions, or by the refusing of new franchises, the city has the game in its own hands. But besides this there are great resources dormant in the hands of the authorities in the shape of a searching inquiry into the provisions of the existing franchises, and an inquiry into the extent to which the corporations have already forfeited their rights by non-use or mis-use of the privileges intrusted to them. It will be found in almost every case that the corporations have trespassed without warrant upon the public domain. They have laid down two tracks where they had only received permission to lay one, they have laid down rails in streets for which they had obtained no permission at all, and they have failed to take any adequate precautions to make the streets safe for the people who have a right to use them.

The leading case which may be quoted in this connection is not to be found in the law books but it applies admirably nevertheless. It is to be found in the Merchant of Venice, where Shylock insists upon having his pound of flesh. "'Tis so written in the bond ;" to the bond he has appealed, to the bond he must go. It would seem that already in Chicago a Daniel had come to judgment in the person of the Mayor.

CHAPTER III.

DIVES THE TAX DODGER.

If Christ came to Chicago and took any practical interest in the establishment of His Kingdom in the city, the assessment system would be radically reformed. This is not a question of politics or of administration or of finance. It is a question of elementary morality. For the assessment system is based on a lie. It is worked by perjury, and it has as its natural and necessary results injustice, corruption, and the plunder of the poor. Its continuance for another year would be a practical recognition of the devil's dominance and ascendancy in Chicago, which it is idle to attempt to counterbalance by such lip worship and devout genuflections as we blasphemously dignify by the name of Divine service in our churches.

A great deal has been written about assessment, but many good people in Chicago are still utterly unaware of what it means or how it is worked. Otherwise, it is impossible that in a city nominally Christian, which is studded with churches and littered with Bibles, such a supreme embodiment of fraud, falsehood and injustice could have been allowed to exist for a single hour. Therefore it may be that the best service I can render is to print in plain English the simple truth about the system and how it works.

The first remarkable feature about the assessment system of Chicago is that it puts a higher premium upon perjury than upon any other vice or virtue under heaven. The culture of perjury is not usually regarded as one of the legitimate objects of a civilized, to say nothing of a Christian, government. But in Chicago perjury may almost be regarded as a protected industry. Cer-

tainly there is a fuller reward offered to professional perjurers than to any other officials in the employ of the city. It may perhaps be argued that the virtue of the Chicago citizen is so austere that it is necessary to offer abnormally high inducements to induce them to damn their souls by perjury; but judging from the eager competition there is for the post of professional perjurer, there would seem but little basis for this argument. Whatever may be the cause, there is a heavier sum in solid dollars pocketed every year by the official perjurers in Chicago, than is paid to any other officials in the service of the city.

Perjury ought not to be so rewarded. When the Lord cometh, it is written on the last page of the Old Testament Scripture He would "come near in judgment as a swift witness against false swearers." "For I am the Lord, I change not," was the message given through the Hebrew prophet, and if He has not changed there will be a very poor lookout for the Town Assessors of the City of Chicago when they stand before Him to render account. For each and all of the whole eleven of them are false swearers. They perjure themselves habitually and necessarily as a part of the system. As the calling of a pirate is based upon the negation of the moral law concerning theft and murder, so the calling of an Assessor presupposes the annulling of the condemnation which the moral law pronounces upon the false oath. This is a strong saying, but it is literally and exactly true and is proved on the authority of the latest official document issued by the Comptroller of the City of Chicago. Mr. Ackerman, the Comptroller in question, in his report on the system of assessments says:

There are now eleven Assessors, whose duty it is to assess values in the South, West and North Divisions of the city and in the towns of Lake View, Jefferson, Hyde Park, Calumet, Norwood Park, South Chicago, Town of Lake, and Rogers Park. When they return their books to the County Clerk they make oath that the book contains a correct and full list of the real property subject to taxation in their town, so far as they have been able to ascertain the same, and that the assessed value set down in the proper columns opposite the several

kinds and descriptions of property is in each case the fair cash value of such property to the best of their knowledge and belief (except as corrected by the Town Board).

The Assessors must, therefore, as a condition of their office, swear that the returns which they make in their official capacity are correct and full and that in each case they have set down the fair cash value of the property to the best of their knowledge and belief. Lest they should be liable to make any mistake as to what constitutes "the fair cash value" of the property they assess, it is expressly laid down by the Statutes of Illinois how that fair cash value is to be ascertained.

The Revenue Law of the State, Revised Statutes, Chap. 120, Sec. 4, page 1,266, in the rules for valuing real estate, provides:

1. That each tract of land or real property shall be valued at its fair cash value, estimated at the price it would bring at a fair voluntary sale.
2. Taxable leasehold estates shall be valued at such a price as they would bring at a fair voluntary sale for cash.
3. When a building or structure is located on the right of way of any canal, railroad or other company, leased or granted for a term of years to another, the same shall be valued at such a price as such building or structure and lease or grant would sell at a fair voluntary sale for cash.

There can be no possible loophole of escape for the Assessor. He must swear that he has made a full and correct return, that each item of property is assessed at its fair cash value and that he has estimated it at the price it would bring at a fair voluntary sale.

Now there is not one of the whole eleven Assessors, if they were put in a row and asked the question at the Day of Judgment, or even before a Grand Jury, who would deny that they each and all habitually make false oaths. They know they never make either full or correct returns, they never assess any item of property at its fair cash value, and they never estimate their assessments at the price the article assessed would bring at a fair voluntary sale. That this is so is obvious the moment the matter is looked into, whether we take the

totals of the realty and of personalty or whether we examine the details of particular assessments.

We will begin with the totals. The fact that Chicago has grown enormously in population, in area and in wealth in the last quarter of a century is one of the most conspicuous and indisputable facts of contemporary history. Its increase is one of the phenomena which have attracted the attention of the whole world. Without going back farther than 1867, the following figures will suffice to illustrate the way in which Chicago has advanced by leaps and bounds to the proud position of being on the eve of securing recognition as the Capital of the New World.

	Area Square Miles.	Population.
1867.....	24	252,054
1873.....	36	367,396
1883.....	36	629,985
1893.....	180	1,438,010

No other city in the world has such a showing. But when we turn to the returns of the assessments, duly sworn by eleven different Assessors as a full and correct statement of the price which the real and personal property owned by the citizens of this marvelously increasing city, we are staggered by the discovery that Chicago would, according to the oaths of these eleven responsible officials, sell for less to-day than she would have brought at a fair voluntary sale twenty years ago! Here are the figures:

	Area Sq. Miles.	Population.	ASSESSED VALUE.		Total.
			Realty.	Personalty.	
1867....	24	252,054	\$141,445,920	\$53,580,924	\$195,026,844
1873....	36	367,396	262,969,820	49,103,175	312,072,995
1883....	36	629,985	101,596,787	31,633,717	133,230,504
1893....	180	1,438,010	189,299,120	56,491,231	245,790,351

Therefore if we are to believe the Assessors, Chicago, with close up on a million and a half inhabitants and with 180 square miles of territory, would bring 66 millions dollars less if put up to auction and sold than what the Chicago of 1873, with only 367,000 population

and 36 square miles of land, would have brought at a fair voluntary sale. Such an astonishing shrinkage in value is even more amazing than the amazing growth of the population.

Let us look at it another way. If we average it up we have the following remarkable results :

AVERAGE ASSESSED VALUE.

	Square Mile. (Million Dollars.)	Per Head. (Dollars.)
1867.....	8.1	774
1873.....	8.5	850
1883.....	3.6	211
1893.....	1.3	170

At this rate, in another twenty years Chicago would be stone broke, and couldn't be sold for a red cent. Yet these figures are all official, and not one of them was inscribed on the returns except over the solemn oath of the Assessor. In reality the value of property in Chicago would be underestimated at 2,000 million dollars.

The extraordinary thing about the unaccountable drop in the value of Chicago real estate is that all the data available for estimating the value of the property in the city points in exactly the opposite direction. According to the statements of the Department of Public Works, there were 71,545 buildings erected in the city between 1883 and 1892, the estimated value of which was \$316,857,000. But when we turn to the Assessors' statements, the addition of these 71,000 houses to the real estate of Chicago did not raise the total value of the assessment more than 88 millions of dollars, even if we exclude from consideration all other descriptions of realty. Two and two do not seem to make four in the Assessors' office at Chicago; for if you add 316 millions to 101 millions the result is 189 millions. The comparison with other cities only brings out the same astonishing contrast all the more clearly. For Chicago, while its assessed value has been shrinking, has not been increasing its debt. It has a less assessed value than any great

city except New Orleans, and it has a smaller debt per head than any city, barring none.

Statement showing the assessed value of real and personal estate for the last year and the population and debt of the leading cities of this country:

City.	Assessed Value.	Popula- tion.	Debt.	Valuation per Head.	Debt per Head.
New York...	\$1,933,518,529	1,923,031	\$100,762,407	\$1000	\$0.52
Brooklyn....	506,054,676	1,000,000	47,334,214	500	.21
Boston.....	924,134,300	500,000	33,720,111	1800	.67
*Philadelphia	769,930,542	1,046,964	29,065,845	750	.29
St. Louis....	280,991,420	574,569	21,376,021	500	.37
Chicago.....	245,970,351	1,500,000	18,431,450	160	.12
New Orleans..	137,000,000	265,000	15,335,037	500	.60

So much for a comparison of the totals. Now let us look at the full and correct returns of property assessed on oath at actual and the fair selling price to the best of the knowledge and belief of the Assessor. Take as our first instance the personalty of Mr. C. T. Yerkes, erstwhile of a Pennsylvania penitentiary, now the street railway despot of Chicago, a millionaire and a resident in a handsomely furnished mansion at 3201 Michigan Avenue. Mr. Yerkes, according to the oath of the South Side Assessor, has got \$1,000 worth of personal property in his residence, excluding the piano. In his stables he has two horses, which the Assessor values at \$150 each, and a carriage which is assessed as high as \$1,000. It is singular that Mr. Yerkes, who rides in a thousand dollar carriage, can furnish his whole house for \$1,000. The carpets on the floor, the pictures on the walls, the plate on the table to ordinary eyes would seem each to be dirt cheap at \$1,000. But the Assessor swears that to the best of his knowledge and belief the whole of the personal property of Mr. Yerkes, excluding the piano, would not fetch more than \$1,000 at a fair voluntary sale! In strange contrast to the beggarly value of the Yerkes' household furnishings is the costly piano. It is assessed

*Real estate only.

at \$1,700, or nearly as much again as all the rest of his furniture.

