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Friday, June 23, 1922.

One Of The Last—And Best

When the wires flashed the news of the sudden death of George W. Aldridge on the golf links in New York, practically the last of the group of "personal political bosses" who have made political history for the last forty years passed on. Simon Cameron, Matt Quay, Thomas C. Platt, Roscoe Conkling, John Kelly, Francis Hendricks, Richard Croker, and men of that type wielded tremendous power in their days. They made and unmade Presidents, Governors, Congressmen, State and County legislators; they made and unmade financiers and financial institutions.

All this and more could be written about George W. Aldridge. Perhaps he never wielded the statewide power of Quay or Platt but he was one of the group of men who did rule New York State for the last twenty years—ever since Platt passed. But he did more because he was supreme master of the political destinies of one of the first-class cities of the State and he saw that city grow from 90,000 to over 300,000 inhabitants. He was a potent power for civic advancement and he knew people in all walks of life and, like the old time political boss, was ever ready to greet and help those from the lower walks of life. He was kindly to the needy. He was true as steel to his friends and a hard bitter at his enemies. To the latter, however, if they were fair fighters, he extended the hand of fellowship after the battle was over. He had no respect for a hypocrite and had scant liking for the "fake reformer or uplifter" as he was wont to style them.

Undoubtedly, in the rough and tumble of practical politics of the olden school, there were methods employed that were not likely to meet approval of the squeamish. Mr. Aldridge was a practical politician of the old school. If his methods did not meet approval of the electorate, the latter could have ended Mr. Aldridge's political ascendancy at any time as his political party was overwhelmingly in the majority in the County of Monroe and the City of Rochester. That Mr. Aldridge wielded his political scepter for two score years is fairly direct proof that the people of Rochester, if they did not always approve his code of political ethics, nevertheless preferred it to any other offered. And that tells the story. The practical politician nine times out of ten sidetracks the professional reformer because the latter always overlooks the human equation in the political game; the heart touch, the sentimental angle.

George Aldridge was personally honest and he never broke his word, once given. He had a heart. He loved his city. He liked his fellows. He never kicked a man when he was down. It will be many a day before another like him appears. Indeed, it is unlikely any successor ever will wield his power because times have

changed and methods change with the time. But let us close by this salient fact:—"George Aldridge, above all, was not a bigot."

Both Sides

John B. Kennedy, in a recent article directs the attention of those hazy reasoners and thinkers who would have the world believe that the Church is the protector of the rich, that the Church is ever just as well as charitable and administers a rebuke to those "anarchic poor" who would put both the Church and all wealthy persons in a false position when he says:—

The Church has always taught and teaches how the beatitude of patient poverty and the blessing of beneficent wealth. The Church will always teach these things because they are not only of the essence of salvation, but of the essence of well ordered society. The Church will always condemn the anarchic poor, who, as a rule, are the lazy or the demented poor, just as the Church will always condemn the selfish rich who provoke anarchy. None the less, the Church will ever insist on the rights of both, with emphasis on the rights of the poor; for the rich can usually emphasize their own. The most flagrant wrong done to the rich is the refusal on the part of the very vocal poor to accept them as brothers of the same human family. They are scorned and hated and gain only the comfort they pay for, the most precious material comfort, the knowledge that they rest well in the minds of men, is denied them. But if it is exceedingly difficult for the rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven, and we know that he faces an awful handicap, it is not guaranteed that mere poverty provides an escape from hell. The rich may well be blinded by their riches while the poor have the gospel preached to them.

In brief, the virtue of charity, which is the final test of human nature that is true to itself, is nowhere better known than among those who know the lack of charity—the poor. For the rich, charity must indeed be charity before it is a virtue. Yet the spiritual pride of poverty is as much a snare to the soul as the material pride of wealth. For while it is exceedingly doubtful that the camel, no matter how athletic, can pass through the eye of a needle, it is none the less doubtful that the beam can ever be removed from the eye that is habitually green with envy.

Beware Of Blues!

