WORKINGMEN CHEER FOR MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

Mayor Jones, of Toledo, Touches the Popular Chord at the Great Laboring Men's Jefferson Dinner.

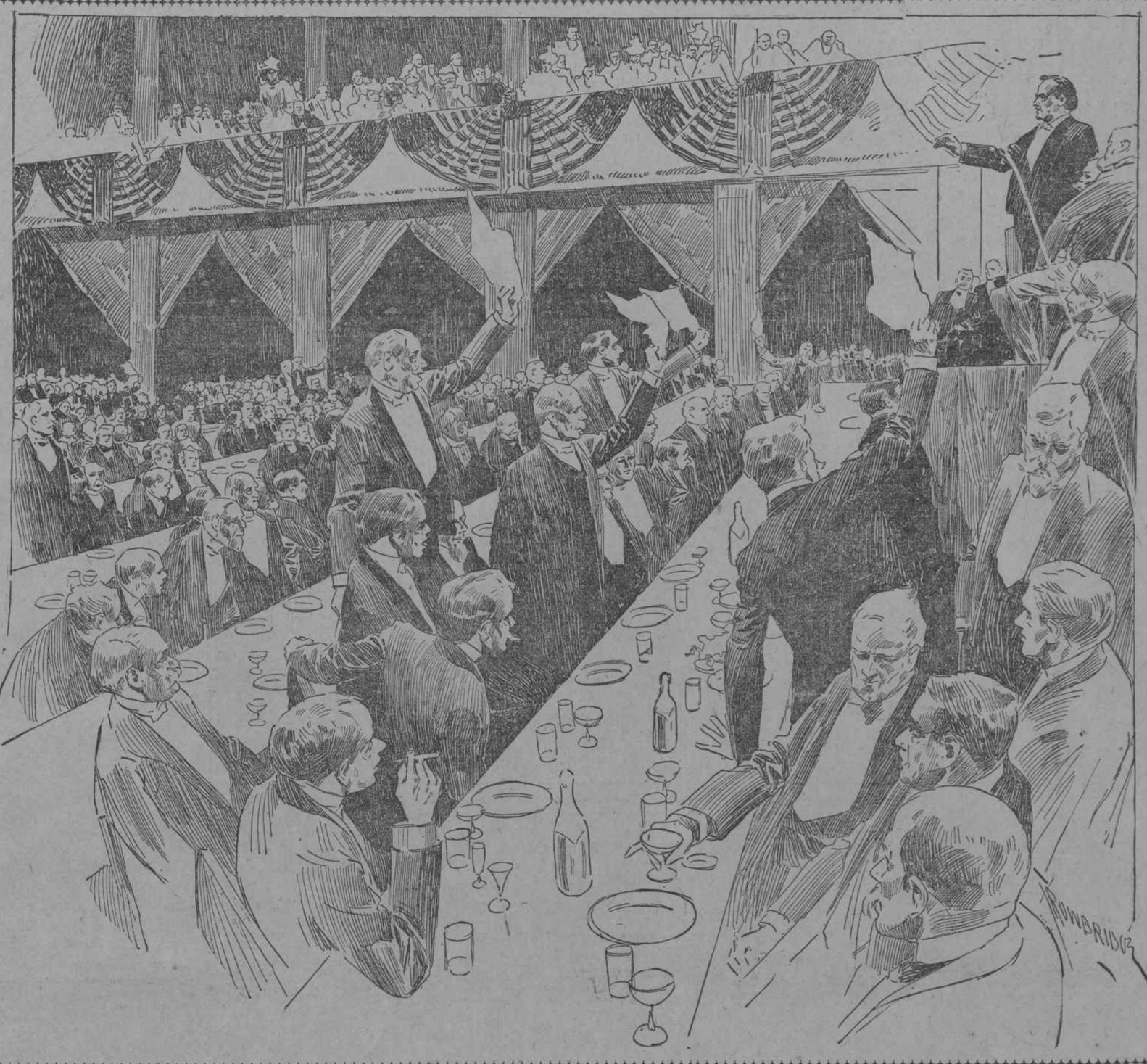
Cities Must Own the Franchises, He Cries, and the Guilty Contract System Is Already Doomed.

