

real estate will justify the expense of the improvement?

Is it not also true, answering all similar objections, that the consolidation of many city, town and village governments in one county, under one administration, would almost balance the extra cost necessary to improve to a decided extent, the more sparsely populated portions of the county?

The style of municipal administration, thus proposed, would equalize the burden of taxation in a marked degree, burdening the country districts, having large cities as near neighbors, but in the end carrying to them, facilities, fully commensurate with the additional cost. An instance of the uselessness of our present system, might be cited in the practical duplication of the boundaries of Cook county and Chicago, Illinois. This identity in confines practically lays upon the assessable property of the citizens of Chicago, the burden of a double taxation, for the boundaries of the city are almost similar to those of the county.

Honesty in the expenditure of public funds and consolidation of county, city, town, and village government, would benefit the people to the extent of many millions of dollars per year.

LEWIS M. HEAD.  
Nebraska City, Neb., May 28, 1901.

#### "RING RULE AND DOMINATION."

The desire to obtain something from the public without returning its equivalent therefor, and the desire for imagined political honor, is largely responsible for the formation of rings in our municipalities to rule and dominate. Dishonest men, for the purpose of financial gain, and weak, cunning and incompetent men for the purpose of self-laudation, are the chief factors and beneficiaries of ring rule.

#### Ring Organization.

The bad, criminal, and vicious elements of society are marshalled, organized and drilled into a perfect machine to plunder and rob the element of society that desires to practice at least some of the virtues, from which alone, good government is possible.

By taking advantage of the fact that party organization is deemed necessary, the machine thus formed, obtains control of the party organization and makes the management thereof a close corporation. And, as it expects to exist and profit by the dishonest manipulation and control of the agencies of government, it can, and does, devote its entire time and attention to politics, and does all within its power to keep honest men from gaining a foothold in the party organization. Those who have at heart, good government, and are interested in politics from an unselfish motive, must necessarily devote a part of their time to their own private affairs; and, as a consequence

thereof, are at a disadvantage in resisting such domination.

In controlling the delegates to the various conventions, the ring keeps within its control the various committee-men of the party, who have its entire management in their hands. They fix the primary districts; name the dates of calling conventions, and preside over them until they are permanently organized.

We are often told that if we do not like the tactics by which our political parties are managed, that we should go into the organization and right the wrongs and grievances complained of. It would seem that this advice is good, and that it would be an easy task to accomplish that object. But it is not as easy as it would seem. It would be about as easy for a man whose pocket-book was stolen, to go into the den of thieves who had stolen it and take the pocketbook from them, as it would be to go into the party organization and wrest its management from the control of the gang.

#### Precinct and Ward Control.

In each voting precinct there is maintained a political organization or club. From these precinct clubs, ward clubs are formed, which embrace the members of the precinct clubs. The means employed by the ring to keep control of these precinct organizations are as devious and unscrupulous as dishonest minds can conceive. In one of the precincts of a ward in a certain city, at an election of officers of the precinct club, the president allowed only such persons of his own party to vote, whose names were on the membership roll. The defeated candidates protested, on the ground that the president should have allowed all members of his party within the precinct to vote, whether their names were on the membership roll or not. The ward club sustained the protest, ousted the officers elected and recognized the officers making the protest. In another precinct in the same ward, the president allowed all the members of his party, who were residents in the precinct to vote, whether or not their names were on the membership roll. The defeated candidates in this precinct also filed a protest, with the ward club, against the officers elected, on the ground that the president should only have allowed such persons to vote, whose names were upon the membership roll. The ward club ousted the officers elected and seated the contesting candidates. In other words, they threw out one set of officers for not doing what they threw out another set of officers for doing, and passed upon both these contests at the same meeting. It is needless to say that, in both instances, the ward club seated persons who were members of its own gang.

It is not an uncommon occurrence for

the officers of a precinct club to scratch off the roll the names of persons who will not vote with the gang, and then refuse to allow those persons to vote at all, because their names are not on the roll.

#### Base Methods.

Another method employed is to call a meeting for an election at eight o'clock p. m., and then a few of the gang will assemble and call the meeting to order at seven o'clock p. m., and elect their officers, so that if there is going to be any opposition, when the opposition arrives the election is over, and the meeting has adjourned. The same, or worse, methods obtain at the ward elections.

At a ward election, only a short time ago, the ring got possession of the hall where the election was to be held, and attempted to keep out all persons not belonging to the ring. When the opposition attempted to gain entrance a general riot took place, and one man was shot and killed. Strange as it may seem to a civilized community, no indictment was ever returned against anybody for this murder; although the friends of the murdered man used every means that they knew to obtain an indictment against a prominent official and member of the ring, against whom they claimed to have evidence, sufficient to convict. If a man kills another in self-defence, the killing will be inquired into, at least, and very likely an indictment returned so that the man is put upon trial for the offense. But it seems that if murder is committed in keeping control of the machinery of a political party it must go unpunished.

#### Election Ruses.

Having thus retained control of the party organization, in order that the gang may realize from its desperate game, it must nominate and elect its candidates to office. For this purpose the men whom they nominate are either members of the ring, or men whom the ring can absolutely control.

The idea, which at one time was prevalent, that if a person did not vote for the nominees upon his party ticket, he did not belong to the party; and the old cry, that if you do not vote the ticket you will be regarded as repudiating or slapping the administration in the face, are the most valuable assets of the ring.

Just what connection the honor due to Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Grant, has to do with incompetent men nominated upon party tickets, would, indeed, be very hard to conceive, but the universal homage that is justly due and paid to the heroes of the nation, is used, and has been the means of electing many an incompetent and dishonest man, because he happened to call himself a member of the party to which some great man had belonged.

The eagerness with which a national election is taken advantage of to place