

ONE WHOSE EXAMPLE WOULD BE EFFECTIVE

An important hint was given to Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States, in an address delivered by A. B. Stickney, president of the Chicago Great Western Railway company, at a meeting of the Washington Economic society, held at Washington City, February 3, 1905. Dealing with the evils of the free pass system and frankly admitting those evils, Mr. Stickney suggested that President Roosevelt set to officialdom the example of refusing all corporation favors. Mr. Stickney quoted Mr. Roosevelt as saying: "No one can too strongly insist upon the elementary fact that you cannot build the superstructure of public virtue save on private virtues."

Referring to the free pass system, Mr. Stickney said:

"The interstate commerce law not only forbids discriminations in freight rates, but it also prohibits free transportation of passengers. It makes the acceptance of a discriminating freight rate or a free pass by an individual a misdemeanor, each punishable alike by fine or imprisonment.

"If we examine the principles of law and the principles of sound morals which justify the law we shall find that every principle applies to the one as to the other. If we inquire as to the relative importance to men of small affairs we will find that one is as important as the other. If we inquire into the heart-burnings growing out of railway discriminations, which are breeding class distinctions and class hatred, and even anarchism, among the so-called lower classes, we will find that the bitterest feelings are aroused by being compelled to pay fare while richer men ride free.

If we go among the laboring classes, either as individuals or in their public meetings, we will hear bitter denunciations, not of unreasonable or discriminating freight rates, but of free passes. In times of railway strikes we can hear the park orators proclaim, 'Why should we work for scant wages in order that rich men may ride in the trains free?' Probably eighty per cent of the entire population pay fares, while not more than, say, five per cent pay freight rates.

"The law which makes it a misdemeanor for any individual not an officer or employe of a railway company to use a pass was enacted by congress and approved by the president fifteen years ago, and as an individual rule of action it was ignored by the congressmen who passed it and by the president who approved it, and subsequent congressmen and president with rare exceptions, have ignored its provisions. Traveling they present the evidence of their misdemeanor before the eyes of the public in a way which indicates no regard for the law. The governors of the states, many of the judges—in short, all officialdom from the highest to the lowest—the higher clergy, college professors, editors, merchants, bankers, lawyers, present the evidence of their misdemeanor in the same manner. Now while sheriffs, district attorneys, courts and prisons may cope with the outcasts of society, they are powerless against the classes which have been mentioned. Think of the impossibility of committing these classes to prison! Think of a sheriff arresting himself, of a district attorney prosecuting himself, and of a court committing himself to the penitentiary!

"In England, where the laws against discriminations are enforced, these conditions do not exist. The members of parliament, who enacted the laws, have obeyed the laws, and even the king, when traveling on the railways, pays the regular fare, and if he has a special train he pays the schedule rates for its use. The minor officials, the railway officials and the public follow their example. Therefore the law of England against discriminations is effective.

"I am not willing to admit that the average standard of official and individual morals is lower in this country than in England, but for fifteen years the public conscience has apparently been in a sort of self-hypnotic trance of an expectancy which can never be realized, namely, that the virtues of the railway companies will render it impossible for the individual to offend the law. While I am willing to admit the uncompromising virtues of railway officials, I submit that it is too much to expect the few railway presidents, who are growing fewer, to furnish the virtues for eighty-five millions of people.

"What the country needs to break the trance is an illustrious example, like the example of the king of England. There is one man, and but one man, whose example would be effective; and, unless the American people have misjudged his character, if he realized that he was transgressing the law in accepting the courtesy of free transportation, Theodore Roosevelt would have the virtue and the courage and the ability to set the example, which shall awaken officialdom and all good citizens to a sense of the individual duty to obey this law."

OHIO DEMOCRATS AND THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

In 1896 there were cast in Ohio 477,494 democratic votes. In 1904 the democratic vote amounted to 344,674—a loss in eight years of 132,820.

It is unnecessary to say that democratic principles have not fallen into disfavor among the people of Ohio. There are many reasons for believing that in that state, as in the other states, democratic principles are more popular today than ever before in the history of our government. Indeed, Ohio's senior senator, elected by the republican party, confesses that the greatest reform for which the republican in the White House stands is a democratic measure, and not a republican measure. As evidence of this fact, he points out that that measure has been repeatedly endorsed in democratic national conventions and re-affirmed in democratic state conventions, while the republican national platforms have not endorsed it, and the latest republican state convention in Ohio deliberately barred the measure from its state platform.

