

New York Tribune

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A Big Man and the Police Commissioner.

Whether Colonel Goethals becomes Police Commissioner or not, New York City is certain to profit from offering the place to him and learning the conditions upon which he would accept it. Colonel Goethals is a great administrator, and he has pointed unerringly to the weakness in the present system. If the city cannot obtain a big Police Commissioner it will be because it will not give him power to do the work expected of him.

The canal digger's condition that the authority to "hire and fire" policemen be given him will count for more toward influencing the Legislature to alter the existing law than all the reports of all the investigating committees that ever investigated and all the requests of lesser men in the office of Commissioner. A great administrator has spoken, and he has said that it is impossible to master the Police Department unless the law giving excessive protection to policemen in the tenure of their jobs is changed. It is squarely up to the Legislature and up to public opinion in this city whether or not the intolerable condition of a "system" ruled police is to go on. Sooner or later this city must have such a man as Colonel Goethals at the head of its Police Department if the force is to be reorganized and made efficient. And to have such a man it must offer him a real opportunity.

It will be no easy thing to get through the Legislature laws which will meet the conditions that Colonel Goethals makes. The police organizations have their ways of intimidating or otherwise influencing legislatures. They control many votes and have at their disposal large funds. The only law that has been recently enacted for the discipline of the force was that secured by General Bingham enabling the Commissioner to reduce an inspector to the rank of captain.

The New Corporation Counsel.

The Mayor has greatly strengthened his administration by the appointment of Mr. Frank L. Polk as Corporation Counsel. Last spring when Mr. Polk was reported to be President Wilson's first choice for Collector of the Port of New York the Tribune praised the selection as one conspicuously in the public interest. It now congratulates Mayor Mitchell on securing for one of the most important city posts a man whose record shows that he is thoroughly in sympathy with the programme of efficiency, honesty and high ideals in the public service.

Mr. Polk is one of the group of Democrats of the younger generation which has never bowed the knee to Crokerism or Murphyism. Of Southern descent—the grandson of President James K. Polk—he has preserved the honorable traditions of Democracy at its best and has kept clear of the degeneracy and corruption which have ruled here under the emblem of Democratic regularity. Mr. Polk in his political experience has put integrity and progress above partisanship and has thus helped materially to recall other Democrats of education and character from servile associations with Tammany.

That service alone deserved recognition. Moreover, Mr. Polk is more than equal to all the responsibilities of the Corporation Counsel's office, even though they be increased by Mr. Mitchell's plans to give this place a larger importance than it has possessed under other Mayors. The city is fortunate when it can obtain the services of picked men like Frank L. Polk.

Federal Discharge of Federal Duties.

Mr. Taft reminds us that one of the oldest problems of our national government is still unsettled and troublesome. Even before the nation was established on a constitutional basis European powers began to reproach us for the lack of authority on the part of the central government to fulfill the functions which logically pertained to it. That flaw in the confederation was not remedied by the Constitution, and for the century and a quarter since Congress has failed to mend matters with legislation.

Foreign countries cannot deal with our states, but only with the federal government. They rightly look to it alone for redress of grievances of their citizens or subjects here. It is responsible to them, not only morally but legally, under its treaties. Being charged with such responsibility, it obviously should be invested with commensurate authority. Nor is it responsible to foreign nations alone. Our states hold it accountable for their safety. If an aggrieved foreign power should land troops here for redress, it would be invading not merely New York or California, but the United States, and the United States government would be expected to defend New York or California—even though the state in question had provoked the attack by its disregard of foreign treaty rights.

There can be no successful challenge of the logic and the justice of specifically endowing the federal government with power to discharge all of what are confessedly federal duties and obligations. No plea of state rights can avail, for a state should not have rights disproportionate to its duties or its powers. States make no treaties and are not called upon to

enforce them and are not held accountable for their violation. The nation is obligated to do all these things and should have the power that it needs for meeting its obligations.

To Spell or Not to Spell.

The great Brooklyn spelling bee, devised by our neighbor across the bridge, "The Eagle," seems to have been at once a glorious and a heartrending success. Sixty-one girls and forty-three boys of the public and parochial schools stood up on the Academy of Music stage and spelled for dear life—until finally one small thirteen-year-old boy alone survived to tell the tale and be pronounced the champion of all Long Island.

