

## ONE MAN'S OPINIONS

BY N. D. COCHRAN.

**The Claffin Failure.**—There's another side to the story of the failure of the big Claffin N. Y. drygoods house. We read in the papers about the \$30,000,000 or \$40,000,000 failure, of the stores all over the country that were involved, of the many banks that held Claffin paper, etc.

Here's the other side of the story:

At least 1,400 employes had purchased stock in the Claffin concern. The company had sold shares to them on the instalment, employes paying something each week out of their wages. One estimate is that employes had about \$800,000 invested. They have been promised their money back, but they are worrying.

The workers also contributed to various funds, conducted by the company. It is reported that the money in the vacation fund will be returned, by court order, to about 350 girls.

There were also sick funds and old age funds—all handled by the big company that failed.

This money, taken from the hard-earned wages of employes, ought to be paid back in full before one penny is paid to those who had only property rights in the assets of the Claffin company. The money should not be treated as part of the assets of the company. It belonged to the employes who were induced to put it in the hands of the management.

**The Trib Has Reformed.**—My attention has been called to the fact that the Tribune has reformed. It's this way—the Trib now is opposing granting a special privilege to Levy Mayer to violate the building ordinance and put up a 260-foot hotel on Michigan boulevard, where the Stratford now stands. In which the Trib is right.

It appears, however, that on March 25, 1901, the same Trib had an ordinance passed by council as follows:

Be it ordained, etc., Sec. 1. That

permission and authority be, and is hereby granted to the Tribune Company, and that the Commissioner of Buildings be, and he is hereby directed to issue a permit to said Company to erect on the premises leased by said Company and owned by the City of Chicago, at the southeast corner of Dearborn and Madison streets, a 12-story building, with a height not exceeding 170 feet above the sidewalk."

The point is that at that time the building code of Chicago limited the height of buildings to 130 feet.

This is not surprising. I imagine the Trib would oppose NOW a midnight lease by the school board of school lands to a private concern with no provision for revaluation for 99 years. Yet the Trib used its political pull with one school board to get for itself that kind of a lease of the school land it now occupies.

It ought to be easy for each reader to write his own editorial comment on this reformation of the Trib.

**Shocked and Unshocked.**—Former Chief Judge Edgar M. Cullen of the New York court of appeals, stand-patter, remarks thus:

"Unless I am utterly mistaken, there is now a strong tendency in courts, in legislatures and, worst of all, in the people themselves, to disregard the most fundamental principles of personal rights. Judicial decisions are made, statutes are enacted and doctrines are publicly advocated which, when I was young, would have shocked our people to the last degree."

There have been great improvements since the judge was young, due, mostly, to the monopolization of personal rights by the five per cent of our people. When Judge Cullen was young corporations had some respect for the law and personal rights and there really were personal rights such as free speech, free press, free assemblage, regardless of shock to the parties who subverted those rights,