Mr. Yerkes, however, is peculiar in possessing so valuable a piano. I have made bold to acquire what the value, the assessed value, of millionaires' pianos may be in Chicago. I find that, according to the sworn valuation of the Assessors, they average little more than \$150 apiece. That is the fair selling price according to the oaths of the Assessors of the instruments which are to be found in the drawing-rooms of Mr. Marshall Field, Mr. George Pullman and Mr. J. W. Doane.

Mr. Yerkes' horses are also much more valuable than those of the millionaires of Prairie Avenue. Chicago is one of the greatest horse markets in the world and South Town Assessors may be supposed to have some kind of an eye for horse-flesh. Hence it must surprise the public to learn that to the best of the knowledge and belief of the South Town Assessor, the carriage and riding horses of the millionaires would not fetch more than \$20 apiece! Judging from their appearance in harness these steeds must be the cheapest in Christendom. But the Assessor may know that despite their fine appearance they are broken-winded and spavined, for he assesses them on his oath at only \$20 a head. Their carriages, also, in notable contrast to Mr. Yerkes' thousand dollar chariots, could be bought, always on the sworn opinion of the Assessor, at \$30 each. Here are a few extracts from the returns :

Millionaire.	Horses.	Each Valued at	Carriages.	Each Valued at	Piano.
J. W. Doane.....	5	\$20	5	\$30	\$150
Marshall Field.....	6	20	6	30	150
Marshall Field, Jr.....	2	20	2	30	...
G. M. Pullman	10	20	6	30	150

The total valuation of the personalty of the millionaires is equally astonishing. Including horses, carriages, pianos, and everything, the following are the returns of the Assessors, under oath, of the personalty of some leading citizens :

Marshall Field	\$20,000	J. W. Doane	\$10,000
Marshall Field, Jr	2,000	H. H. Kohlsaas	1,500
P. D. Armour	5,000	C. T. Yerkes	4,000
George M. Pullman	12,000	Potter Palmer	15,000

None of these gentlemen make out their own returns. They prefer the unerring judgment and trained experience of the Assessor. He stands between them and their conscience, and why should they complain if he, the elected representative of the citizens, should decide that it would be unfair to tax Mr. Marshall Field, for instance, upon a higher valuation than could be realized by the sale of the Corots and Millets and Teniers which are the gems of his picture gallery?

This is no jesting matter. It is, in plain English, a colossal lie, bolstered up by habitual perjury, and operating to produce roguery of every kind. If it does not speedily go by the board, there will be very little value in the apparent revival of the spirit of righteousness in Chicago.

It is not difficult to see how the system came into existence. Like Topsy, it grew. No lunatic in Kankakee is quite mad enough to have invented such a labyrinth of fraud and make-believe all of a piece. The evil is of comparatively recent growth. As the Comptroller says :

In 1867, under an act of that year, there was a Commissioner of Taxes appointed by the Mayor. He was a man selected for his knowledge of real estate values. His books were open to the inspection of the public, and affidavits were required of tax-payers as to the value of their real and personal property. By act of 1st of July, 1877, an unfortunate change took place. The city of Chicago was required to assess and collect its taxes in the manner provided for in the general revenue law. This is set forth in Art. 8 of the Revised Statutes, and is the system in use at present.

The net effect of this system is that while the value of the property in Chicago, if it were correctly assessed, is nearly 2,000 millions, the officially assessed value of the whole state of Illinois, including Chicago, is only 700 millions. Hempstead Washburne, when Mayor of Chicago, said that the Supreme Court of Illinois had de-

cided that all property should be assessed at $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent of its actual value, but even this liberal standard of $66\frac{2}{3}$ per cent reduction would hardly bring Chicago up to the sum at which the whole state, including Chicago, is now assessed. When you begin to inquire you find that the city throws the blame upon the state and the state upon the city. If the Assessors of the city were not to perjure themselves, these worthy officials remark, we should simply be enabling the state of Illinois to run tax free. All the taxes would be paid by Chicago. If you can get all the Assessors throughout the state to assess full value or any regular proportion of the value, we might fall into line and keep our assessments up to the agreed standard. But at present what can we do? We must do as the others do, or hand over the city to be knifed by the state.

The state, however, would co-operate if Chicago were in earnest. The Revenue Commission, appointed by the joint resolution of the two Houses of the Legislature in 1885, reported as strongly against the present system as any one could desire. The Commissioners' report that the Assessors, although sworn to assess all property at its fair cash value, "are far from doing so. Real estate is generally put down at one-third of its value, frequently much less, and personal property at a much smaller fraction. If there was uniformity in the reduction perhaps but little harm would be done; but there is not. The Assessor, having forsaken the standards of the laws without guide or restraint except his own varying judgment, and subject to the pressure of importunate tax-payers, falls heavily downward. The practice is widely different from the theory. The realty of one man is assessed at one-third, one-half, two-thirds, or even the full measure of the actual value, while that of his neighbor is assessed at one-sixth, one-tenth, one-twentieth, or, as was shown in one instance of considerable magnitude, one-twenty-fifth of its actual value. The owner of the one pays as his annual tax five or six per cent of the whole capital invested,

while the owner of the other pays one-fourth or one-fifth of one per cent. Such distinctions are too invidious to be meekly borne."*

In order to understand the true significance of this system of tax dodging from the point of view of financial pressure, it is well to remember that while the city of Chicago can only levy two per cent, the other taxes which are collected on the same assessment mount up to over \$7.00. Broadly speaking, Chicagoans in the South, West and North Towns pay from \$6.79 in the South to \$7.98 in the North Town. The difference is due to the rate of taxation for parks and boulevards, which falls heaviest on the west and north. The total is made up of the following items which are uniform all over the city :

State	0.310
County	0.778
City.....	4.608
Library	0.199
Sanitary	0.500

The other items vary. They are highest in the West and North. The figures for the other taxes for the West are as follows :

Town.....	0.500
Park	0.450
Park Bond.....	0.050
Boulevard.....	0.050
New Park Survey.....	0.150

Roughly speaking, the citizen of Chicago pays from \$7 to \$8 local rates and taxes for every \$100 of his assessed value. It is therefore his constant object to cut down his assessment. He can not materially alter the rate of taxation, but he can and does reduce the assessment.

If Chicago were assessed at its selling value it would not need to be taxed more than one dollar per hundred for all purposes. One dollar per hundred would yield almost exactly as much as \$8 does to-day, for the net result of manipulating assessment is to reduce the real

* Report of the Revenue Commission, Springfield, 1886.

value from 2,000 millions to an assessed value of 245 millions. But in that case all would pay according to the value of their property, and not, as at present, upon the fantastic value at which they can induce the Assessor to perjure himself.

In England we have no tax upon personal property; local rates are based upon what is called ratable value. This is ascertained by a calculation based upon the letting rental. If a house lets at \$1,000 per annum it is rated at about \$750 or \$800; the 20 or 25 per cent being thrown off as an allowance for repairs, etc. When I occupied my house on a repairing lease, that is to say, when I as tenant undertook to keep the house in repair, I was rated on my net rental. The system is not perfect, but as the rental can be ascertained from both landlord and tenant and the valuation is subject to independent revision it does not work badly on the whole.

The result of the Chicago system is too ludicrous for belief if it were not so cruel and unjust as to stifle laughter. It is of course absurd to blame the rich citizens who have been born under the system and have never realized their personal responsibility for what the tax-farmer does in their name. Neither do they realize, the most of them, what hardship their maneuvers inflict upon the poor. But if they will study the comparative tables which I publish in the appendix, they will see how the system works.

Speaking broadly, the average assessment is one-eighth the value of the selling value of the property. There is no rich man assessed at more than one-eighth. There are many assessed at much less. There are few poor men assessed at all whose assessments do not run above the average of 12½ per cent—of course except the poor Aldermen, who, with half a dozen exceptions appear to have no personal property at all. They have probably spent it all in trying to live upon their official salary of \$3 a week.

The curiosities of the assessments collected in the appendix speak for themselves.

First and foremost be it noted how careful the Assessors have been to assess lightly all those who have a pull, political or otherwise. Mr. Melville Stone told me that some years ago when he was editing the *Daily News* he was assessed at about the same as his stenographer. He protested and got his assessment raised, but he attributed his low assessment entirely to the fact that the Assessor hoped thereby to secure the support of the paper which he edited. Newspapers in Chicago have certainly, from this or from some other cause, a very low "fair selling value," in the opinion of the Assessors. He would be a smart man who could equip a first-class newspaper office with plant, type, machinery, and so forth, for the total sum of the combined assessments of the Chicago press. The average assessment of the morning paper is about \$15,000, about the price of a single printing machine. The personalty of the *Dispatch* is as low as \$300, a very modest sum on which to run an evening paper. Newspaper real estate is equally cheap, in the opinion of the Assessor. It is rather odd to find that the *Inter Ocean* is assessed at more than double the assessment of the *Tribune*. The total value of the realty and personalty of the *Record* and *Daily News* is about a month's profits, if common report be correct. Mr. Lawson does not seem to have inherited his late partner's objection to low assessment.

After the newspapers, the Aldermen are most influential in Chicago. They are hopelessly impecunious—according to the Assessor. Mr. Madden, Chairman of the Finance Committee, is not assessed at one red cent. Mr. Mann, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, has only \$100 of personalty. It is an extraordinary illustration of the way in which Chicago is governed, that the control of the city revenues, which amount to almost exactly the total value of all the gold mined in the United States in a twelvemonth, should be vested in

the hands of sixty-eight Aldermen, of whom fifty-five have no personal property at all and the remainder only own, in the opinion of the Assessor, sufficient personal property to fetch \$1,550 if they were sold at auction.

The millionaires—but stop, there are no millionaires in Chicago, according to the Assessors. No one pays taxes on a million. The personal property and the real estate combined do not in any single instance amount to that sum. There is no tax roll compiled by the Assessor so as to show at a glance what each tax-payer is assessed at. The real estate of a millionaire is scattered around to such an extent that it is difficult to ascertain how much he is really assessed at. But if we take their personalty and the cost of their residences it is astounding how cheaply they are housed and how economically they furnish their palaces. The Chicago millionaire drives blooded horses which the Assessor does not think would sell for more than \$20 cash, if he lives on the South Side, but on the North Side they average \$50. Their carriages also vary in cost from \$30 to \$100 according to the district in which they are assessed. Their pianos also come cheap—from \$50 to \$180; and one of them, Mr. McCormick, has actually got three watches, worth, on an average, $\$33\frac{1}{3}$ each.