Boston and Other Large Municipalities Are Shining Proofs of the Benefits of Public Control.

Rousing Welcome to William J. Bryan—Women Join in the Applause of His Tribute to Democracy's Father.

There Is Plenty of Work Right at Hand, He Declares, for All Who Will Apply Admitted Principles.

Mrs. Stetson Urges Upon Wives to Concern Themselves That Their Husbands Are Not Oppressors of Laborers.



THE $1 FEAST OF THE WORKINGMEN.

MENU.
Soup,
Vegetable.
Fish,
Haddock, Egg Sauce.
ENTREE.
Roast Beef,
Roast Turkey, Cranberry Sauce.
Pickles.
Ice Cream, Cake and Coffee.

Seventeen hundred men and fully one hundred women gathered at the Grand Central Palace last night, at the Jefferson dinner given under the auspices of the workingmen of New York, while scores of spectators filled the two galleries.

William Jennings Bryan was the principal guest and speaker of the evening.

There were twenty-four great tables in all. There were 105 waiters and forty-nine ushers. Cooks had been at work for three days in preparing the feast.

Cheers for Bryan.

Colonel Bryan arrived at 7:20, and was received with a great cheer by the crowd assembled outside of the building. He entered the dining hall, escorted by Alfred J. Boulton, chairman of the Committee of Arrangements.

As Colonel Bryan walked down the hall, men and women rose to their feet and the great room rang and re-echoed with the storm of welcome.

John Brisben Walker, the presiding officer of the evening, occupied the centre of the table, and on his right sat Colonel Bryan. Then came N. O. Nelson, the Rev. Dr. Edward McGlynn, Charles Frederick Adams, John S. Crosby, Judge William J. Gaynor, and Ernest H. Crosby. On the left of Mr. Walker sat Mayor S. M. Jones, of Toledo; O. H. P. Belmont, and William Temple Emmet.

Dr. McGlynn arose and offered a brief blessing.

"Make these men and women wise. Make their work in the interests of humanity effective."

Then Mayor Jones escorted from the gallery to the platform Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Stetson, and there was enthusiastic cheering as Colonel Bryan gallantly arose, offered her his seat and took one on the left of the chairman instead.

At 9 o'clock a picture of Thomas Jefferson was placed, amid a burst of cheers, at the front of the guest table, and then Chairman Walker made a brief opening address.

He attacked political conditions and bosses, but aroused neither applause nor interest when he declared that men like Platt could make themselves emperors if they wished.

He even aroused derisive laughter when he went on to say that so weak-spirited are the American people that there would be no opposition to an "emperor taking his seat in the White House and establishing a kingdom."

Bryan himself and the others at the guest table were gravely silent, and when Mr. Walker sat down there was not a particle of applause.

"Bryan," yelled a voice, and immediately the hall was filled with tumultuous shouts and cheers. "Bryan! Bryan!" came from all over the hall, but Mr. Bryan did not rise, and the cheering gradually ceased.

The chairman introduced Mayor Jones, of Toledo, and the applause that greeted him was prolonged and long continued. Cheers frequently interrupted him.

All for Municipal Ownership.

"Municipal Ownership of Public Franchises," was the subject on which he spoke.

Earnest-faced and with a grim and earnest manner, he chught the fancy of the people, and was listened to with absorbed attention. His speech was filled with pithy, stinging declarations.

"I stand for public ownership of all public utilities!" he cried, and the hall rang with applause.

"I am not here to condemn corporations nor trusts, but to condemn a system that creates these things," he declared.

"From social injustice spring all of the evils of vice and crime and poverty. We have no need for charity. We want a system that will give us social justice.

