

# Galveston Storm Results In Seventy-five Cities Adopting Commission Plan



## DES MOINES PLAN BOILED DOWN.

Five commissioners, only elected officials, govern city. Mayor, a commissioner, has vote in commission or "council," but no veto. Administration divided into five departments, each commissioner heading one. All important franchises referred by law directly to vote of people. All ordinances subject to vote of people by petition. Any commissioner subject to "recall" and removal by vote of people on petition. All city officials such as treasurer, police judge, prosecutor, appointed by commissioners. Civil service board of three appointed by commissioners to pass upon all applications for employment in city departments. Election absolutely nonpartisan; personality, not politics, counts. Direct primary for nomination of candidates, who must get signatures of twenty-five voters to run. Two men receiving highest vote for mayor put on ticket; eight men receiving highest vote for councilmen put on ticket; only one ticket in field at general election. Heavy penalty for candidate making any promise of job or other reward for support at primary or election.

By ARTHUR J. BRINTON.

TRUE as truth itself is the ancient adage, "It's an ill wind that blows nobody good." Here is an intimate application of the adage which belongs to the vital news of the day. The ill wind which wrecked the fair island city of Galveston on the 8th of September, 1900, was directly responsible for a reformative movement in municipal government that has revolutionized the executive administrations of nearly seventy-five American cities. It is sweeping over the United States with something of the force and swiftness of that West India hurricane which leveled Galveston to the sands, destroyed 8,000 to 10,000 lives and more than 4,000 houses in that city alone and wrought an incalculable loss of life and property on the mainland of Texas.

This movement is known as the commission method of city government. Originally it was called the Galveston idea. Having gathered greater force and efficiency with the passage of a few years, it is best known now as the Des Moines plan. The very latest news from the reform

storm is that it is about to be "put off at Buffalo." A bill is pending before the general assembly of New York which, if passed, will permit Buffalo, the population of which was estimated at 415,532 on New Year's day, to vote on the adoption of the commission form of government. This bill incorporates the vital features of the Des Moines plan and adds distinct and almost startling ideas.

The present writer arrived in Galveston on the first relief train from Houston after the hurricane of 1900. He spent a week in the stricken city, almost overwhelmed with the horror of the disaster. Yet not to enjoy the privilege of pointing out just how that most stupendous of American catastrophes has worked, it appears, for the good of American home government. It is difficult to refrain from quoting Cowper right here:

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants his footsteps on the sea  
And rides upon the storm.  
Prior to the storm Galveston was governed conventionally. There was a mayor, with fourteen aldermen elected from seven wards. City officials,

such as treasurer, auditor, police judge and prosecutor, were elected by popular vote. The aldermanic government had plunged the city into a debt aggregating \$2,000,000, with the municipal borrowing power practically exhausted. Graft was considered there, as in many other cities, "a conventional crime," to be laughed at and looked over. Then came the calamity which decimated the population about one-fourth by sudden death and another fourth by flight. At the first meeting of the city council after the storm, while the uncounted and unidentified and uncounted dead were lying in windrows or being burned in trenches and the wreckage of homes and business houses was piled in a four mile swath fifty feet high along the eastern and southern parts of the city, Alderman McMaster arose and addressed his colleagues:

"It strikes me, and I believe we are all of one mind, that we are up against one of the most momentous propositions that any city ever had to face. The resources of the city are nearly exhausted. The mayor and the aldermen have been elected from the different walks of life without any idea that such a calamity would visit Galveston and without any idea that such questions would arise."  
Then Alderman McMaster proceeded bluntly to suggest the resignation of himself and his colleagues and also the mayor and the creation by state authority of a commission of three or five men to take absolute charge of city affairs and save the municipality from a threatened receivership. Out of this suggestion grew a public meeting called by a hundred citizens more or less prominent, and at that meeting a committee was appointed which prepared a new charter and submitted it to the Texas legislature for ratification. The measure was enacted into law, sustained almost unanimously by public sentiment. It provided for the government of Galveston by five commissioners. Two were to be elected by the people. The other three, one of whom was to be mayor, were to be appointed by the governor. Thus came about the first "government by commission" in any American city.