The list abounds in strange contrasts. Who, for instance, could have imagined that Carrie Watson down Clark Street had four times as much personalty as Mr. John R. Walsh, President of the Chicago National Bank, chief proprietor of the *Herald*, and head of the Western News Co.? Such, however, is the fact, according to the sworn information of the Assessor. Carrie Watson's personalty is \$4,000; Mr. John R. Walsh's only \$1,000. Whatever Carrie Watson's failings may be in other respects, she seems to do her duty as a tax-payer better than many other people who would not touch her polluted fingers. I had heard that she lived in style and had amassed considerable wealth, but I did not expect to find that with the exception of Mr. Yerkes she owned

the finest horses in the city. She has four assessed at \$125 each. Mr. Yerkes has only two, but they average \$150 apiece. If Mr. Yerkes beats her in horse-flesh, she leaves Mr. Marshall Field far behind in carriages. The multi-millionaire modestly rides to town in a \$30 chariot, whereas nothing less than two \$350 coaches will suffice for Madame. Mr. Medill, poor man, can only indulge one piano valued at \$100, whereas Carrie Watson has two, each of which is assessed at \$150.

Speaking generally, the total personalty of millionaires is assessed at about the sum necessary to furnish a single room in their palaces, and that by no means the best. The jewelry worn by some ladies at an evening party far exceeds the total value of the whole assessment of their personalty. Mrs. William Astor is said occasionally to dazzle New York society by appearing plastered with diamonds valued at a million dollars. There are fortunately no such peripatetic jewelers' show cases in Chicago, but more than one lady in Chicago, could sell her jewels for more than the entire assessed personalty of the Prairie Avenue fraternity.

The contrasts between the assessments of the immense business buildings and those of humble stores, upon which the *Chicago Times* lays such stress, is notable enough to need no comment. Much of this may be explained by the fact that, as a wealthy man remarked the other day, "I buy my taxes cheap as I buy everything else." When we find the Auditorium assessed at just about the sum which it cost to fit it with radiators, it is not marvelous that people shrug their shoulders. What can we think also of the assessing of the Plaza, a seven-story building at the southeast corner of Clark Street and North Avenue, at \$10,000 in 1892, when the purchase money of the ground on which it stands was \$95,000? The premises as they stand are estimated as being worth well-nigh a million. But even now they are only assessed at \$30,000, an increase of \$20,000 since

the previous year. The assessment lists are full of similar scandals, but few are quite so gross as this.

If the evil were confined to rich people it would be bad enough. But there is just as much discrimination or indiscriminatio between the poor and the poor as between the rich and the poor. The canker of corruption has eaten through and through the whole social system.

The Assessor, who having forsaken the standards of the law, says the report is without guide or restraint, except his own judgment and the pressure of the importunate taxpayers. This is a euphemism for saying that the Assessor is without any guide excepting his own interests as they are influenced by *Dives the Tax Dodger*. The place of Assessor is not worth very much if it is estimated by the value of the legal salary, but every one knows that in Chicago an assessorship is the shortest cut to fortune. As Roman Emperors were wont to give their favorites consulships in a fat province, in order that they might replenish fortunes wasted in gambling and debauch, so the political system in Chicago distributes assessorships as plums to politicians who have deserved well of their party. Assessors are not bribed in the same way in which Aldermen are corrupted, but although the method varies, the end in the long run is arrived at all the same. The representative of the people uses his position of trust in order to cheat the people and feather his own nest. That is all there is of it, take it as you please. Sometimes the Assessor is bribed by liberal subscriptions to his election fund, the balance of which goes into the Assessor's pocket. At other times the matter is arranged in hard cash, either between the tax-farmer and the Assessor, and sometimes between the individual citizen and the man who can fine him to three or four times as much taxes as are being paid by his neighbor or who can cut down his estimate to next to nothing. An anecdote was told me of an Assessor who, calling upon a cobbler in one of the towns of Chicago for

the purpose of fixing his assessment, asked significantly, how much a first-class pair of boots would cost for him. The cobbler's honesty wilted under the temptation, and he replied, as any luckless Christian would do whose goods a pasha or kaimakan had taken a fancy to in Macedonia or Armenia, that to him the boots would cost very little. As a matter of fact the boots were given, and if the assessment was not reduced it certainly was not raised.

An Assessor, no doubt, when he leaves office marvels at his own moderation. He has practically *carte blanche* to steal where he pleases, nor is there any possibility of any check upon his corruption provided he acts with ordinary caution. Here, for instance, is a case in point. Mr. Washington Hesing, present Postmaster of Chicago, mentioned the following instance of the kind of plunder that goes on. Speaking of Assessors suddenly becoming rich, Mr. Hesing said :

There is Chase, who was Assessor on the North Side. A few years ago a friend of mine came to me, and with him was Chase. My friend said : "Mr. Hesing, this man is Mr. Chase. He is poor and has nothing to do. He wants to be Assessor in the North Town. The salary is only \$1,500 a year, but that will keep Chase and his family from starving. Will you help him get the office?"

Chase got the position all right, held it either four or five years, and went out of the office rich.

I make no comment on this at all. I don't need to do so. I just simply state these facts : Chase went into the office penniless. He held it either four or five years, drawing a salary of \$1,500 a year, and came out of it wealthy. He built himself a handsome and costly house on Vernon Avenue. Where did he get his money?

So well recognized is it in the town that assessments are fraudulent, and it is considered perfectly legitimate to resort to any expedient to avoid taxation. Of course in this kind of a game, the rich, and especially the corporations which have no souls to be damned or bodies to be kicked, play a leading part. The law is the poor man's friend. Civilization consists, as I am constantly saying, in the substitution of the law for the arbitrary caprice of an individual. Civilization means the protection of the weak against the rapine of the strong. The strong and the rich can always hold their own under an-

archy. Under a system in which might is right, there is no law save only the will of him that is strong; the poor and weak go to the wall. That is just what happens in Chicago where civilization has still to penetrate many of the departments of the city administration. The very poor in Chicago do not pay taxes at all. They are excused on account of their poverty. The very rich, at the other end of the social scale, do their best to approximate to the condition of the very poor by reducing their assessments to a minimum. The burden of taxes, therefore, falls on the middle classes. The middle class man is not wealthy enough or powerful enough to employ tax-farmers to reduce his assessment.

I shrink from using language which would be adequate to describe the injustice of this proceeding. Fortunately there is no need for me to say what I think, seeing that my sentiments and those of every person who looks on this subject from the outside have been expressed with sufficient emphasis by Postmaster Washington Hesing in an interview published by the *Chicago Times*. Mr. Hesing's official position and his familiarity with the facts of which he speaks give great authority to the following scathing indictment of the tax system of Chicago:

There is not a large corporation in the city of Chicago that is paying taxes on over one-tenth of the real value of its property. It is the greatest outrage on a municipality ever perpetrated. The poor men of Chicago pay the bulk of the taxes and it grinds them and galls them to do it. Some of them get to thinking about it and once in a while you'll hear of a man declaring himself an Anarchist. No wonder. Can any one blame him?

The lowness of Chicago's tax list is the result of the most villainous bribery and perjury. It is enough to make honest, decent people boil with indignation to hear the naked facts. The property of a big corporation is never assessed for more than one-tenth of its real value. Here, for example, is a syndicate owning a big building. The property is worth a couple of millions. At a forced sale it would bring in the neighborhood of \$1,200,000. That is the figure it should be assessed at. But it never is. It goes on the Assessor's book at about \$125,000. The Assessor and his go-between pocket their bribes and go out on Blue Island Avenue or Clybourn Avenue and find a poor man—a small shop keeper—owning a little place worth \$2,000. He pays taxes on \$1,500. There is a great merchant in this town. I will not

mention his name; everybody knows who I mean. His place was burned out once and he produced fire insurance policies for between \$950,000 and \$1,000,000. He got the money, I presume. At least the companies never made any public objection to paying. That insurance was on his stock—that is to say, chattels—which is taxable. When I heard about it I sent a man over to the Assessor's office, and I declare to you that a member of the firm had sworn that the stock was worth \$72,000, and that was what they were paying taxes on.

The rank dishonesty of the Assessor amazes me. I don't see how a man can accept bribes, flagrantly disobey the law, and escape unscathed. The Assessor, however, always tries to cover up his tracks and works behind another man. To show how these persons operate let me tell of a case that was brought to my attention. There is a business man in this town whose taxes amounted to \$1,500. He was going to pay that sum without a kick. One day a man went to him and said: "Your taxes are \$1,500. I can get them cut to \$750. What will you give me if I do this?" After some talk the business man agreed to give \$400. His taxes were reduced and he saved \$350. The city was cheated out of \$750. That is only one case. There are scores of others. Of the \$400 bribe the Assessor got \$200 and his agent \$200.

There are men in the city of Chicago whose business it is to swear to lies, to perjure themselves. A merchant does not like the idea of going on record as a perjurer. So he says to one of these professionals: "Here, I am going out of town. You fix up my taxes. Make the amount so much," naming the small sum on which he wants to be assessed. The perjurer does this and gets his price.

Whatever is done, the present infamous system should go. It forces men of little means to bear the burden; it takes but a trifle from the rich; it results in bribery; it causes perjury; it is outrageous. Let it be wiped out, and that without delay.

Mr. Hesing went on to describe how his efforts to secure an adequate assessment of his own property utterly failed. He protested against a building in which he was interested being assessed as being worth a little more than its annual rental, but it was in vain. Mr. Hesing's house, for which he would not take \$40,000, was assessed for \$3,637. He owns land in Ravenswood that is worth \$80 a foot, and is assessed for a mere bagatelle which would hardly pay for putting up a fence around it. It is very seldom, however, that the tax-payer manifests an eager desire to be assessed at his full value. They take the goods the gods provide them and they do not care to look a gift horse too close in the mouth. They secure themselves on the ground that these things form part of a wrong system and that they ought not to make martyrs

of themselves in changing it. What they forget is that they might at least make voters of themselves in order to improve it, but that is what they heretofore do not seem to have taken into consideration. So the rotten system goes on. How it works out may be seen from these fragmentary examples given in this chapter. Those who care for further information will find in the appendix a list of many of the wealthiest people in Chicago together with some samples of the way in which the property of the smaller tradesmen and the lower and middle class is assessed.

