THE DAILY BEE.
PUBLISHED BY
G. P. WEISSE & CO.
G. P. WEISSE, S. HARBY,
E. DUVERGER, M. DUPOUY.
Daily paper, (one year in advance).....$12
Country paper, semi-weekly.....5
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OFFICE, 83 CHARTRES ST. NEW ORLEANS, FRIDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19, 1858. VOL. XVII—NEW SERIES. VOL. XXXII—WHOLE NO. 10,817.

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*FRIDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 19.*

### ABUSES IN GREAT CITIES.

One of the New York papers—the *Times*—speaks glowingly of the prospect of municipal reform. It predicts the failure of every movement for the suppression of rascality and peculation, foreseeing that the tax-payers will not sever their political associations, and combine together for the purpose of ousting dishonesty and incompetence, and elevating integrity and capability to office. The *Times*, reviewing these abortive efforts, arrives at the conclusion that self-government, with universal suffrage, in large cities, has proved a failure; that it does not give security for persons or property; does not check ruffianism nor prevent pauperism; is neither a terror to evil-doers nor a praise to them that do well; that it gives dishonest law makers, corrupt judges, and imbecile executives, and makes of government a nuisance and a sham.

If such is the truthful result of the experience of the municipal administration of New York, the people of that great city are to be pitied. Whether, however, the proposition can safely include other large corporations may be somewhat questionable, although we are bound to acknowledge that, with the single exception of Boston, there is no population in the Union which is not amenable to the charge of barboring gross abuses, and of electing ignorant or unprincipled officials. Is this, however, the consequence of universal suffrage, or of the criminal apathy of the tax-payers and substantial citizens? Can it be denied that the latter chose to combine, they could control every disorderly element, and frame an administration in conformity with justice and honesty? If they will not thus concentrate their power, but prefer frittering it away in the despicable struggles of party, or withholding its exercise, under the fallacious impression that it will be stilled and overwhelmed by adverse influences, upon them must the onus and the responsibility rest. New York, it may be, is an exception to the general rule. She is the centre of an immense foreign immigration. She swarms with ignorance, brutality and prejudice. The soothing nassesses of her semi-pauper population outnumber the sober and well-disposed citizens. Reform there is confessedly an arduous task, only to be achieved, if at all, by resolute effort, by a spirit of self-abnegation, and by a strict and solid cohesion of all who seek improvement against those who oppose it. But other cities are more favorably situated. We have already spoken of Boston, which, with a fair population of 200,000 souls, takes care to govern herself soberly, quietly, and in an orderly and irreproachable manner. Philadelphia, which numbers almost as many inhabitants as New York, does not suffer by the means of the same aspectacle of corruption and venality, and is neither ruled by the rabble nor surrendered to lawless license. Hence we conclude that it is not to the failure of universal suffrage we must look for an explanation of the predominant rascality of certain large cities, but to other causes, chief among which it are the vicious of parties, on the one hand, and the culpable indifference of law abiding citizens on the other.

Something more than the temporary reign of a wicked man in New York and other cities will be required ere we can reluctantly admit the failure of our political system. And even supposing the reason assigned by our New York contemporary to be a true one, where, we would ask, is the remedy? Nature must decree that the Legislature of New York shall continue to protect the people in property now enjoyed. The people in the mean time would not consent to be stripped of the right of suffrage, and would visit with the rapacity vengeance the daring innovator who should propose the curtailment of the right. It is idle to imagine that the evil complained of can be eradicated, or even materially abated during the life time of the present generation. This consideration induced many far seeing conservative minds to oppose the extension of suffrage when it was first mooted in our own and in other States. They knew that the gift once bestowed, could never be recalled, however fearfully it might be abused. Unfortunately the truth is that liberty is always subject to excesses, and it is the solemn duty of those members of the body politic who hold heavy stakes in the community, and who are properly and safely dispos'd upon sound laws well administered, to become the conservators of the blessing, and to interpose whenever the pendulum threatens to swing dangerously beyond its proper limits. There are always good citizens enough to keep down the bad, and to restore a healthy administration to its equilibrium if they discharge the sacred obligation, and suffer lawlessness, violence and crime to subvert order, fair liberty and substantial rights. The task is, we admit, difficult, but it is not impossible. It may be perilous, but it is not to be watched with earnest and anxious solicitude. The right of suffrage is the most effective power in the State, for it binds up our public servants and our rulers and the masses. Hence the necessity of directing the latter chose to combine, they could control every disorderly element, and frame an administration in conformity with justice and honesty? If they will not thus concentrate their power, but prefer frittering it away in the despicable struggles of party, or withholding its exercise, under the fallacious impression that it will be stilled and overwhelmed by adverse influences, upon them must the onus and the responsibility rest. New York, it may be, is an exception to the general rule. She is the centre of an immense foreign immigration. She swarms with ignorance, brutality and prejudice. The soothing nassesses of her semi-pauper population outnumber the sober and well-disposed citizens. Reform there is confessedly an arduous task, only to be achieved, if at all, by resolute effort, by a spirit of self-abnegation, and by a strict and solid cohesion of all who seek improvement against those who oppose it. But other cities are more favorably situated. We have already spoken of Boston, which, with a fair population of 200,000 souls, takes care to govern herself soberly, quietly, and in an orderly and irreproachable manner. Philadelphia, which numbers almost as many inhabitants as New York, does not suffer by the means of the same aspectacle of corruption and venality, and is neither ruled by the rabble nor surrendered to lawless license. Hence we conclude that it is not to the failure of universal suffrage we must look for an explanation of the predominant rascality of certain large cities, but to other causes, chief among which it are the vicious of parties, on the one hand, and the culpable indifference of law abiding citizens on the other.

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