The commission, with the co-operation of the people, raised Galveston out of the slough of despond, restored her credit, rebuilt her homes and houses of business and won the respect of the world. Literally the new deal in municipal management lifted the city out of the depths by building a safe sea wall and filling in behind it so that the level of the ground was raised to a point from which the town can laugh at future West India hurricanes.  
In the autumn of 1905 a wealthy business man of Des Moines, James G. Berryhill, accounted a millionaire, made a trip to Galveston to study conditions. So favorably impressed was Mr. Berryhill with the achievements and promises of the new idea in municipal government that upon his return home he submitted a report, Nov. 17, at a public meeting in the Y. M. C. A. auditorium in Des Moines, in which he urged that his city take steps toward reform in civic affairs by adopting a form of government based upon the Galveston idea, with improvements suggested by obvious conditions. Out of that suggestion grew the "Des Moines plan." Mr. Berryhill being the father of the movement, Alderman McMaster of Galveston, however, must remain the Adam of the idea for commission government.  
The Iowa legislature passed a measure drawn up subsequent to this Berryhill meeting which permitted cities of the first class to vote upon the adoption of the commission form of government. Des Moines, the state capital, first adopted the new deal. Then Cedar Rapids and Keokuk followed.  
The Iowa law provides for the election of five commissioners by popular vote, to serve two years. These are the only elected officials in the city. They appoint or superintend the appointment of all the other officials and employees. Four of the men are called councilmen. The other is called the mayor. But he is a commissioner, just like the rest, and is a member of the council, over which he presides.  
The mayor votes just as the other councilmen do. He is denied the power of veto. The city government is divided into five departments, one commissioner being superintendent of each. Under the present Des Moines

administration, the first since the commission law went into effect, Mayor A. J. Mathis is superintendent of the department of public affairs; Councilman Charles W. Schramm, accounts and finances; Councilman John L. Hamery,

and administration under the new form. The law requires a direct primary for nomination of candidates. The two highest candidates for mayor are put on the regular election ticket, with instructions to vote for one. The eight highest candidates for councilmen are put on the ticket, with instructions to vote for four. Only one ticket is in the field. Personality, not politics, is what counts. Des Moines is a strongly Republican city, yet Mayor Mathis is a Democrat. Councilman Ash was a coal miner. Councilman MacVicar had served twice as mayor under the old regime and has been president of the League of American Municipalities. The mayor receives \$3,500, and the councilmen \$3,000 each a year, and they must keep office hours and attend to business.  
The Buffalo proposition provides for votes on first, second and third choice for mayor. If a candidate gets a majority of third choice votes over first or second choice votes for either of his two opponents he is elected. This is a new wrinkle.  
One of my informants in Des Moines declares that not more than 1 per cent of the electors would vote against the commission plan. On the other hand, there is considerable opposition, but this is said to be chiefly among politicians who have no chance for office now.  
Government by commission reduced to the ultimate analysis seems to be as close an approach to pure democracy—with a small "d," remember—as any theory ever put in practice anywhere.

"Fashionable Men to Be 'Chesty.'"  
Have you heard the latest? After Easter there will be a decided change in the apparel of fashionable men. First of all, peg top trousers are doomed, with the revival of what is termed as the "natural" trousers. These, according to the model, appear to be a medium between skin tight and baggy. The sack, or morning, coat will grow shorter by several inches. Thirty inches will be the stylish length. Shoulder padding, like the peg top, is also to become extinct, and instead of broad shoulders the fashionable dresser will assume narrow shoulders, with

## CITIES NOW GOVERNED BY COMMISSION.

Nearly seventy-five cities in the United States now are governed under the commission system. At the first of the year the following list of cities so governed was compiled, being the most nearly complete list up to date:  
TEXAS—Galveston, Houston, Palestine, Waco, Fort Worth, Austin, El Paso, Dallas, Denison, San Antonio, Greenville, Sherman, Beaumont.  
IOWA—Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Keokuk.  
KANSAS—Kansas City, Topeka, Coffeyville, Leavenworth, Wichita, Independence, Anthony.  
MASSACHUSETTS—Haverhill, Gloucester, Chelsea.  
NORTH DAKOTA—Minot, Bismarck, Mandan.  
COLORADO—Colorado Springs, Grand Junction.  
OKLAHOMA—Ardmore, Enid, Tulsa.  
TENNESSEE—Memphis, Bristol, Etawah, Clarksville, Richard City.  
MISSOURI—St. Joseph.  
WASHINGTON—Tacoma.  
SOUTH DAKOTA—Sioux Falls.  
IDAHO—Boise, Lewiston.  
NORTH CAROLINA—Charlotte.  
CALIFORNIA—San Diego, Berkeley, Riverside.  
NEW YORK—Mount Vernon.

public safety; Councilman John MacVicar, streets and public improvements; Councilman John Wesley Ash, parks and public property.  
Partisan politics appears to be divorced absolutely from city elections

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a "high chest." This means that what padding will still remain will be pushed to the front, giving the wearer a "chesty" appearance.

The Norfolk jacket will be revived in popularity if the models have anything to do with the selection of styles. But the back will be "gathered" severely, and there must be at least three plaits on each side, in front. Then there is another new sack coat, which has an intersection of cloth one-quarter of an inch wide traversing the peak lapel.

Even the new fancy overcoat for spring has a box effect. It is held together with buttons measuring five inches in circumference. Another innovation in the sack suits is a one button shepherd plaid, made up into a single breasted coat, which resembles the coat now worn by some of the militant suffragettes.