The reform of the assessment system can only be effected by action at Springfield through the State Legislature, and this brings us to another difficulty. A leading citizen and universally respected ex-official of the city administration said frankly that he despaired of doing anything because "there are too many in it," to use his own words, for any measure of reform to be carried through the Legislature at Springfield. He said: "Our Aldermen are bad enough, and cannot be said to be ideal representatives of the city; but they are gentlemen compared with the creatures whom we send to represent us in the Legislature of the State of Illinois. Hence, even if you were to reform the City Council of Chicago and get them unanimously to indorse a bill reforming the assessment system, it would have no chance at Springfield. The rich, who at the present moment escape their fair share of the burdens of the city, would simply go down to Springfield and buy up the Legislature. Congressmen are not only a more disreputable lot than the Aldermen, but their price is much lower. You can buy up the Legislature of Illinois at much less per head than you can the City Council of Chicago. It is ludicrous, if it were not a matter for indignation, to see the kind of men who are considered fit and proper persons to represent this great city in the Legislature of the State. I remember some time ago I had a young man who was a pretty fair clerk in my office, a man of no

special capacity, who was earning fair wages but who was totally destitute of any training that would qualify him as a legislator. One fine day I was told that he was listening to the proposals which were being made to him for standing for Congress as a representative of one of the wards of the city. I sent for him and begged him to dismiss such nonsense from his head. 'You cannot make an honest living at Springfield,' I said, 'neither can you continue to earn a salary as a clerk in my office if you are attending to your legislative duties in another place. Besides you know you are quite unfit for the post. You cannot write the introduction to any bill which might be introduced, to save your life. Drop all that and stick to your business.' He hung his head and looked ashamed, but then picking up courage he said that he would try, because if he did not get it some other d— fool would. He did get elected and went to Congress. He became as corrupt as any of the boodlers there and as corrupt personally as he was politically. His moral character went, he took to drinking and now he lies in a drunkard's grave. He is one among many who have gone down to destruction because our Legislature, even more than our City Council, is a sink of iniquity. What are you going to do against such a state of things as this?"

"Well," I replied, "there is more work to be done than I at first realized, but it will be done all the same."

I can only say that for my own part I marvel with exceeding great wonderment that a system so rotten and so unjust could be allowed to continue for a quarter of a century in the midst of a nominally Christian community. In England we have been accustomed to consider that Americans as a race are fond of liberty, with a keen sense of justice and an inveterate impatience with injustice when it takes the form of taxes. I am afraid I shall return to my own land with a very different conception of American citizens. The men who threw the tea into the bay at Boston

and severed the tie which linked the American colonies to the mother country have left few descendants among the citizens of Chicago. The amount of taxes in dispute which lost us this continent was only \$400,000 a year. Many times that sum is every year unjustly shifted by the wealthy tax-dodgers of Chicago from their own shoulders to those of their poorer neighbors, and no one seems to care. Yet the number of tax-dodgers is comparatively few. They could be snowed under at any election by majorities of at least ten to one, but this meek and patient majority has gone on year after year, suffering without protest a system of taxation compared with which that of George III was ideally just. There has been no tea thrown into the harbor in Chicago; there has hardly been an articulate protest against a system of spoliation which admittedly robs the poor to enrich the wealthy.

I read in the *Chicago Times* the statement that "the Chicago system of taxation is systematized crime against the poor; that for twenty years the burden of taxation has rested upon the poor and that it is the history of tax-dodging, discrimination, bribing and perjury, written upon every page of the tax books of Cook County. The trusts, the corporations, the millionaires of Chicago pay taxes on less than one-tenth of the value of their enormous accumulations of wealth, while the small property owners are being taxed on from one-half to one-third of the value of their humble possessions. The millions belonging to the rich are sheltered by bribery and perjury from paying tribute, while the humble homes of the poor have no protection." Yet, although these facts are undenied and have been in the possession of the public for years and are no worse to-day than they have been any time since 1880, there is no agitation, no protest, no revolt. Here and there in a few obscure corners a few Socialists are organizing, and in still more obscure corners the Anarchists are muttering threats and perhaps dreaming of dynamite, but for any trace of an out-

burst of healthy indignation which such facts should elicit in any self-respecting community, I have looked in vain. The Chicago tax-payer may have the meekness of the sheep and the patience of the ass, but he can hardly be said to have the independence and self-respect of a human being or the public spirit of an American citizen.

But human nature being human nature all the world over, even in Chicago, and the stock of patience and forbearance under spoliation and plunder being a limited quantity, the time of its exhaustion must be drawing near. I have had some little experience of agitation in the Old World and I must say that I never have seen a condition of things in an English-speaking land where the signs point unmistakably to change, and it may be to violent change. Evils often exist which are keenly felt, but whose origin and source is so obscure that it is almost impossible for the sufferers to place their finger on the cause of their trouble, nor do they know how to redress it. In Chicago for the first time I have found a system of taxation admittedly unjust, undeniably and palpably based upon corruption, maintained for the benefit of a handful of persons, none of whom dare defend in the light of day what they are doing in secret; and we have the facts officially certified by the chief authorities in the city. Successive Mayors and Comptrollers have placed on record so that no street sweeper could mistake their meaning, their deliberate judgment that Dives is a tax-dodger and that he is now and has been for years thrusting the burden which he should have carried upon the shoulders of Lazarus. Here, for instance, is a passage from the last report of Comptroller Ackerman:

There appears to be a general disposition to escape this form of taxation, and evasion and misrepresentation appear to be almost the rule. It is notorious that many instances occur every year in which eminently reputable citizens have made returns equal to about one-fiftieth and in some cases one-hundredth part of the value of their personal estate. The whole system is demoralizing in its effects from beginning to end and should be remedied by such legislative action as will

enable the officers of the city to have complete and entire control of its resources.

Changes indeed! But what sign is there of its being changed at the present moment? Even a worm will turn, but the poorer tax-payers of Chicago seem not even to have the spirit of a worm; they are rather like caterpillars, bruised and mangled beneath the gardener's spade, without even strength to crawl or resolution to bestir themselves to remedy their miserable condition. Even the loss of the beloved dollar fails to nerve them to action. Possibly the tax-dodger knows his neighbor and assumes upon his apathy and indifference; but he will do well to remember that this assumption is the infallible mistake of all tyrants and oppressors in all lands. They think that the injustice by which they profit will last their time and after that may come the deluge. But sometimes the deluge does not wait until they quit the scene. George the Third made that mistake, among others, with the result that the English-speaking race was reft in twain, and Britain lost her empire in the New World, owing to a dispute about a less sum than that annually plundered from the poor by the tax-dodgers of Chicago. There is a grim saying in the Old Book which may be commended to the gentlemen who are skulking, ashamed but resolute, in their trenches of the assessment system: "Rob not the poor because he is poor, neither oppress the afflicted in the gate, for the Lord will plead their cause and spoil the soul of those that spoil them." And there is another like unto it: "their feet shall slide in due time."

CHAPTER IV.

GAMBLING AND PARTY FINANCE.

Every city in Europe, with one exception, Monte Carlo, which is not a city, has put down public gaming hells. They flourished in other places until 1870, but when reunited Germany smote down the French Empire and unified the Fatherland, the clink of roulette was heard no more in Homburg and the other German watering places, for the croupier went out as the Kaiser came in.

There is plenty of gambling in England, but the European conscience has decided apparently once for all that gaming hells are not institutions for civilization to tolerate. This would also seem to be the opinion of the Legislature of the State of Illinois, and the same doctrine has received the approval of the City Council of Chicago. Nevertheless, so far from this having brought Chicago up to the moral level of the most immoral European city, the contrary is the case. The gaming hell open and unashamed is one of the indigenous institutions of Chicago.

The love of gambling is almost as deep-seated in the human nature as the animal appetite on which the race depends for its preservation and multiplication. The craving for excitement; the longing to be suddenly rich without exertion or expenditure, are too deeply seated to be expunged by municipal ordinances or statutes of the Legislature.

Gambling seems to come to most men as naturally as lying, and therefore it is claimed by some it is best to place no obstacle in the way of this strong, inherited and natural propensity. Common sense would seem to point in exactly the opposite direction. One does not need to be a moralist to admit that the gaming table is

not an institution which makes for righteousness in a community. That would not be maintained by anyone, least of all by its habitues, of which in this city, it is said, there are about 5,000. If, therefore, it be regarded as an object of sound policy to minimize any evil which cannot be annihilated, the object of the administration must be to compel those who gamble to do it as much out of sight as possible, in order that the temptation and fascination of the pursuit may be kept out of the minds of others. Because it conduces to unrighteousness, the public gaming hell has been suppressed everywhere in the Old World, and it is not likely that any new arguments can be discovered in Chicago to justify a contrary policy from a moral point of view. The defense, if defense there be, must be based on other than moral considerations. At the same time, while regretting that Chicago should deliberately adopt a lower moral standard in relation to gaming hells than any European city, there is no ground for Phariaism on the part of European critics.

The great gaming hell of England is the race course, and I have never been able to understand the nicety of the distinction which damned the gaming table and upholds the race course. Everything is strongly in favor of roulette and unloaded dice as against the gambling machines used not on the green table, but on the green turf of the race track. Monte Carlo is a fair play itself compared with the betting ring. Nothing can be more odious than the way in which some English newspapers which derive much of their circulation and profit from pandering to the race course, hold up their hands in holy horror against the Prince of Monaco for drawing a handsome revenue from the gaming tables of Monte Carlo. At the same time while we recognize that the race track is worse than the gambling hell we need not sanction both evils because one is less than the other, and refuse to do one good thing because we cannot do

two. This is an absurd policy which should be left strictly to the party of temperance, falsely so-called.

The peculiarity about the Chicago plan of dealing with the gambling hells is not that the houses are allowed to run; anybody could allow houses to run, if they were prepared to take the moral responsibility of allowing pitfalls or temptations to be opened up before the feet of citizens. That which is peculiar about Chicago is the way in which gaming is utilized as an engine of party finance. Chicago taught the world how to make the dice box and the wheel of fortune and the pack of cards a resource of partisan finance. It is ingenious and immoral. It is simply the adoption by the Mayor of the city of the methods and morals of the policeman who levies blackmail on the street walkers on his beat. Between the blackmailing Mayor and the blackmailing policeman there is not a pin to choose, except the man in the high position is much more to be condemned than his poorer and humbler fellow citizen. The principle in both cases is exactly the same. The gaming house has no more right to exist in Chicago than the woman has to solicit vice in the public streets. The law against gaming houses is much more precise and more emphatic than that which forbids solicitation. It is inconvenient for the policeman to be perpetually arresting street walkers, and it is much more agreeable for him to make a deal with her in consideration of which he lines his pocket and she is left uninterrupted to pursue her vocation. The same argument precisely led the late Carter Harrison to conclude the famous deal with the gamblers' syndicate, which brought in so golden a harvest. Of course, if anybody asks for proof that any particular policeman took blackmail, the proof is not forthcoming. There was the same universal conviction as to the nature of the bargain which was struck between Carter Harrison, as Mayor of Chicago, and the gambling fraternity, but the evidence which should be produced in a court of law is not forthcoming.

