

LETTERS TO "GREENBOY"

Government by Injunction.

VII.

One of the phantoms conjured up by the democratic party is "government by injunction." Their national platform has this to say: "We denounce arbitrary interference by federal authorities in local affairs as a violation of the constitution of the United States and a crime against free institutions. We especially object to government by injunction as a new and highly dangerous form of oppression, by which federal judges in contempt of the laws and the rights of citizens, become at once legislators, judges and executioners."

At first blush this proclamation would appear to be as self-evident as one of the conventional phrases in the constitution referring to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," three things that no party on earth has ever sought to deprive any citizen of.

What is it that is objected to as "government by injunction?" It is directed against all temporary and permanent injunctions issued by judges of the United States courts securely bulwarked as they are and have been for so many years by the confidence of the people, not unmingled with veneration. The sight of a federal judge fulminating novel and, in the majority of cases, unnecessary injunctions from the bench, as an evident preliminary to the substitution of summary "contempt" proceedings for the usual and orderly processes of the law, does not have a soothing effect on the public mind. It tends to exasperate and irritate. It is a sight disquieting and odious to the people. Better a hundred local trespasses and turbulences of occasional happening than a shaking of a people's belief in their form of government.

The question, as you will remember, was more particularly brought to the surface by the famous Chicago strike, when President Cleveland felt called upon to aid the state authorities in preserving order. Contempt of court, so-called, was at the bottom of it all.

Now the less courts monkey with questions between capital and labor, between the employers and those employed by them, the better it will be all around. The platform of the republican party contains a plank favoring the creation of a national board of arbitration to adjust differences which may arise between employee and employed engaged in interstate commerce. The democratic platform contains a plank in favor of the arbitration of differences and recommends such legislation as may be necessary to carry out this principle.

Quite a number of states have laws providing for the settlement of labor disputes by conciliation and arbitration. Congress regulates interstate commerce. The act creating boards of arbitration is an ill-digested measure. It provides for the taking of testimony, but the duties of the board are not ended there. Their verdict gives only moral support to one or the other of the parties. Neither party is in any wise bound by the decision. One vital principle, however, is recognized—the desirability of avoiding, by conciliatory methods, any open rupture which may have to be settled by arbitration. Conciliation is always in order from the start and arbitration only when the conflict is really on.

How would it do to make the interstate commerce commission a final resort (with "final" underscored) in deciding all questions, permitting no appeal? You will have to trust some one for impartiality. It is ridiculous to take it for granted that high-minded men composing a commission are open to bribery and corruption. Their short and decisive verdict, within a few weeks at

most, would do away with the fixed forms of court and the inevitable "law's delay"—features that are alone responsible for all the irritation and distrust produced. Simplifying matters is what is needed, not cumbersome methods long drawn out.

In this connection I desire you to hold fast to a few fundamental truths regarding demagogues, persons in politics who are the successors of P. T. Barnum and although quite unique and picturesque are void of sincerity times.

A few words quoted in the New York Sun of July 10th, are timely here. The article says in part:

"There is too much demagogism abroad in the land; there is too much false doctrine taught pertaining to governmental functions.

"There is too much toleration of disrespect for courts and constituted authority.

"There is too much clamor for class legislation. There is too much inculcation of the idea that men can become rich without effort, by the mere fiat of the government, instead of earning wealth in the good old-fashioned way; and there is too much attention paid to cranks, blatherskites and political adventurers, entitled to no consideration, but who seem to have obtained the public ear, and are seeking to pull down the pillars of society."

J. H. TYNDALE.

"School City" Elections.

Wherever the School City is tried the periodical election of officers awakens more intense interest than the most exciting ball game. A part of this interest undoubtedly is due to the pleasure children get from playing at the pursuits of their elders. But no less important as an element in the intense interest the children take in the matter is the palpable fact that the officers to be elected have a very real part to perform in the ordering of the everyday affairs of the school community. There are always numerous candidates for appointment on the school police force; and this is owing doubtless to the normal instinct that impels children to play at being policemen, firemen, or other familiar functionaries. But the larger interest in the matter doubtless grows out of the fact that the school policemen make real arrests for real offenses. The trials of the arrested offenders involve the enforcement of real rules and regulations that the school community has adopted for its own well-being. The sentences that are pronounced by the court mean real punishment of some kind that is no more a part of a children's game than are the punishments meted out under the municipal government to disorderly persons arraigned before the police magistrates.—From "The School City—A Method of Pupil Self-Government," by Albert Shaw, in the American Monthly Review of Reviews for December.

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