"You are living in a condition in which you can get a first-class baby cheaper than you can get a second-class dog.

"No human intellect can estimate the value of a franchise in perpetuity, and any government granting it is committing a crime against the people."

There was immense applause when he concluded and resumed his seat, and "Three cheers for the Mayor of Toledo" were given.

CITIES AWAKENING, SAYS MAYOR JONES, TO SET LABOR FREE

THE evils of the contract system are the evils of special privileges. Any system that is adopted by society, either as custom or law, that grants to one man or set of men a privilege that is by force of circumstances denied to other men, is a denial of the equality guaranteed to the people of this Government in the Declaration of Independence, and is therefore a violation of divine justice.

This poison injustice that makes many men the mere tools of their more capable fellows is the cause and source of all our distress, municipal, State and national. From social injustice proceed causes that excite and perpetuate vice and crime and poverty, the three-headed Cerebus that today seems to be dragging society into the hell over whose gate the fabled dog was said to have stood guard.

We can understand how the contract system or a system of special privileges might exist in a monarchy, or be tolerated under a despot, but even a suggestion of inequality is repugnant to any conception of a government in which all are supposed to be equals.

For this reason the fact of equality under our Government has generally been accepted without question. We seem to come on to the stage of action with the impression that so far as the thing called government is concerned in these United States the work of creation is a finished job.

I know I got my early conception of patriotism from the red fire, flags, bunting, music and speech of the Fourth of July celebrations of my boyhood days; and this mischevious and wrong conception of patriotism kept me chained in ignorance until I had reached the period known as middle life.

One Fault in the Schools.

I believe that much of the distress that we are now seeking to escape is occasioned by the wrong teaching of our children. Such conceptions of patriotism as I got in my boyhood days are a delusion, pure and simple, and instead of aiding me to a proper and helpful understanding of citizenship, they proved a barrier almost insurmountable.

The impression is given to our children that, as the thing called government is perfected, there is therefore no responsibility upon the boy beyond the mere perfunctory work of voting on election day, of proclaiming in season and out of season that we have the best government on earth, and constantly keeping before the minds of our fellow-men the assertion that we "can lick everybody."

If we have the best Government on earth, which I do not question, it does not necessarily follow that even that may not be improved. If we can "lick everybody," even that is not of necessity the highest ideal toward which a nation may strive.

It is even possible we may demonstrate our greatness in a far more substantial manner by manifesting our ability so to organize and associate ourselves together in the thing called government as to show the world that we can love everybody and that we can love them so thoroughly and scientifically that we have a Government that is as ready to listen to the cry of the weakest child as to the clamor of the most powerful organization on earth, and a Government in which, and under which, every man, great or small, may have equal and exact justice; and when that condition shall have been attained the cry of the pauper and mendicant and the pitiable appeals of the workless throng will forever cease in our land.

With justice done to every one, then happy shall we be.
Poverty will disappear, the prisoners will be free;
The right to work, the right to live, the love of liberty,
All God's best gifts to the people.

"Unemployment exists," says Alfred Russell Wallace, "because of the fact that production is carried on not at all for the sake of supplying the wants of the people, but for the sake of making money for the capitalists. This is the vital weakness in the contract system of doing the work of public improvement.

Not the Capitalists' Fault.

"I have no quarrel with the capitalist; I have no quarrel with the contractor. Under our existing business system it is the business of the capitalist and contractor to get the best end of the bargain, and to my mind all inflammatory and denunciatory appeals directed against 'the capitalist,' 'the contractor,' 'the money power,' are idle and of no avail. Our warfare should be upon an unholy system, a system, too, that is as unscientific as it is unholy, a system that hopes to perpetuate itself through ministering to greed, a system that is daily warfare, that is calculated to make men hate each other—men who are the children of one Father, whose natural instincts are to love each other, and who will yet demonstrate that in spite of all the devils in our special privilege laws or in hell itself they will love each other.