Embroidered waistcoats for evening dress will be shown, ranging in colors blue and white, with dainty decorations of needlework. One waistcoat in particular, seen on exhibition recently, is made in dark blue satin, somewhat resembling a tulle for wistaria vines, with flowers daintily worked out in light blue silk. Polished black buttons are to take the place of the old fashioned silk buttons on evening dress, and shawl collars will show plenty of white shirt bosom and waistcoat.

Land One Gallon an Acre.  
An eastern editor deeply deplors the recent transfer of 100,000 acres of land in Texas for 100,000 gallons of whiskey—one gallon per acre. He writes, after stating that land has a peculiar importance and dignity: "Whisky, though it hath charms from some point of view, is highly objectionable from others, and, as a balance for land in a big trade, nothing could be less compatible with the essential proprieties. The man who sells his land for whisky makes a terribly bad land for whisky matter how much whisky he gets. He could do so much good with the one and can hardly help doing so much harm with the other that the transaction, for a sensitive observer, has an almost criminal air."

## At Lincoln's Tomb

By ROBERTUS LOVE

ABE LINCOLN? Wull, I reckon! Not a mile from where we be, Right here in Springfield, Illinois, Abe used to room with me.

He represented Sangamon, I tried it for Calhoun, And me and Abe was cronies then; I'll not forgit it soon.

I'll not forgit them happy days we used to sort o' batch Together in a little room that didn't have no latch To keep the other fellers out that liked to come and stay And hear them dasted funny things Abe Lincoln used to say.

Them days Abe Lincoln and myself was pore as anything; Job's turkey wasn't pore, but we used to laff and sing, And Abe was clean chuck full o' fun, but he was sharp as tacks,

For that there comic face o' his'n was fortyfied with fac's.

Some fellers used to laff at Abe because his boots and pants

Appeared to be on distant terms, but when he'd git a chance

He'd give 'em sich a drubbin' that they'd clean forgit his looks,

For Abe made up in common sense the things he lacked in books.

Wull, nex' election I got beat, and Abe come back alone;

I kep' a-clinkin' on the farm, pervidin' for my own.

You see, I had a woman and two twins that called me paw,

And Abe he kep' a-clinkin', too, at politics and law.

I didn't hear much more of Abe out there in old Calhoun,

For I was out o' politics and kinder out o' chune

With things that happened, but 'way back I'd named my two twin boys—

One Abraham, one Lincoln—finest team in Illinois.

Wull, here one day I read that Abe's among the candi-

dates (My old friend Abe!) for president o' these United States,



PRESIDENT LINCOLN WRITING A PARDON TELEGRAM.

And, though I had the rheumatiz and felt run down and blue, I entered politics ag'in and helped to pull him through.

And when nex' spring he called for men to fetch their grit and guns And keep the ship o' state afloat I sent, him both my sons

## Being the Reminiscences of the Hon. Jason Pettigrew of Calhoun County, Ill., in 1895.

And would 'a' gone myself and loved to make the bullets whiz 'F It hadn't ben I couldn't walk account o' rheumatiz.

Wull, Abe—my little Abe, I mean—he started out with Grant;

They buried him at Shiloh. . . . Excuse me, but I can't

Help feelin' father-like, you know, for them was likely boys;

The' wasn't two another sich that went fom Illinois.

And Lincoln—my son Lincoln—he went on by his self, A-grievin' for his brother Abe they'd laid upon the shelf,

And when he come to Vicksburg he was all thrashed out and sick,

And yit when there was fightin' Link fit right in the thick.

One night afore them Johnnies' guns my pore boy went to sleep

On picket dooty. . . . No, sir; 'tain't the shame that makes me weep.

It's how Abe Lincoln, president, at Washin'ton, D. C., Had time to ricolleck the days he used to room with mel

For don't you know I wrote to him they'd sentenced to be shot

His namesake, Lincoln Pettigrew, in shame to die and rot,  
The son o' his old crony and the last o' my twin boys  
He used to plague me so about at Springfield, Illinois.

## A Valentine For the Girl Who Makes Them



Sent by Robert Donnell 1910

I WONDER if she ever gets  
A tender missive, if she pines  
For love, and knows but vain regrets—  
The girl who makes the valentines.

All day she works at turning cranks,  
All day upon her weary feet  
She grinds the mill for Cupid's pranks—  
A grist of tokens soft and sweet.

From girlhood on to spinster age  
Mayhap she treads the tedious round,  
A toiler for a trifling wage—  
The stingy grist by Commerce ground.

In showy shops the young gallant  
Inspects the beautiful designs  
And showers (his devotion scant)  
A dozen belles with valentines.

The ardent lover takes but one,  
With paper hearts that cling and curl  
Like scented roses in the sun,  
And sends it to the Only Girl.

I doubt if any ever asks  
Whose fingers deftly put in bond  
The cunning Cupids—from the task  
Her fancies flying free and fond.

Well, here's a poetizer pleads  
For her to look beneath his lines  
A message for her if she reads—  
The girl who makes the valentines.

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GIRLS AT WORK IN A VALENTINE FACTORY.