Easy little words like legible, ineligible, hydrangea, stylographic, harass and impassable constituted the first round of words fired at the children. Nine flunked. Next came disillusionized, desecrate and such, with ten more victims. After that the words grew steadily fiercer and the slaughter was terrific. Idiosyncrasy put out nine, phlox seven, triphthong four. Schism found the whole line in a panic. Syzum, scism, seycism, scism and scissum, it ran; but finally a boy saved the day.

In the end three children, two boys and one girl, were left. All failed on lachrymose. And it was no worse a word than prodigious, Dominic Sampson's favorite, that pinned the gold medal on Master Ambrose-Bianey, instead of Miss Gluzela Greenberg or Master Eugene O'Reilly.

As it happened, it was a parochial school child that won. So the defenders of our public schools have thrust upon them this new item in an old indictment. The whole teaching of spelling, including the resurrected spelling bee, may be a slaughter of the innocents. But it is not a patch on the slaughter of the English tongue which our public school graduates effect, day by day, year after year.

A Society Note for Gangdom.

"Dopey Benny" Fein departed yesterday for a five-year sojourn at Sing Sing. His absence will be mourned by that social set which organizes masked balls at Tammany Hall and casually shoots a few innocent bystanders in the course of the evening's entertainment. The smaller and, perhaps, more elite circle, the horse poisoners of the East Side, will miss his leadership. The rest of the public, thankful that at last some judge has been found to give the rogue the limit of the law instead of a reprimand or suspended sentence, will wish him nothing worse than hard labor for his full term.

This is the proper treatment for the gangmen. The "Dopey Bennies" probably won't be much improved by their stay in prison, for they are generally beyond the period of reformation. But at least while they are in jail the public is safe from them. The heavy club of the policeman must be supplemented by the severity of the judge consistently if the criminal gangs are to be reduced to their proper place.

The Growing Sequel to Zabern.

Yesterday's extraordinary proceedings at Berlin vindicated the observations of the "Frankfurter Zeitung" on the Strassburg verdicts on the Zabern incident. If they are not corrected by higher courts, it said, "they will have a far-reaching effect upon our whole political life." The writer of that prediction could have expected no effect more far-reaching or more momentous than that the Reichstag should formally challenge the army's independence of the civil law.

That was what the Reichstag did yesterday, or what it will be doing if it completes the procedure which was then begun, as it is quite likely to do. At present the army assumes that it is subject to only the imperial will. For the Reichstag to declare it subject to the civil law will be not merely to challenge the army. It will be to challenge the imperial prerogative. A bill to that effect may pass the Reichstag. What will happen to it when it reaches the Emperor is an interesting question.

At any rate, the empire now seems to be face to face with the question of the relative rank of the military and the civil authorities in time of peace. That it can be answered, in the present temper of the German people and their parliament, in favor of the superiority of the former is not to be believed. If such an answer were given, it would, as the "Vorwaerts" said of the Strassburg verdicts, send hundreds of thousands of fresh recruits into the ranks of the Social Democracy.

A Confident Intimation of Home Rule.

Bonar Law may rage and Edward Carson imagine a vain thing, but Home Rule for Ireland now seems to be assured. That is not because John Redmond says so and Messrs. Asquith and Lloyd George say "ditto." A more confident authority than they has spoken, in tones that the world, and particularly the Yankee part of it, can understand.

For the trustees of the Irish Home Rule Fund will make no appeal to America this year. That is not because of consideration for our income tax burden, nor because of the size of the balance on hand. For all the trustees care, America may be rolling in wealth, and for all we know their treasury may be empty. No, but it is because Home Rule is certain to be enacted in the near future, and therefore no more sinews of war will be needed.

We should hesitate to estimate how many millions this country has contributed to that fund; generally ungrudgingly, sometimes enthusiastically. We have no doubt that it would keep on giving, if it were necessary. That the trustees deem it no longer necessary is the most practical intimation of the imminence of Home Rule that we have seen. That they are ready to accept Home Rule at once of the stoppage of that golden flow is an impregnable demonstration of the good faith of their cause.

Too Much "Dixie."

The man from Maine who was ejected from a restaurant for blessing when the band played "Dixie" may not be precisely a hero, but he has the courage of his convictions. Departing hastily for Aroostook County, where they don't follow the Broadway band wagon too closely, he remarked as he caught the train:

"Anybody would think Jeff Davis was Mayor of New York and it was one of the suburbs of Charleston, S. C. They play 'Dixie' in every restaurant here. Why don't they all go down there if they like it so well?"