"The 'contractor,' the 'franchise grabber,' the 'briber' who invades our halls of legislation and courts of justice, the political plunderer, the business plunderer, and all the monsters of greed and rapicity to whch we charge our distress to-day are the legitimate products of this vicious system that makes our pretended democracy a travesty and exhibits our life and practice a denial of democracy and brotherhood, and it is therefore treason to the Republic, in which we are all professed sovereigns and equals; and it is a blasphemy of Almighty God, who is the Father of us all, and who through His Divine Son has said: 'A new commandment I give you, that you love one another.'

"The distinguished chairman of this meeting has well said that we "are yet to know a system of political economy that will perform as well as promise and will rain the luxuries of nature into the laps of the starving poor."

"The contract system is a part of our wholly iniquitous system of special privileges; it is a system to which many of our cities are chained by law.

"In my own city we are bound by a State law to let all work amounting to more than $500 to that ideal robber the lowest bidder, and similar laws and customs prevail with many of all of the public work, municipal, State and National. This law would seem to have been framed especially for the benefit of those who are capable of influencing, purchasing and bribing boards, departments or legislatures.

The popular idea, of course, is that it has been framed in order to give the community the most work for the least money, but in practice it works just exactly the opposite direction, for, as I have already intimated, it is the contractor's business not to see how cheaply he can do the work, and do it well, but the first consideration is to see how much he can get for doing it, and the next is how very little he can pay the laborer and how poorly he can do the work in order to increase his profits.

The result of this unscientific system is damaging and destructive in innumerable ways; the most direct of all proceeding from it is the wholesale robbery of labor that it leads to. Instead of affording the free competition that its advocates claim for it, it has been shown by practical experience that the inevitable result of the system is monopoly through a combination of business interests into rings, combines and trusts.

And Labor Is Robbed.

Where in a single instance the monopoly fails, as sometimes occurs, the result then is the wholesale robbery of the laborer. In one city of Ohio last year the contractors failed to "get together" in bidding for the work of a large sewer. The warfare between them was bitter and the contract was finally let at a figure so low as to threaten the ruin of the man who secured it, but, acting under the impulse of the greed that has been developed by the competitive system, the man shifted the consequences of his wrongdoing to the poor laborers, and instead of employing them by the day at a living wage, he put them in competition with each other for the privilege of digging the sewer by the lineal foot, with the result, as I was told by the civil engineer of that city, that the poor laborers who dug the sewer received less than fifty cents a day for their pay.

And this is freedom! This is under the best Gvernment on earth. This is liberty, is it? Liberty of what? Liberty to live on a crust and live the life of a dog?

Some of our cities have awakened to the horrid immorality and guilt of thus making the citizens mere instruments of profit for merciless contractors and subjecting them to the conscienceless tyranny of insatiable greed.

Boston has adopted the labor plan of doing the work of State improvement, and Boston has taken advance grounds as to the living wage and fixed the scale for common labor at $2 for a nine-hour day.

This is public ownership of the work of Improvement against private ownership in the Ohio city, where the poor laborers toil ten or twelve hours for fifty cents a day.

Easy to Prove.

In every city in this or any other country that has adopted public ownership of its utilities the work of street improvements is of the same class. The contract system and the franchise system will both disappear together.

Every city, I say, that has adopted public ownership of public utilites has shortened the hours of labor, increased the pay of the men and improved the quality of service.

When Glasgow, Leeds and Plymouth adopted public ownership of the tramways they reduced fares in addition to the improvements I have already enumerated.

What Difference?

It seems to me that the city that sells the privilege of plucking its people to the lowest bidder is placing itself on a par with the robber barons of old, who sold the privileges of highway robbery in the narrow passes and mountain crags of their possessions.

The poor laborer to-day under the contract system is a more helpless victim in these United States than were the travelers of old, who were made the legalized objects of plunder by the robber barons.

