

THE AUSTRALIAN BALLOT.

THE Australian ballot is spoken of as something new discovered or invented by the present generation. The fact is the system is very old, so old that it runs back to primitive times.

Of course where absolute monarchies prevailed there was no need of a ballot. Among the ancient Jews, who in a measure were a self-governed people, at least before the king period, a system of casting lots was observed in the selection of persons for office or authority. It is true that even in this scheme it was believed that God would send the right lot to the right man. Anyhow, it is to this primitive source that historians trace the first idea of a secret ballot.

A ballot system prevailed among the ancient Greeks. Originally a pebble or small stone was used. A whole one meant an affirmative, and a perforated pebble a negative. Later on the pebble gave way to an official form made of bronze and stamped. There were different methods observed for the election of the various officers. For some it was merely a show of hands, for others by lot, and still for others white and black beans were used. This latter system led to the habit of calling hungry office-seekers bean eaters.

What was known as ostracism among the Greeks was carried out by a strictly private ballot. When a leader made himself so obnoxious that neither party could tolerate him, a vote of exile was ordered. Each person wrote the name on a piece of shell and put it secretly into a box. If a majority of the votes thus cast called an official to leave the country, he must do so and remain away ten years. It was an easy method of getting rid of demagogues, but unfortunately philosophers were thus sent away by the tricks of politicians. Aristides the Just was thus banished and he even wrote his own name on a shell for an illiterate person, because the politicians raised the cry of exile for him. It was such cases of injustice as this which finally led to the abolition of the custom.

What is known as the Australian ballot among us was introduced into Rome two centuries before Christ. Each voter received a wooden shingle covered with wax. On this were written the names of all the candidates. The voter then made a hole in the wax in front of the name he wished elected to office, then placed his tablet in the ballot box. But with the fall of the republic passed away the necessity for a ballot system.

During the middle ages the ballot was used in many of the Italian republics,

and in other governing bodies in various countries. It was in those days that the system of electing the Pope was adopted. This embraces a very perfect ballot as far as secrecy is concerned. But it is entirely too complicated and technical for popular bodies.

In electing a Doge of Venice, perhaps, the most elaborate system of voting ever adopted was in vogue. The politician made himself so potent in Venice that all sorts of schemes were tried to baffle his trickery. The plan adopted at last was so complicated and so full of nonsensical detail that it probably hastened the fall of the little republic.

The Hungarians a century ago voted with sticks six feet long. Each voter was given a stick which he placed in a compartment that bore the name of his favorite candidate. The largeness of the stick was adhered to, because small ones could be concealed, and thus the stuffing business he carried out. Paper ballots are now used there.

In nearly every country a system peculiar to itself prevails. In Greece at present little lead balls are used as ballots. In Italy stamped official papers are given to voters. In France the ballot system is something the same as the older forms in the United States. England uses the Australian system. About twenty-eight or thirty of the States now use some form of it. But it is far from being a modern invention, and in the past it was not found equal to the crookedness of politicians.

A SANITARY OR A POLITICAL DANGER?

THE colonization of a gang of men in City Creek canyon, on pretence of digging a ditch for the city, is a matter of common discussion. Nobody pretends, so far as we are aware, that one of the objects of camping these strangers on the creek is not political. They are pledged to support the "Liberal" ticket in February. Their votes are wanted in the Fourth Precinct.

As to the pollution of the waters of City Creek by these men, we have not much to say. We are of the opinion that the danger has been somewhat exaggerated. A reporter of this paper has personally visited the camp as a passing traveler, and has made notes of what he saw, which can be relied upon as impartial. Of course, it is not pleasant to think of the possibilities of contamination and of drinking from a supply that may be tainted with offensive and unhealthful deposits. But as the danger is rather remote, and running water purifies itself, if not too greatly impregnates

with detestable matter, we are inclined to think that the evil to be deplored is rather moral than material.

The fact remains that a gang of men, most, if not all, imported to strengthen the party in power in its struggle to retain its domination, is massed in a precinct which is lacking in votes for that party, and that this makes another "object lesson" to illustrate the policy of "Salt Lake work for Salt Lake workmen."

The Parley's canyon conduit is another cartoon to the same purport. The gangs there are for the First Precinct. Hordes of men are also herded in some well known boarding houses in the Third Precinct. It is easy to learn from their conversation what they are put there for.

The decent citizens of Salt Lake should be awake to the importance, to them, of the movements which are quietly taking place with the object of continuing in power a party which has been false to its pledges, incompetent in its official action, extravagant, oppressive and reckless in its financial policy, and defiant of the people in its general course. And they need not think that the tricks now resorted to must necessarily succeed. It only needs determination, discretion and unity of action, to establish a city government here of which every progressive permanent citizen may be proud.

The peremptory requirement of the Utah Commission, that the address as well as the name of every registered voter shall appear on the registry lists for the next municipal election, if carried out will render difficult the illegal voting which has been heretofore effected under "Liberal" manipulation. And we trust that the force of public sentiment will prove of such a character as to put an end to the faction which has vaulted into power by corruption and fraud.

The grievance against the City Creek and other similar matters of public complaint is rather political than sanitary, and the consequences of permitting such evils to triumph will be far more dangerous to the community than the remote possibility of the fouling of a running stream.

DEATH OF DONN PIATT.

THE dispatches bring news of the death of Donn Platt, one of the most able and incisive journalists of modern times. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, June 29th, 1819, was educated at the Athenaeum (now St. Xavier College). He suddenly left that institution, however, owing to having engaged in a personal encounter with a