Rightly says "Columbia":—Whenever the announcement is made of a resumption of any campaign for reform by professional reformers, the inference is usually justifiable that the war chest is running low and that all checks should be made payable to the financial secretary. The Lord's Day Alliance appears once more in battle array, nothing daunted by the repulse administered more than a year ago by public opinion recorded and interpreted by a lively press. Praiseworthy, indeed, is any movement carried on to secure at least one day of rest and recreation in every seven for the workers of the world. But while the blue-buglers toot engagingly of rest they have nothing but righteous scorn for recreation on the Sabbath; they see no compatibility between religious duty and legitimate diversion as constituents of human activity on the same day. It is strange that these gentlemen, who are proud of their acquaintance with the Scriptures, do not recall that the Lord definitely expressed His opinion concerning observance of His day in His reference to the ass fallen in the pit. Commercialization of the Sabbath is to be condemned, of course; but financed hypocrisy is not even a pardonable human weakness.

Hiram H. Edgerton

Hiram H. Edgerton was one Rochesterian who was proud of his city. He was an intense believer in the greatness of Rochester and he did everything in his power, both as citizen and public official, to advance the city's interest and to make it a beautiful place in which to live.

As contractor and builder, he erected many of Rochester's fine edifices, notably St. Michael's Church, one of the most beautiful churches in Rochester. As a member of the old Board of Education he started the city building fine school buildings and as Mayor he furthered such action. Rochester's parks and streets and public buildings were broadened and beautified during his incumbency of the Mayor's office.

In Hiram Edgerton's death the city loses an honest, public spirited citizen and official and every citizen a valued friend.

Forget Them

There are many men who apparently "make up" with the friend or neighbor with whom they have had an argument or spat but who really do not make up because they cherish a grudge against their fellow and never forget the argument or tiff.

Such persons are not generous either to themselves or to those with whom they are understood to have settled a difference. They are synonymous and contemporaneous with the war lovers who will not permit peace to be really consummated in Europe but prolong the period of unrest and prevent reconstruction.

It is not required that absolute trust be placed in the one who has done you wrong or that due prudence be not exercised to the end that repetition of the fault may be avoided. But it is not manly, not decent, not Christian-like to be carrying the grudge forever. Better open hostility than supposed peace which in reality is only guerrilla warfare.

As a contemporary well says:—"There is an over amount of acidity in our daily commerce of thought and in the corporate actions we engage in. There is too much of the notion that the world is against us because it does not agree with us, which attitude of mind totally ignores the patent fact that opposition is the price that must be paid for the privilege of holding individual opinions. It seems to grow more difficult for people to be content to think as they please and keep their tempers when other people please to think differently. We form grudges on incomplete knowledge of facts, and having formed them, are slow to complete the knowledge of facts which would banish the grudge."

"What makes injustice such a terrible foe to the common welfare is that it always tends to stimulate its victims to further injustice in retaliation. There is a woeful fallacy in the philosophy of "getting even." As long as the balance between injustice and unfair invasion of rights is attempted there will be no getting even; wrongs will not balance. It is probably as true as it is futile to propose that if the world were to lay aside its grudges and wipe the slate clean of them, and would then apply itself to the business of setting things to running smoothly and in just accordance with a fair deal for everybody, the sour would be sweetened and most of our common troubles ended."

Let us lay aside the grudges! Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas H. Donovan, of Albany, on the ordination or their son, Leo B., to the holy priesthood in Albany on June 10 and to Father Donovan as well. Thomas H. Donovan was one of the founders of the Catholic Journal and moved to Albany a quarter of a century ago.

"Hello Friedler"

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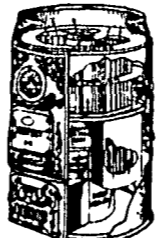
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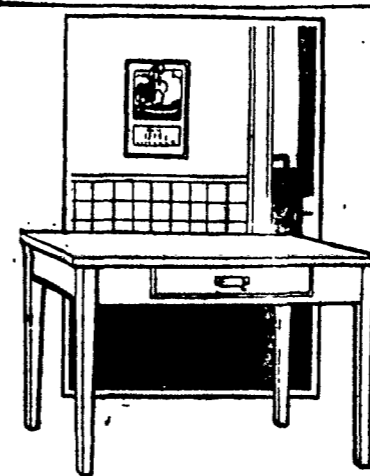
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