But this system does not exist because men hate each other; it exists because we have not yet learned the source of our distress. Our social system ministers to selfishness and greed, and in every conceivable way we have sought to divert attention from the real question, first by this false issue and then by that.

At every recurring campaign a new cry of "Stop thief!" has been raised to divert attention from the real thief; at one time it is the tariff question, at another the money question, at another the question of our foreign policy; and while we still point our fingers at those vanishing mists and cry aloud "Stop thief!" we are all the time filling our pockets with unrighteous gain at the expense of the toilers and producers.

Henry D. Lloyd says that "politically we are civilized, at least in theory; industrially not yet." A large step toward industrial civilization and industrial freedom will be the abolition of the contract system. Neither the city nor the earth has been created for the benefit of the contractor or franchise getter.

It is certain that the earth and all its resources were intended for the benefit of all the people, and it is through government that we must evolve the plan that will get the cunning and the strong to release their grasp upon, at least, so much of it as is necessary to let every man who is willing to work have the right to live and live a decently human life.

Not the Real Civilization

Well does George D. Herron ask this pertinent question, "Who gave this earth to the profit makers, and by what authority do they set the children of men to making gain for them? By what process of alchemy have the resources of nature passed into the hand of the strong, and how is it that human life is treated as mere grist for the capitalist mill? Is it the end of civilization that industry should develop into a monstrous profit getting machine into which the multitude are to be fed, to be ground out as the increased capital for private owners?"

We are glad to know that this is not the end of industry in regard to the object of civilization. The ideal toward which the race is struggling, the ideal which poets, prophets and philosophers have seen, is the realization of human brotherhood in human affairs.

There is but one way in which we may hope for this realization. The State is the only instrument through which the people may express their love for each other and I bid you good cheer, workingmen of New York City, for the promise that a brighter day is drawing near. The long night of bondage to economic slavery is disappearing and the day of industrial freedom is about to dawn.

We know that by and by a better day will come,
When hate and strife will die, and each man own his home;
When "mine and thine" are ours, and every law is good;
And all are pure as flowers and one grand brotherhood.

Much to Be Done.

In the work of developing this large idea of liberty, this nobler conception of government, in this reaching out for justice, organized labor has performed an important part, but there is still greater work to be done. The fields are truly ripe for the harvest and the laborers are few. It is as true to-day as when Robert Burns wrote that

Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.

But we are to see the day when man's love for man through the institution called government will bring joy and gladness to millions of hearts. We know that expediency is not a substitute for justice, and that right is the only antidote for wrong. Let us be strong and patient in this great work of emancipation. Let us nail to our banners "Principle before party," the slogan under which the hosts of Toledo rallied in the recent election.

If the workingmen and masses are in economic slavery in chains to-day it is because they so will it; it is because preceding economic slavery there has been party slavery, and in every succeeding election the workingmen of the country have been the dupes of the schemers who sought to serve only their own ends.

I believe this is the beginning of the end of government that is bought and sold and run for revenue, and that the days of pretended partisan hatred have vanished, that workingmen can no longer be rallied with the mere hue and cry of 'Be a Democrat' or 'Be a Republican.'

Let the platform that commands the votes of the workingmen and reform forces be definite and positive for those things that we know are essential to liberty, such as equal opportunities for all, the abolition of the contract system, the substitution of the eight-hour day and the recognition of organized labor in all skilled departments; and let us repudiate any platform that does not involve every one of these principles.

In the contest at Toledo there was no choice for the workingman between the two old parties. Both were equally solid against the independent movement, and neither one had a definite statement of principle to plead for. It was simply "Stick to the party," but "Stick to the party" has failed in this country, and "Stick to principle" will take its place hereafter.

PUBLIC OWNERSHIP ALWAYS A BENEFIT.

EVERY city that has adopted public ownership of public utilities has shortened the hours of labor, increased the pay of the men and increased the quality of service.—Mayor Jones, of Toledo, at the Workingmen's Dinner.

WORKINGMEN CHEER MISS GOULD.