Without organization it will be impossible for men to effect great reforms. The "democratic measure" to which Senator Foraker referred is of the utmost importance, but it is by no means

the only important reform for which the democratic party stands, and for the accomplishment of which the people must finally depend upon democratic success. These reforms are so essential to the best interests of the people that they demand the faithful, persistent co-operation of democrats everywhere to the end that the party may be so organized not only to deserve success by the character of its platform and its candidates, but to win success through the formation of its line of battle.

The Commoner believes that the primary pledge plan provides a practical method for effecting this desired organization. Ohio democrats now thoroughly aroused against the evils of bossism and fully awakened to the enormity of the impositions under which they have been required to suffer in national life, are in a good position to give marked impetus to the primary pledge movement. In this work every Ohio democrat may have a part. In the number of primary pledges sent to The Commoner office, Ohio stands fourth. This is creditable to the Ohio democracy, but a great work in that field is yet to be accomplished. To this end The Commoner makes to every one of its Ohio readers the same appeal it made to its readers in Missouri.

If every Ohio reader of this paper will see to it that every democrat of his acquaintance signs the primary pledge himself and asks his own neighbor to do likewise, the field will be covered in a short time, and the results will tell in the democratic vote of the future. It would be well for several democrats in every county in Ohio to get together and circulate the primary pledge form in every precinct, obtaining the signature of every democrat, who is willing to discharge this duty. This work of organization is not to terminate with a mere signing of the pledge. The interest of democrats once aroused is to be maintained. Clubs are to be organized in every county of the state and in every precinct of the county, these clubs having for their purpose the promulgation of democratic principles and the protection of the democratic creed from those who would destroy it.

To those Ohio democrats who have assisted in this good work, The Commoner gives its cordial thanks. If those who have so faithfully co-operated will renew their activities and will also arouse the interest of their fellows, the result will tell, not only in the Ohio election to be held in November, but in the future elections in that state.

THE FIRST CRIME

Below will be found a statement issued by Edward J. Lewis of Wheaton, Ill., as he entered the state penitentiary to serve a term for forgery. Before his crimes were discovered he was prominent in local society, belonged to several exclusive clubs and was regarded as a rising young man. After his crookedness was found out he was a fugitive from justice and traveled in several countries. He was finally captured and is one more witness to the fact that "the way of the transgressor is hard." It is a good sign that he desires to make his own sad experience a warning to others—it shows that he is anxious to do something to atone for his misdeeds. What a vast amount of suffering would be avoided if all young men would heed the advice which he gives! He says: "Arriving in Joliet to serve an indeterminate sentence for forgery, I feel it my duty to write a letter and make a statement, hoping thereby to prevent other young men from putting themselves in the same position. When I first sold a mortgage for \$400 I thought I could easily repay it by a lucky strike or a commission on a real estate deal. When I found that I could not do this and the person owning the mortgage asked for her money, then I had to sell another and larger mortgage

to make good. Afterward I thought this was so easy I could keep up the crime forever. Boys and young men, don't play poker. Don't start when you are young sneaking back of the barn with other small boys and using corn for poker chips. Don't smoke cigarettes. Don't drink your first glass of beer or whisky. Don't bet on horse races. Be sure your sins will find you out. Boys and young men, if you knew the suffering I have gone through you would shun crimes, untruth and deceit as you would poison. If I am the means of preventing any one reading this from committing the first crime, then I am the happiest convict in Joliet. That's the trouble, boys—the first crime. It leads you on and on till you will surely land where I am. Boys, if you ever have committed a crime confess it to the one you have wronged and don't do it again. If you do you will be sure to come to my end."

TO GET IN ON

Republican newspapers in Nebraska whose editors are free from the control of corporations boast that the anti-pass platform adopted by the republican state convention shows the determination of that party to be free from corporation control. The Norfolk News may be said to be a representative republican newspaper, and in

a recent issue the News printed the following editorial: "The hue and cry that has been going on over the state on the question of passes brought forth a mild anti-pass resolution, which was incorporated in the platform. It really is of very little force at the present time, because before a legislature can be elected to carry out its provisions, another state convention will have met and another republican platform will be in effect; but in spite of the fact that it was shooting in the air, the plank was allowed to go into the platform to satisfy those republican newspapers and politicians with populist ideas."

A man on the rear of a railroad coach was admonished by the conductor not to stand on the platform the passenger inquired: "What are platforms for, anyhow?"

The conductor replied: "They are not made to stand on; they are made to get in on."

According to the Norfolk (Nebraska) News, the anti-pass plank in the state republican platform was made to "get in on," and those republicans who are in earnest in their anti-monopoly fight should govern themselves accordingly.

Mr. Loomis has received another vindication. Incidentally the stock of presidential whitewash has been somewhat reduced.