A Mayor can on an occasion be as discreet as a hoodling Alderman, and they usually console their consciences by reflecting that, after all, the money is not used by them for their own private needs; it is a contribution to the expense of getting elected and a safe financial expedient for recuperating the party war chest for the lavish outlay of dollars which a contested election will cost.

The way in which it was done, according to the story circulated everywhere in Chicago, is as follows:

Before Carter Harrison's last election, a certain number of the gamblers, as is the custom in this city, made up a purse and subscribed several thousands of dollars (authorities differ as to the precise amount) to Mr. Harrison's election fund. When he was elected he took steps to recoup those patriots who had supplied him with the sinews of war. A small syndicate was formed for the purpose of securing a certain liberal percentage of the profits on gaming, and in return practical immunity from prosecution was secured to the gaming houses by the arrangement with the Mayor. How large that percentage was has never been definitely settled, but reports put it as much as 65 per cent. A certain well-known citizen who was trusted by the Mayor was at the head of the syndicate, and in that capacity he became the favored shepherd of all the gamblers in town. In dealing with the gaming houses he had practically a free hand. Whom he would he slew; whom he would not, he kept alive. That is the theory; but in practice it was found that the houses that were shut were those which had not agreed to pay the stipulated percentage while those who punctually paid up their dues to the gambling shepherd were allowed to run free. This sum, which amounted during the World's Fair, in some districts, to a colossal fortune, was divided. Many people had a finger in the pie before the residue reached Mr. Harrison. But how ever many there were who fingered the profit enroute, there was enough left to make it well worth the

Mayor's while to allow the houses to run. This arrangement was in full force when Carter Harrison was shot, and the houses continued running all the interregnum. Everyone in Chicago knew perfectly well that they were running; there was no attempt at concealment. They were all in existence and prospered under the protection of the administration. One of the most famous hells was running immediately over the saloon of Alderman Powers.

A Grand Jury last autumn suddenly struck evidence as to the existence of gaming houses. They asked the police why they were not suppressing them, the patrolmen declared under oath that gambling was running wide open in the city by the consent and under the protection of the authorities, with an occasional exception where the parties were not in sufficiently good standing to obtain a permit. They were reminded that each one of them was commanded by law to close up each gaming house and seize and prosecute the gamblers. They replied that their hands were tied by their superior officers, and that no houses were closed without special and direct orders from these superior officers. The Grand Jury summoned the Chief of Police. Of course he knew nothing about it; the duty of closing the gaming houses was left, he said, to the patrolmen. The Grand Jury thereby reported that the conflict of evidence led its members to the conclusion that there was collusion between the police force of the city and the gamblers so general and wide that its devil-fish tentacles reached over a large portion of the police force. Of course everyone who read this laughed at the innocence of the Grand Jury, and wondered how long after the deluge begun these worthy souls would discover that it looked like rain, and prepare to unfurl their umbrellas. The Grand Jury, however, at least established the fact beyond all doubt or gainsay that gambling was running wide open by the consent and under the protection of the authori-

ties in direct contravention both of municipal ordinances and the laws of the state of Illinois. Although this fact was thus officially brought before the Chief of the force and acting Mayor, nothing was done. The gaming houses were crowded every night, and at the dinner hour by the dinner-pail brigade, just as they always had been; and the gambling syndicate collected their share of the gaming receipts, and, it is hoped, handed over the due proportion to their heirs and representatives of those who had arranged the deal. So matters remained until the election of Mr. Hopkins.

Nothing was said on the subject either by the Republicans or Democrats in the mayoral campaign. The Republicans were too busy discussing the city's financial situation and the infamy of the Queen of the Sandwich Islands. The Democrats laid low and said nothing for reasons of their own. Gamblers, acting in accordance with their usual sagacity, put up large sums of money (the exact amount is again uncertain) for campaign purposes. A leading Democrat on the West Side told me that Mr. Hopkins, who was receiver of the Chemical National Bank, noticed, with some curiosity, a heavy check paid into the Republican campaign fund by some leading gamblers of the South Side. He immediately ordered all checks from the same source to be sent to him for examination, and as a result of this scrutiny he came to the conclusion that the gamblers were putting more money upon Mr. Swift than they were on Mr. Hopkins. Therefore the Mayor, who is quick to resent an injury and slow to forgive a slight, is said to have marked down those gamblers for condign punishment. He said nothing, however, and when the election was over he still kept his silence, until one fine day, early in January, the Rev. O. P. Gifford and a gambler, by name Ficklen, waited upon the Mayor and asked him what he proposed to do about the gaming houses. Mr. Gifford had previously made a radical speech at Willard Hall, in which he declared he and other ministers were determined to put

the law into motion against gambling hells or perish on the threshold. His first move was to take counsel with the Mayor. He reported when he came out that he was more than satisfied with his visit. He (the Mayor) told Mr. Gifford he considered gambling an evil which could not be suppressed in a city of this size, though he thought it could be regulated, and he assured Mr. Gifford of his hearty sympathy in every effort he might make to exterminate open gambling in Chicago. This was on the fifth of January. The same day he summoned Chief Brennan and as a result orders were issued the next day ordering all the police to close the gambling houses in the city. The next Saturday night every gaming hell was closed up tight. On the next Monday, the following interview appeared in the Chicago papers:

The Mayor expressed some surprise when questioned concerning the order.

"Who told you the gambling houses had been closed?"

His honor was informed that the information had come direct from Chief Brennan's office.

"Well," remarked the Mayor, "I don't know anything about any order on the subject. But I do not issue instructions to my department chiefs. I presume Chief Brennan can tell you all that is to be told about closing the gambling houses. I think it not improbable," the Mayor continued, looking very grave meanwhile, "that the closing is entirely voluntary on the part of the gamblers. I understand they have been complaining about the hard times. Then within the past few weeks two of these gambling houses have been robbed. I am informed that Chief Brennan is talking of reducing the police force. In view of these things, it is possible that the gamblers fear they will not have adequate police protection hereafter, and have concluded to go out of business. This is only a suggestion, however, which I offer for what it is worth."

Chief Brennan was appealed to.

"Does the order include all gambling houses?"

"All gambling houses."

"For good?"

"For good."

"All forms of gambling?"

"All forms of gambling—gambling houses, crap games, pool rooms."

"They will not be allowed to reopen under certain promises, then?"

"They will not. The pool rooms of the city were closed on my orders after I had conferred with the Mayor on the matter. They will remain closed if it takes the entire police force to do it."

From this it will be seen that the Mayor in addition to his other gifts possesses a broad sense of humor. It also shows that the actors in the little comedy had not arranged their parts with sufficient care; otherwise the Mayor would hardly have expressed surprise at the action of the Chief of Police and disclaimed all responsibility for what he was doing, at the very moment when the Chief in question was declaring that the gaming houses were closed after he had conferred with the Mayor on the matter.

Another reporter declared that the Mayor had said if anyone could find an order of his closing the houses he would give them a new suit of clothes. The *Inter Ocean* in announcing the closing of the houses embodied the general conviction of the gamblers themselves in the following "Scare heads:"

Not on the square! Gambling houses are ordered to suspend operations! It is only a blind! Done for the purpose of concentrating the privilege to rob! Houses will open again as soon as those under the ban are driven out!

"We shall all be open again in a week," was the opinion of most of the professionals; but they began to look rather blue when a week passed and no permission was received. They began to fear that the Mayor, after all, might really be in earnest. After a time they decided to give him a hint. To remind him of his dependence upon the gamblers they made it hot for him by an election petition. The petition called attention to the various irregularities which had taken place in the contest which had resulted in the return of Mr. Hopkins and compelled him thereby to defend his seat. This led to Mr. Hopkins' second declaration on the subject of gambling, from which it may be seen plainly enough that he regarded the whole question from the point of view of the politician and not from that of the moralist. When asked about the current rumor about the petition he said: "You can say this: no gambler who spends his money in fighting me in this contest will open his place while I am

Mayor. I may not be able to stop gambling entirely, but I will be able to stop these men from running open houses." This was on the 23d, the houses having been closed for more than a fortnight. The papers, which at first had been very dubious about the Mayor's will or power to close the gaming houses, now declared that gambling could be suppressed, and had been suppressed, and must continue to be suppressed. Judging from the utterances of the Chicago newspapers there was nobody in the town who wished gambling to continue. Meanwhile some of the gamblers who had been through similar experiences smiled audibly.*

Then one or two of the papers announced that the Mayor was going to weaken on the policy of restriction. The 25th of January a gaming house proprietor stated that the Mayor had owned himself beaten: that the gaming houses would all be running full blast as soon as they could get their rooms in order. "He (Mayor Hopkins) has been driven to toleration by stress of circumstances. He has thrown up both hands and confessed his failure. I am willing to give him credit for a conscientious attempt to suppress the gaming tables, but, like everybody else who ever tried it, he has found his efforts futile. He has been successful in exterminating the downtown gambling houses for the time being, and what is the result? Simply that the fever has broken out all over the body corporate. There are small games all over the city and invariably will be as long as the legitimate outlet for the disease is closed.

*The gambling houses should not be permitted to reopen under the pretense that they are to be "regulated." There can be no "regulation" of that which is plainly illegal and which is overwhelmingly condemned by the best public sentiment. Let the gambling houses remain closed throughout Mayor Hopkins' term.—*Herald*.

Mayor Hopkins' first step toward the "regulation" of gambling is to close up their places. The next logical step is to cause the arrest and prompt conviction of the gamblers as common vagrants. "The laws will be enforced." That seems to cover the case.—*Times*.

The recent onslaught of Chief Brennan has afforded ample proof that gambling can be suppressed if the authorities wish to suppress it.—*Record*.

If the police mean business, they will swear out warrants, they will raid the gambling houses, will smash the implements, and prosecute all the offenders they catch. If that policy is pursued the establishments which were warned Saturday can be kept closed permanently. There will not be the least difficulty about it.—*Tribune*.

From various and sundry quarters complaints have been lodged with the police that residents were annoyed in their homes by the proximity of gambling houses."

The same paper which published this statement reported that the Mayor declared that he had stopped open gambling and he proposed to keep it stopped if he could. Meanwhile the gaming house keepers went on furnishing and preparing their establishments for the reopening, which they confidently predicted would speedily come.

