

persistent defeat there was a goal worth attaining. And, though they did not know it as yet, they were at the very daybreak of a new and reconstructive era.

THE MACHINE'S FIRST DEFEAT

Through those sordid decades of Coxism, we now come to 1905, a year destined to stand out in living numerals in the chronology of Cincinnati. Undeterred by the overthrows of previous elections, and encouraged by some progress made in the Legislature, which had raised the school appropriation, the fighting idealists again came to the fore with an independent ticket, which this time bore the Democratic stamp.

A campaign of unremitting aggressiveness was waged. Even the "Old Boy," as they called Cox in those days, was startled by the fierceness of the movement against him. But he had only drawn what he deserved. Not satisfied with his years of complete mastery in Cincinnati, he was reaching out for a grip on the State. John M. Patterson was the candidate on the Democratic ticket for Governor against Myron T. Herrick. In Cincinnati, Edward J. Dempsey was Patterson's party colleague for the mayoralty against Harry Gordon.

The whole State was ablaze with excitement, but in Cincinnati it flamed the fiercest. Under the direction of the late John Vandercook, a really great journalist with something of the vision of a seer, the Cincinnati *Post* made a memorable fight against boss rule. Cox bent all his energies to stem the tide which seemed to be rising all about him.

It remained for one man to swing the day. Theodore Roosevelt sat in the White House at Washington. Always the uncompromising foe of the boss, his sympathy went out to the struggling people of Cincinnati. And as a result, at the behest of his chief, William H. Taft, then Secretary of War, made what came to be known as the Akron speech, in which he said, referring to Cox:

The whole government of both city and county are absolutely under his control, and every Republican convention nominates the men whom he dictates. . . . The government under the machine is constantly described as a very corrupt one.

If I were able—as I fear I shall not be, because public duty calls me elsewhere—to cast my vote in Cincinnati in the coming election, I should vote against the municipal ticket

nominated by the Republican organization, and for the State ticket.

It was a great stroke at the psychological moment. The entire Cox ticket, State and local, was swept into defeat. Cox received his first smashing blow. He "retired," but his retirement was like a Patti farewell tour.

There were many deluded people who immediately said:

"This is the end of Coxism!"

They did not realize that while the reformer works spasmodically, the politician labors unceasingly at the game, for it is his vocation. But for the moment Cox seemed down and out, and Cincinnati drew a breath of relief.

A NEW POLITICAL STAR RISES

That election of 1905 had a significance far greater to the people of Hamilton County, and, through them, to the whole State, than the temporary downfall of an arrogant and corrupt political machine, because it sent to the State Legislature, on the high tide of a great victory, a man destined for a conspicuous part in the subsequent civic rebirth of Cincinnati. That man was Henry T. Hunt, then little more than a boy, although he was already a militant member of the reform party.

Hunt was born in Cincinnati, the son of a distinguished railroad official who was one of the first foes of the rebate. His father had spent some years as a division superintendent of the Missouri Pacific, in Kansas. There the boy grew up, and possibly out of that soil of protest and unrest he gathered some of the inspiration which in later years led him to a great task. Be that as it may, Hunt, on the family's return to Cincinnati, grew up to a stalwart young manhood, graduated from Yale in 1900, and in 1903 emerged from the Cincinnati Law School a full-fledged barrister.

At college he had been a good boxer. He had an instinct for a "scrap," and, as he looked about him in Cincinnati, he realized that about the biggest game he could take on was that octopus which for years had laid its tentacles of graft and oppression upon his native city.

He had a part in the fight for the raising of the school-tax levy; now at Columbus he found a big opportunity. With a few other idealists, he helped to introduce a bill for a legislative investigation of Hamilton County, which was the sore spot in the State.