Perhaps Lombroso could explain why estimable former citizens of Dubuque, Iowa, or Skaneateles, N. Y., feel impelled to give a shrill version of a "rebel yell" when a restaurant orchestra of members born on East Broadway, New York, or in Naples, Italy, plays a ragtime piece ending with "Dixie." "John Brown's Body" doesn't stir any patriots, even from Kansas. "Silver Threads Among the Gold" appeals only to the lachrymose. "Too Much Mustard" may start a turkey trot. "The Star Spangled Banner" or "America" will bring a few shamefaced, rather reluctant ones to their feet. Yet "Dixie" will produce a demonstration, frequently to the surprise

of some loyal Southerner, who doesn't see a great deal of the same kind of article south of Mason and Dixon's line. Returned travellers say that in Argentina the tango is chiefly conspicuous by its absence. Maybe the same general principle accounts for the prevalence of "Dixie" in New York and points West.

Another cup of coffee for Mr. Wilson, please!

Man in New Jersey refuses a legacy because he would not be able to spend it all until he was ninety. Lots of men would like to get legacies which would last them until that age.

One of the Washington wills has been returned, but it is not likely to be offered for probate.

"O'Gorman Will Link Murphy and Graft."—Headline.

Does O'Gorman have to?

THE TALK OF THE DAY.

Howard Elliott, chairman of the New Haven Railroad, was telling some friends that he was no parliamentarian.

"Well," remarked one of his hearers, "for a non-parliamentarian it seems to me you did a fine job running the meeting of your stockholders at New Haven. The conditions were right for a lively fight."

"Have that as you wish," replied the good-natured railroader, "but there is really only one rule I know of for handling a meeting of men. A labor agitator gave it to me many years ago. It is: 'Let them smoke and see that they get their meals regularly.'"

That, by the way, is what Mr. Elliott did at the meeting in question.

Mrs. Helter—Tommie, don't you think you've had enough chocolates?

Tommie—No, mother. There are two left.—Life.

ON THE SLEEPING CAR.

A famous English Canon, Who travels fast and far, Proclaims a righteous ban on Our sacred sleeping car.

If meant for sleep eternal, Those berths might corpses hold, But their torment infernal To living men is sold!

Sardines are packed as tightly, But they have lost their heads, And headless men might rightly Curl up in Pullman beds:

No big feet far extended, Would knock about the ears; No snores with wheezes blended, No oaths, the headless hears.

O woman, will you stand it? When once you get the vote? Here's hoping you may land it, And get the Pullman goat!

W. A. H.

"Do you believe that the world likes to be humbugged?" "Well, every fortune teller I can call to mind is fat."—Houston Post.

Berlin has a "theatre novelty" in the form of a perfumed programme, of which a "patron of the stage of many years' standing" says in one of the papers of that city: "Inasmuch as we must pay for the playbill we might be spared the perfume. It mingles with the other theatre odors, it clings to one's coat and suggests tango, and is liable to cause trouble in households where women allow husbands to go to the theatre alone. No matter how we rebel, it must be endured. Are we indebted to America for this novelty?"

A bomb wrecked the door of a New York barber's apartment. Probably the work of some anarchistic customer unable to control his anger after replying in the negative to this cross-examination: "Massage?" "Shampoo?" "Mustache curled?" "Hair singe?" "Dandruff cure?" "Manicure?" "Shine?" etc., etc.—Buffalo Express.

SENATOR O'GORMAN TO THE STAND.

TO THE GRAND JURY ROOM



MURPHY—What do you 'spose he's going to say?

THE PEOPLE'S COLUMN

An Open Forum for Public Debate.

ONE PORTRAIT OF VILLA

An Observer Writes of the Rebel as He Sees Him.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Puzzle over it as I do, I cannot make out why it is that newspaper editors and individuals who have professed horrified disapproval of General Huerta should accept as a matter of fact the villainies of Villa and root for his success. It's beyond my comprehension entirely. I have received a letter from a friend of mine who lives in El Paso. In Juarez he has seen Villa, and this is how he described him:

"Imagine a cross between a halfbreed bad man and a rattier and you've got this fellow Villa. The snake in him has given him a diabolical cunning. He's out for loot and nothing else. He has made a lot of money by selling thousands of head of cattle which he has stolen from the big ranches of Chihuahua and shipped across the border. He gets his followers by closing down the mines and forcing men out of work. Then there is nothing left for them to do but join him for all there is in it. He's killed and ordered killed hundreds of men, robbed and destroyed everything he can lay his hands on. There isn't a woman safe wherever he goes. He's a deified devil and don't let anybody tell you anything else."