At the beginning of February the rumor as to the reopening of the houses began to gain, and it was not until the eve of Valentine's Day that the interdict was removed, no one knew why or how. The last statement which appeared from Mr. Hopkins was that while gambling could not be suppressed he was determined to prevent houses from running open, and that as long as he was Mayor there should be no open houses in Chicago, whatever might be done secretly. His declaration was so emphatic that it is difficult to account for what followed.

On the 12th of February several houses opened and were closed at once by the police. Chief Brennan said: "In closing the gambling houses that were opened last night the police acted only on my standing instructions. I guess if any houses open up the police will know their duty; there has been no change in orders." That utterance was reported on the morning of the 14th of February. On that day every gaming house in Chicago started playing in full blast, nor was there even a pretense of secrecy. Notwithstanding this, two days after the houses were running open Mr. Hopkins declared that he was doing all he could to stop gambling.

"Day before yesterday," said the Mayor, "I was going to lunch with a friend, when we passed under the shelter shed on La Salle Street, in front of the Stock Exchange Building. This shed is placed there to protect the people passing from falling bricks and timbers from the hands of workmen laboring high up on the uncompleted structure. When we reached the center of the shed we encountere^d

a big crowd. Peeping over the heads of the men on the outskirts of the crowd I saw a man with a chuckaluck cloth spread out and a dozen or more men placing their money on the turn of the dice. I did not wish to create a disturbance of so quiet a game, and concluded to go to the corner of La Salle and Madison Streets and send a policeman back to arrest the fellow. Afterwards I wished I had used my authority as head of the police force to make the arrest myself, for on reaching the corner no policeman could be found. I went back myself, but before I got there the fellow had flown."

"After dinner I called Chief Brennan to my office and told him what I had seen. He informed that this was a common occurrence; that the gambler always had a confederate to watch for the arrival of a policeman and when one loomed up on the horizon the gambler, being warned, stuffed his cloth and dice into his pocket and walked off in the crowd."

"This simply shows," continued the Mayor, "that we cannot stop gambling. I am trying to the best of my ability. Chief Brennan had his orders soon after I entered upon the duties of my office and he has had no modification of the orders since. There is bound to be gambling and it is surprising how many reputable business men want it to continue. I have had representatives of prominent wholesale houses tell me that they have great difficulty in entertaining their country customers because they cannot take them around to gambling houses. It is a fact, too, strange as it may seem, that 75 per cent of the brewers want gambling houses open."

Chief Brennan's orders were still unchanged and yet the public was asked to believe that the Mayor and Chief of Police were totally ignorant that everything was going on just as before.

Mr. Harrison at least was bluff, cynical but straightforward in the matter; he openly avowed that he was permitting gambling to go on for reasons which he set forth; he did not pretend to be doing one thing while in reality he was doing the other. He did not, of course, admit that he was subsidized by the gamblers; that would be expecting altogether too much from human nature. But he did not say he was doing all he could to suppress it, while a dozen houses were running full blast under his nose; nor did he declare he was opposed to gambling and that no house should run open while he was Mayor, and then permit the gaming houses to be run as openly as they are in Monte Carlo. Mr. Hopkins may have reasons for the course he has taken; that the future will show. But at present he has unfortunately given the

enemy so much reason to blaspheme that it will require very energetic action hereafter to remove the impression that Mr. Hopkins is no better in this respect than his predecessors.

CHAPTER V.

THE SCARLET WOMAN.

“Servant, awake, arise, for the people have slept o’er long!” is the opening line in the soul stirring summons which Mr. Grant Allen in his newly published volume of poems, hears reluctant “In the Night Watches.”

Sing of the maiden, thy sister, whom men thy brothers have sold,
Cast on the merciless world, on the tide of the ravening years,
Bought with a price in the market and paid with dishonor and gold,
Courtied and loved and betrayed and deserted to desolate tears.

* * * * *

Sing of a pitiless race and the blast of a terrible wrong,
Poisonous, fiery, venomous.

“Master, I hear and obey.”

There is as much need for such a clarion cry to the servants of God in the New World as in the Old. The terrible wrong “ancient as infinite ages and young as the morn of today” is as poisonous, fiery and venomous in Chicago as in modern Babylon on the Thames.

I regret to have to number among the illusions dissipated by this visit to the western hemisphere the belief that the Americans were leading the world in the sincerity of their respect for womanhood. The woman with money in her purse has more homage—at least from the lips outward—than in England, but the poor woman is cheaper in Chicago than in London.

A leading member of the Knights of Labor said the other day that the Americans as a nation no longer believed in God. They worshipped, he said, three things, first gold, secondly women, thirdly children. I wish I could have found more proofs of their devotion to women and to children in their laws. The statutes made and provided for the protection of young girls are in many states a very grim and ghastly commentary upon the traditional respect of the Americans for their women.

In some states it is true the law has been amended—largely under the influence of the same cyclone of moral indignation which raised the age of consent in England in 1885 from 13 to 16, but in many others the law is still in a condition to be a disgrace to heathendom. The legislatures of Delaware, of Wisconsin, and other states in the following list would seem to be composed of Yahoos rather than of Christian citizens of a Republic founded by the descendants of the Puritans. The age of consent—the technical term used to denote the number of years that a girl must have lived before she is regarded by the law as competent to consent to her own seduction—varies all over the Union. I quote here the black list of dishonor from a table compiled by the *Philanthropist* from official returns:

AGE OF CONSENT.

Delaware.....	7 years.	Kentucky.....	12 years
Texas.....	10 "	Indiana.....	12 "
Idaho.....	10 "	Wisconsin.....	12 "
South Dakota.....	10 "	Virginia.....	12 "
Carolina, North.....	10 "	West Virginia.....	12 "
" South.....	10 "	Louisiana.....	12 "
Georgia.....	10 "	Iowa.....	13 "
Alabama.....	10 "	New Hampshire.....	13 "
Minnesota.....	10 "	Tennessee.....	13 "
Colorado.....	10 "		

These are the worst states in the Union from this point of view. There are others nearly as bad. Seventeen states fix the age of consent at 14 and two at 15. Six follow the English rule and place the age of consent at 16. Florida the most southern of all the states raises it to 17, while Kansas and Wyoming place it at 18.

The time is coming when such laws as those which practically hand over innocent and unsuspecting girl children of 7 and 10 to 12 to be the lawful prey of brutes in human shape if they can but get their consent—forsooth! to something of which they know nothing until it is too late will be regarded with as much shame and indignation as the Fugitive Slave Law. Certainly as long as these

States persist in leaving defenceless maidenhood without the protection of law, the vaunts about American chivalry and high regard for women and children sound as hollow as did the Declaration of Independence in the old Slave States.

The increase in the number of young women in America who make their living as clerks, shop girls, teachers and other callings which take them away from home, has not been accompanied by increased safeguards for their protection. Young children are employed as cash girls in Chicago at a much earlier age than would be permitted in Europe, and in more than one of the great stores ugly stories are current of wages being fixed at a rate which assumed that they would be supplemented by the allowance of a "friend." The recurrence of this worst feature of Parisian shops in the far west is a much more painful phenomenon than the appearance of the familiar figure of the street walker. In one of the largest of the dry goods stores in Chicago the head of the dress making department, now happily discontinued, was the manager of a house of ill-fame down the levee. She is said to have found the combination very convenient as she recruited in one establishment by day for assistants in the other at night. These things are only too well known to the unfortunate victims, but as public exposure would add the last drop to their bitter cup, they suffer in silence. The Missions and Refuges which receive the shattered wrecks of lost womanhood, know only too well how deadly is the system by which the daughters reared in American homes are lured to their doom. Another lost illusion is the belief that American girls are trusted with knowledge instead of being kept in that cruel ignorance which is confounded with innocence. It is not the case. If legal protection peremptorily denied the American girl by the men who monopolize the legislative function, neither are they delivered from the dangers of ignorance by their mothers. No disability of sex stands in the way of the timely performance of the

most necessary duty which maternity ever imposed upon woman. But even that is denied the American girl. Anna B. Gray, M. D., writing in the February number of *New Occasions*, a monthly magazine edited by Mr. B. F. Underwood, and published at Chicago, on "Ignorance at the Price of Depravity" bears testimony on this point that is worth noting. She writes:

I have given years of attention to the subject, and have arrived at this much of knowledge. In nine out of every ten cases of seduction, the woman in America has erred through affection, not passion; that instinct of common humanity, most highly developed in women, to please the beloved, but chiefly through *ignorance*. They feel no passion; they are totally ignorant of its signs in others, even if they feel, they are in equal ignorance of what it means. While that much lauded ignorance prevents any thought of evil, the result is that before they know they have arrived within sight of it they have crossed the threshold of sin.

I have not arrived at my conclusions hastily nor do I state them lightly. I have talked with all sorts and kinds of women from the common prostitute to the purest matron, from the girl who committed suicide when told of the consequences that would follow her error, to those whose sins never became known, and this is my sure conviction:—The commonest, and largest factor in the seduction of unmarried women is unadulterated ignorance. Ignorance of any love less innocent than that which teaches her to clasp a baby in her arms, caress its tender limbs, smother it with kisses, and half crush its life out in a passion of tenderness. If she wonders at the fervor of the caresses bestowed upon her, they mean no more to her, than those she so freely bestowed upon her baby brother or sister.

If any good is to be done in dealing with this saddest of all social maladies it must be done betimes. Prevention is a thousand times better than cure and many thousand times easier. The chief difficulty that stands in the way of frank sensible speech on such subjects between parent and child is the absurd prudery which in the old days led American matrons to put frills round their piano legs and which quite recently led an American girl to call legacy limbacy, in order to avoid the improper first syllable. A prudish silence with ignorance as the necessary results lands many an innocent girl in Fourth Avenue. This is a subject upon which an ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory. The facts are indisputable. The keepers of houses of ill-fame who reap the

harvest of these blighted lives are authorities on this point. Take for instance the evidence of Mrs. Vina Fields, who next to Carrie Watson is the best known Madame in Chicago. Vina Fields is a colored woman who has one of the largest houses in the city. During the Fair she had over 60 girls in the house, all colored, but all for white men. Now she has not more than 30 or 40. She has kept a house for many years and strange though it may appear has acquired the respect of nearly all who know her. The police have nothing to say against her. An old experienced police matron emphatically declared that "Vina is a good woman" and I think it will be admitted by all who know her, that she is probably as good as any woman can be who conducts so bad a business. I had a talk with her about it one afternoon and some days after she wrote me a long letter, upon this subject. She says:

The present state of affairs results from the want of proper knowledge regarding self. When cultivation of self is made universal, a better condition is possible, and not until then. The cause for prostitution will continue until it is made honorable for the sexes to seek knowledge of self and their duties toward each other. The most important things of human life ought to never make an honest educated man or woman blush. It is ignorance that causes shame and all this distress. Let the causes of life and common things be more understood and the greater things will take care of themselves, in private matters between man and woman the same as in other things.