In introducing Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Stetson, Chairman Walker referred to Helen M. Gould as another type of working woman who held her great fortune in trust. Miss Gould's name was received with applause.

LET ALL COMBAT ADMITTED EVILS.

—*WILLIAM J. BRYAN.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, Ladies and Gentlemen: I shall not occupy a great amount of your time. I had an opportunity only a few nights ago to apply certain fundamental principles to some of the questions before the public. But to-night I think that it is only fitting that I shall confine myself to the principles which we all believe in, but which we do not all always apply to those questions which from time to time divide the people.

I want to speak for a moment of one who is the source of our inspiration, a man so great in his ideas that, while he is the patron saint of one party, he is loved by those who have never assumed the party name of the party that he founded.

We do not come to-night to celebrate the birthday of Jefferson merely because he was a President of the United States. Many Presidents have lived and died and their birthdays are forgotten. We do not celebrate his birthday because of the honors that we heaped upon him; and yet, seldom has a public man received more at the hands of his countrymen that has Jefferson.

Because of His Ideas.

We celebrate his memory because Jefferson was a man of ideas, and it is his ideas that have made his memory blessed. It is his ideas that bring us here to-night, and, my friends, after all there is nothing in this world but ideas.

I fear that we sometimes forget that it is not men whom ideas make, but ideas make men great. An idea will revolutionize a community; an idea will revolutionize a State, a nation or a world.

There is dynamic force in an idea, and an idea once turned loose in the world can never again be chained.

I repeat that Jefferson was a man of ideas. We are applying his ideas to-day to the questions which arise. They were not all applied in his day. They have not all been applied since his day. They will not all be applied in our day, for the work of civilization is a never ending work.

Sometimes people think only on the battle field can a man show his patriotism. I am proud that I live in a land where peace hath her victories as well as war.

I glory that we live in a land where every day presents an opportunity for man to show his love of country, and I thank God that we live in this generation where the grandest principles are presented that have ever been presented to any generation since the history of man began.

A distinguished citizen of the nation spoke not long ago of strenuous life and applied his idea to a policy that gives this nation an opportunity to go forth with musket and with cannon and carry its ideas by force to other nations.

I thank God that peace in this country gives an opportunity for all the strenuous life of the people.

Work for All.

If we but begin to apply to our daily conditions the principles which we all accept, the theories which we will not contradict, there is room enough for work for several generations yet to come.

Thomas Jefferson believed in the people, and he was the first great believer in the people. I appreciate the fears expressed by the toastmaster—no one will deny the evils tendencies of the times; no one will deny that there are abuses so intrenched in government that it is difficult to dislodge hem. But, my friends, as Jefferson believed in the peole, so we can believe in the people.

Some one has said that the American people may sleep until the last half of the twelfth hour, but when they do wake up they can do more in the last half hour than can be done in the whole day in any other nation.

Jefferson believed in the people; his appeal was to the people, and he had confidence that an enlightened public sentiment was sufficient to correct every wrong. He believed in the freedom of conscience, he believed that every citizen had a right to serve his God according to the dictates of his own conscience—that it was a question between man and his Creator with which nothing could interfere.

He believed in a free press, and no one had reason then to complain of the malignity of the press that he believed to be free, but he believed in it as his followers believe in it to-day—believe in it because it is better that a paper shall publish a lie than that it shall not be permitted to publish a truth.

He believed in the trial by jury in order that every man may go before a court of his peers, selected because not interested, and to that court trust the adjudication of his cause.

About two and a half years ago a distinguished divine of this country complained and said that one of the difficulties was that too many farmers' sons were being educated and made dissatisfied with their condition.

CONTRACT SYSTEM ALREADY DOOMED.

SOME of our cities have awakened to the horrid immorality and guilt of thus making the citizens mere instruments of profit for merciless contractors and subjecting them to the conscienceless tyranny of insatiable greed.—Mayor Jones, of Toledo, to the workingmen.

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