Therein Vina spoke wisely and well. The result of not teaching young people the truths of physiology at home is that they usually acquire them abroad when it is too late.

Vina Fields is a very interesting woman. She is now past middle age. She has made a moderate competence by her devotion to her calling and she prides herself not a little upon the character of her establishment. The rules and regulations of the Fields house, which are printed and posted in every room, enforce decorum and decency with pains and penalties which could hardly be more strict if they were drawn up for the regulation of a Sunday school. In it the ladies are

severely informed that even if they have no respect for themselves, they should have for the house. She is bringing up her daughter who knows nothing of the life of her mother in the virginal seclusion of a convent school, and she contributes of her bounty to maintain her unfortunate sisters whose husbands down south are among the hosts of the unemployed. Nor is her bounty confined to her own family. Every day this whole winter through she has fed a hungry, ragged regiment of the out-of-works. The day before I called, 201 men had had free dinners of her providing. She had always given the broken victuals away, she said, but this year the distress had been so great she had bought meat every day to feed the poor fellows who were hunting jobs and finding none.

"What brings your girls here?" I asked. "Passion, poverty, or what?"

"Misery," she answered quietly. "Always misery. I don't know one who came that was not driven here by misery. Unhappy homes, cruel parents, bad husbands. Misery, always misery. I don't know one exception."

On this subject Vina wrote me afterwards at some length. And I cannot do better than quote this homily on home, the duty of making home happy—although few, perhaps, would be prepared to listen to such a discourse from the colored keeper of a house of ill-fame.

It is not necessary to go to houses of prostitution to find the cause that places girls there. All you have to do is to investigate the homes of the people. These women called prostitutes come from these homes from every grade of life, from the upper classes as well as the others; and I am sorry to say that they give a good percentage to this class, as the daughters are educated to an idle, frivolous life. As a rule the marriage policy does not work very charmingly, and only a few succeed in obtaining comfortable homes, the balance have to find shelter wherever they can, and as houses of ill-fame are open to this class of woman—they prefer it to dying and starving on the street; many of them find it more pleasing and preferable to their married lives. These women are no more lustful than their sisters in other positions in life. They simply have not been successful in marrying a home, and as many, very many do not know how to do any kind of work, they come here.

The only remedy for prostitution will be to educate woman in the value of home life.

It is natural only for man to provide. He cannot make a home alone. It is absolutely necessary that there be the mother and wife, and as girls enter into the most important condition of life without any previous culture or consideration of the new life that they enter, as a rule, there will be failure, and more is to pity than to blame for the results. The men from necessity are forced to houses of prostitution. Why? Because the women are uneducated in the business of becoming wife and mother, and they, as a rule, know nothing about the formation of a new home; that is left to chance. Is it any wonder that there is trouble and ruin all around us? Do you think that there is even a single instance where a young girl leaves her mother to-day to form a new home, that she is taught by that mother to believe that the grandest and best work of women is to be able to produce a grand, noble woman or man; and that to do this her home must be a heaven, and that it rests with her, more than all things else, whether her home is a heaven or hell? The great cry of today is the advancement of woman—that means for all to make a grand rush for outside employment, other than home work. While the husbands and sons are walking the streets idle the mother and sisters are earning the living, and by so doing, the homes from necessity are dirty and the younger children uncared for or left with ignorant nurses, and this state of affairs makes the women tired and fretful, the husbands, when they have money, naturally seek the house of ill-fame, as wives are too tired from work or devoting their time to society, to give husbands even a pleasant word. Yes, I say, the only way out of this trouble is to teach girls the value of home, and when women in a mass elevate their homes and make them all that the word implies, that is, clean, home-like and cheerful; their kitchen the cleanest and most cheerful room in the house, and their parlor for use of the family instead of strangers; the houses of ill-fame will have to shut up shop. They will have to close for want of patronage.

When this is made the highest ambition of girl's life, to be a possessor of a model home by her own virtues; and the boys, by mother, are taught to value a good woman; they will then think it an honor to keep those homes clean and wear a bright smile for husband and little ones, and will then know the value of a clean calico dress, a gingham apron for work and a white apron for eyes of father and dear children. There is not a man living that would not prefer a dear little home to "a wandering, no-account, hap-hazard life."

An other typical scarlet woman of Chicago is Carrie Watson, whose brown stone house in Clark Street has long been one of the scandals of Chicago. She was there before the fire and is there still. She does not have quite as many girls as Vina Fields but they are white and not colored and as she is at the head of her shameful profession prices run higher. Business is carried

on openly enough with carriages standing at the door at all hours of the night waiting for the "gentlemen" inside. Carrie Watson and Lame Jimmy her violin player are a typical Chicagoan pair. Lame Jimmy acquired an unenviable notoriety this year for at his annual benefit-ball one of the best known police officers in Chicago was shot dead in the midst of the orgy. Lame Jimmy's benefit is one of the saturnalian nights of the Levee when all the professional forces of debauchery are let loose to disport themselves in a Music Hall with the assistance of the police as the above incident shows. Carrie Watson herself has made a fortune out of her trade in the bodies of her poorer sisters. She is the exploiteur, the capitalist of her class, for the same conditions reproduce themselves everywhere. In the brothel as in the factory the person at the top carries off most of the booty. Carrie Watson is a smart woman, said to be liberal in her gifts to the only churches in her neighborhood, one a Catholic just across the way and the other a Jewish synagogue which local rumor asserts is run rent free owing to Carrie's pious munificence. This is probably a slander but its circulation is significant as proving that Carrie Watson can be all things to all men. She is emphatically a smart woman, and cynical as might be expected. Prostitution is to her the natural result of poverty on the part of the woman and of passion on the part of the man. She regards the question from the economic standpoint. Morals no more enter into her business than they do into the business of bulls and bears on the Stock Exchange. Girl clerks and stenographers she says are often unable to earn salaries to keep them in clothes to say nothing of the numberless relations who are often dependent upon their labor for a livelihood. If they have youth, health and good looks they can realize these assets at a higher price down Clark Street, or on Fourth Avenue than at any other place in the city. Women who are desperate go to Carrie Watson and her class, as men go to the gaming

hell in the hope of recouping their fortunes. The misfortune of it is, that women can almost always secure their stakes at first, whereas the gambler quite as often as not is deterred by an initial failure. Few people realize that a young and pretty woman can make more money for a short time by what may be called a discriminate sale of her person than the ablest woman in America can make at the same age in any profession. But as life's enchanted cup but sparkles near the brim so the profits of that life are of very short duration. When the bloom is off the rose, a very rapid process of degradation sets in which ends in the lock hospital, the jail or the drunkard's grave.

Carrie Watson agrees with Vina Fields in believing that girls do not take to the life from love of vice, neither do they remain in it from any taste of debauchery. It is an easy lazy way of making a living, and once they are started either by force, fraud or ill-luck there is no way of getting back. They have to go through with it to the bitter end. They bury the memories of the past by drinking the waters of that temporary Lethe, which men call strong drink, and quiet their conscience by the thought that after all they are not worse than the highly respectable men who visit them and that they are able by suffering these things to help relations who would otherwise often be in very great straits. Carrie Watson for instance says that almost every girl in her house has three to four persons depending on her who share with her the wages of sin.

Dora Clafin, who was interviewed at length by a representative of the *Mail*, which published a series of articles suggested by some remarks which I made at the Central Music Hall last November, spoke with great good sense on many phases of this difficult and appalling problem. Like everyone also who has thought much upon the subject, either from the inside or from the outside she was of the opinion that prevention is a far more hopeful field of work than that of rescue.

"Prostitution is an effect," said she, "not a careless, voluntary choice on the part of the fallen. Girls do not elect to cast themselves away. They are driven to the haunts of vice. The more distinctively womanly a girl is—and I mean by that the more she has beauty, delicacy, love of dress and adornment, feminine weakness—the easier a mark is she for the designing. And the designers are not wanting.

"Girls, and I say this emphatically, are not seducers. They have innate delicacy and refinement. I say honestly that I do not believe that one woman in 10,000 would cast herself at the feet of lust except under duress or under the force of circumstances.

"The recruiting grounds of the bagnio are the stores, where girls work long hours for small pay; the homes that have few comforts and practically no pleasure; the streets, where girls are often cast, still unknown to sin, but in want and without shelter; in a word, places outside the levee, where distress and temptation stand ever present as a menace to purity and rectitude, behind every effect there is a cause. In the case of prostitution the real cause lies not in the girls who fall, but in the social conditions that make the fall easy and the men who tempt to the step and furnish the money to support degradation after the step has been taken. Before reform in the levee is possible there must be reform in the home, on the mart. The people to enlist in the work of reform are the fathers, the husbands, the sons, especially the fathers and husbands."

I excited much animadversion by saying that if you wished to do any good by reforming any section of society it was a good plan to take counsel of those who were the least disreputable of their class in order to know where we are to begin. These three women whom I have quoted are probably better qualified than anyone else in Chicago to speak as to the profession which they have successfully pursued. They all lay their finger upon ignorance, poverty and misery, as the three great causes of prostitution.

The question of assignation houses of which the police say there are between 400 and 500, is far more difficult to deal with nor is it possible to deal with it by the favorite specific of some people by placing them under a system of license. Such a remedy would be worse than the disease. The utmost that can be done is to keep an eye upon notorious houses and when the concourse of couples becomes so large as to become a public scandal and to leave no doubt as to the character of the house it should be proceeded against as a public nuisance. But a fresh ordinance would probably be

required if not an amendment of the statute law of Illinois.

The only licensed houses of ill-fame in Chicago are the massage parlors, fully 90 per cent of which places are nothing more nor less than houses of prostitution. The City Council on May 9th, 1893, passed an ordinance licensing these places with a hope that it could thereby control them.

One condition of the license is:

That it shall be unlawful for any proprietor, manager or employe of any room, establishment or place wherein any of the kinds of business, treatment or operations mentioned in the first section of this ordinance are carried on to furnish, provide, permit or suffer female attendants to bathe, treat, manipulate, operate upon or attend male patrons.

It shall be unlawful for any female attendant, employe or inmate of any rooms, establishment or place wherein any of the kinds of business, treatment or operations mentioned in section one of this ordinance are carried on to bathe, treat, manipulate, operate upon or attend any male patrons thereof.

At the first glance this ordinance will appear to be a measure for the suppression of the immoral massage parlor. It has had the exact opposite effect. The criminal code of the State of Illinois says that no person can be convicted of a crime where the witness to the crime have been guilty of participating in the offense in order to procure the necessary evidence to convict. This fact was prominently brought out at the trial of three of the proprietors of massage parlors in this city two months after the passage of the ordinance mentioned above. The case, in question, was put on trial in the Criminal Court of Cook County for three days during which nearly a dozen police officers testified to the fact that they had gone into the houses in question and had taken the baths and massage (?) treatment in order to procure the evidence on which to arrest the three defendants. On this admission being made a verdict of not guilty was returned by the jury on the defendant's attorney quoting the law which prohibited the obtaining of evidence in such a manner. By the passage of the ordinance the

power of putting down these places has been virtually stopped. Previous to the action of the City Council the massage parlors were frequently raided and so kept under some kind of subjection. At the present time, however, the mayor of the city has no power to refuse a license to any persons providing their characters are good and although he may be morally certain in his own mind that such places are going to be run in direct violation to the law he has no facts on which he would be justified in refusing to grant the license asked for.

As might be expected the employers of girls are very sure that if any of their employes go wrong it is not because of insufficient salaries. Indeed it would seem from their statements that the standard of female morals is higher in a Chicago store than it has ever been anywhere since the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. I sent a representative to question some of the leading men in the city on the subject. Here are their answers in brief.

E. Hillman, the manager of the Boston Store said "As far as I can remember I never have had a girl who has gone wrong who was employed in this store and we employ about 1,900 girls. We take every precaution for their being of strict moral character. It is a strict rule with us that no young man is allowed to come in and talk with the employes or wait for them when they are through work so as to escort them home. If this rule is broken and we learn of it we immediately discharge the offender."

H. G. Selfridge, of Marshall Field & Co., has only known of three girls who have gone to the bad in the last five years. In his opinion it was not want of food but a craving for jewelry and finery that led girls into prostitution.

Arthur Keim, the Superintendent of Siegel, Cooper & Co's. store said in talking on such a subject there is always a feeling of delicacy. "Generally I cannot say much upon the matter but I know that girls in this store are paid good living wages. I think that wages makes but little difference as only those girls go wrong who have a tendency that way."

Another gentleman who was principally engaged in employing girls and young women at the Fair said: "From my own experience I have found that the question of wages caused but little difference with these girls who go wrong. It is the training which they have received. Girls in this store all receive \$5 or \$6 a week and on that money a girl can live easily in Chicago."

Not food but clothes, not plain clothes but finery,

that is no doubt the want that drives many to a life of shame. The fact that I venture to remind the Woman's Club of is that the peculiar temptation of a woman is that her virtue is a realizable asset. It costs a man money to indulge in vice, but for a woman it is money into pocket. This temptation has naturally greatest force when work is scarce, and when sickness is in the house. Even if they have a living wage in ordinary homes, these periods of stress and strain break them down.

"I lived at home," said a girl in a house of ill fame, "and had a mother and a sister to support on \$5 a week. One time, however, my mother got ill and I could not get the necessary medicine for her. Then some young man whom I knew in the street and who came quite frequently to my counter to buy goods, offered me a good deal of money if I would go with him to an assignation house. I wanted the money for my mother and so I went. Having gone once I went again until I gradually drifted into a house of prostitution."

So it is with many. But there are many employers who are not so careful as Mr. Selfridge, who says: "It is and has been my custom to ask all girls whether they live at home or with friends before engaging them and I always make it a practice if they have to pay for board and lodging to pay them a larger salary. When a girl is inexperienced I refuse to employ her rather than pay her a salary on which she cannot live morally."

A keeper of one of the best houses on Fourth Avenue spoke to me very thoroughly on the subject. She said that one of the large dry goods managers had been complacently assuring her—he was a customer of hers—that he never employed any girls for \$2.50 a week unless they could live at home. Pin money girls as they call them who are maintained in part by their relations, keep the rate of wages down below living point. If blood relations fail, other relations are too often established. As Mr. Hillman, of the Boston store says: "A girl who

boards out cannot support herself on a low wage. We have to enforce the rule as to living with the family or with friends to insure the moral character of our employes."

The procuress plies her trade in Chicago as in other large cities, preying upon youth and inexperience. They haunt the railway depots, they are quick to discover the pretty girl who is out of work, and they are quite often in attendance at the County Hospital. Excellent societies of good women have done much to warn inexperienced girls of their danger and to provide them with a place of shelter. But their efforts are inadequate and there are many girls in houses of ill fame who have been taken there by plausible ladies who "knew of such nice lodgings, you know, with a teacher of music who takes such an interest in young girls." They did not know anything until it was too late. These girls are as innocent of any wish to go wrong as the deer is innocent of any wise to be shot or snared.

The keepers of houses always deny indignantly the accusation that they recruit their establishments with unwilling volunteers. They profess to detest "green horns." They prefer experienced women well broken to the work, etc., etc. All the same there are many who are only too glad to obtain young simpletons whom they can fleece even if they cannot, as is sometimes the case, realize heavily upon them for rum. One well known procuress, Mrs. Davis, was arrested twelve months ago for one of these offenses, but she escaped. Criminals "who have a pull" can usually escape in Chicago. And procuresses, of necessity, "stand in" with the police whom they subsidize for permission to live.

Cabmen in Chicago are frequently the active agents of the houses of ill fame. If they find a pretty girl who has not enough money to pay her fare they can usually raise the money by delivering her at a sporting house. That this is done may seem incredible but it was not

merely admitted but even complained of by keepers of houses, who being overstocked objected to the practice of an imposition. One madame on Fourth Avenue told me that on three occasions last year she had received consignments in this fashion. She did not want the girls so she handed them over to the Annex to Harrison Street police station. If only any one will take the time and trouble to watch some of the depots and houses of prostitution on Plymouth and Custom House places in the "levee" district, and those on Dearborn street and Armour avenue, in the vicinity of 22nd street they will realize the sad state of affairs.

An ex-police reporter in this city said recently: "I have to my knowledge had four distinct cases of cabmen taking young girls, who had just arrived in the city and engaged him to drive them to a hotel, to a house of ill fame. In each of these cases the girls were only saved by police interference, and yet no effort was made to punish the guilty driver of the vehicle in which the girls had been driven to the houses where they were found."

The best proof that the practice exists is the fact that the City Council has passed an ordinance expressly directed against it. It runs as follows:

It shall be unlawful for any licensed owner or driver of any coach, cab, public cart or other vehicle to convey any person without his request to any place or house of ill-fame, or deceive any person in relation to any railroad or other ticket or voucher for conveyance which is worthless, or make any false representation or statement in regard to any voucher or ticket for conveyance that may be shown to him, under the penalty of not less than ten dollars for each and every offence.—*Municipal Code, p. 291, Sec. 1202.*

When once a young girl is ensnared there is very little chance of her escaping. The police report that 20 per cent of the girls between 14 and 18 reported missing are never heard of. Those zealous A. P. A. emissaries who work themselves up into a fever heat of indignation and of passion because of more or less imaginary narratives of the way in which convents are used to imprison unwilling maidens, would find a more

profitable field for their emotions in contemplating the underground railway by which keepers of houses of ill-fame move girls out of the way. After a girl has been ruined in one town, especially if there is any trouble, she is exchanged for a safer girl in another city. A case of this kind, which can be vouched for, occurred about a year ago. L. M., a girl of 18, came to Chicago from a well-known city in the western part of New York. While here she was seduced under a promise of marriage and taken to a house of ill-fame on South Clark street. Meanwhile she had ceased writing to her parents, and they, fearful that she had met with an accident, communicated with the police here. She was located soon afterwards, but before the authorities could arrest her she was sent to Council Bluffs, Ia. A few weeks later another girl arrived at the South Clark street resort to take the place of L. M. Strange to say, she *had come from the same house in Council Bluffs* to which her fallen sister had been sent. Her story was also on the same line with that of the deported girl.

Many other girls are taken from the County Hospital, where the authorities could interfere with effect in enforcing some standard of civilized decency.

In places of amusement, the Park Theatre is an outrage as it has been and is being conducted. The whole theatre is an exhibition which would be more in place in Sodom and Gomorrah than in Chicago. The proprietors, it is said, make friends of the powers which be by subscribing to the funds of both parties. Whether that is so or not I cannot say. As a matter of fact it is but the antechamber to a lupanar. The moral level of its stage is below that of a decently conducted sporting house. The Midway dance was one of its standing attractions long after it had been banished from Boston and New York. Although the manager lied to me like a Trojan on the only occasion when I visited the place, I had no difficulty in obtaining trustworthy information as to the orgies which have given an evil fame to the wine room.

In a book called "In Darkest Chicago" it was stated that dancing by naked women was one of the regular performances of this theater after the play concluded. That, however, I think, is no longer true, the only difference, however, being that when the women dance the cancan in the Park they pay such homage to decency as is implied in the wearing of a single garment which enhances rather than interferes with the obscene suggestiveness of the performance. An outward semblance of decency could be secured by cancelling their license whenever their decorations or entertainments violated the municipal standard of decency. There is no necessity for making that standard extreme or puritanical, but in a civilized city the goatlike gambols of Satus might be forbidden. It would be too much no doubt to expect certain classes, including some of the most respectable so-called citizens, to comport themselves like human beings, but they might certainly be compelled to preserve the natural decency of an ordinary brute beast. The unnatural and worse than bestial performances which are carried on in certain places in Chicago well known to the police ought to land a considerable number of persons in Joliet for the rest of their natural lives. Offences which in England a very short time ago sent men to the gallows and still entail penal servitude are among the sights of Chicago which are not interfered with by the police, because it is held by large wholesale houses, so the story runs, that it is necessary for them to have certain amusements for their country customers. Entertainers are attached to the large wholesale houses, and when the country customer comes in to make his purchases the entertainer personally conducts him round the sights of the town. As Mayor Hopkins remarked when discussing the gambling houses, it is surprising how many merchants in this city approve of their existence for the sake of their country customers. They say that the first night a country customer comes to town he is taken to the

theater; next he is taken round to the questionable resorts, and on the third night he insists upon going to the gambling hells. The questionable resorts to which the Mayor referred as occupying the country cousin's second night may be said to be run, if not under the patronage of the police, at least with their cognizance. A friend of mine who made the round was personally escorted by a detective. When the police and the large wholesale houses and country cousins are in collusion to support unnatural crimes which the good people of Chicago fondly imagined existed only in the corruption of the later Roman Empire, it is obvious that the moral reformer has a very up-hill task before him.