This is a pretty harsh picture of any man, but I have great faith in my friend's judgment, and Villa's record of crime is common knowledge, anyhow.

FRANK GUARD, New York, Jan. 23, 1914.

THE CALL OF THE CITY

How Feeding the Shiftless Depopulates the Farms.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Your news columns this morning contain several items of extreme interest to the farmers in the vicinity of New York. You give accounts of hundreds of men being fed and housed by charitably disposed persons and associations that cater to the wants of the unemployed. Does it ever occur to some of these well intentioned people that the doles they hand out are the bait that is continually luring help away from the farming sections in a radius of one hundred miles of New York City? I am positive that no single factor of New York life is as much to blame for the inability of farmers to obtain and hold steady help as is this indiscriminate feeding and housing the shiftless and indolent gangs that infest New York in the winter months.

Mayor Mitchell has struck the right note when he advocates a requirement of some service in return for help advanced, and if that condition could be made general I am perfectly satisfied that ten thousand men would find steady employment winter and summer in the area mentioned, because if the bait did not exist in the city and they had to work in either case they would stay where a great many belong—in the country.

Now a word in explanation of that assertion: Under present conditions 75 per cent of the farms in that radius (operated for profit) are not run at anything approaching their maximum capacity for the simple reason that the farmer has to base his calculations as to animals he keeps and the crops he plants in a large measure on the minimum supply of help—in other words, a farmer who now milks, say, fifteen cows would be willing and able to handle forty but for the fact that emergency help, i. e., members of his family or immediate neighbors who will come in for a few mornings, is limited, and he cannot take a chance of being left periodically without help to milk and care for a barn full of animals. That also applies in a great measure to the planning of crops grown.

How much this affects the supply of and high cost of selling foodstuffs I will leave to others to determine. In conclusion I am satisfied that were some of the charitable agencies that de-

vote more time to procuring work and following it up, New York City would lose a great deal of its fascination for the majority of its floating population at the present time. JAMES M. REID, Buccleuch Farm, Granite Springs, N. Y., Jan. 23, 1914.

GINGERBREAD AND GRAPEJUICE

Of Such Is Said To Be the Bryan Brand of Statesmanship.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: About a month ago there appeared in The Tribune a letter signed "E. D. Brinkerhoff" that dwelt with considerable emphasis on the strange incapacity as public men nowadays in this country. The main point made was that no one in the legislatures or in the congresses stands forth as a master mind, especially in fiscal affairs, but all alike fall utterly, lamentably, fail to know what is constructively the best thing to do.

In today's Tribune there are news items which not only corroborate this, but which appear to go it better. One is from Washington, saying it is probable New York will not get a reserve bank, and giving as apparently a factor of influence in this weird proposal an opinion expressed by the late J. P. Morgan, quite as if that extraordinarily arbitrary financier was, in his time, the most reliable authority imaginable and beyond all others honest.

Also from Washington it is stated that the Secretary of State has not replied to a diplomatic note from the Japanese government dated more than five months ago, and as if to make the Japanese most question defiantly dangerous the President has not been informed by his Secretary of State about treaty suggestions made to Japan.

The sublime idiocy of, if possible, breaking up New York's huge banking interests so they shall at least become practically located elsewhere is, of course, preposterous; but it is consummate practicality itself (provided the great bankers say yes to it) as compared with that insufferable gingerbread and grapejuice statesmanship (?) which stupidly sets itself to hold the Japanese nation on redhot tenterhooks, and meanwhile keep our Chief Magistrate in blind ignorance of treaty proposals which not he alone but which the whole country should be apprised of frankly, right straight along, and would be were this Secretary of State a statesmanlike, true patriot, instead of merely a master politician.

ALFRED LAURENS BRENNAN, New York, Jan. 23, 1914.

"SPILLING THE BEANS"

Was It Murphy, O'Gorman or Somebody Else?

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: In view of recent events was it Murphy, O'Gorman, Little Delaney or the gloomy Sulzer that really "spilled the beans" for Tammany?

A careful study of the official canvass of the vote in Manhattan shows that at least 45 per cent of the enrolled Democratic vote was cast for anti-Tammany candidates.

Evidently a great many self-respecting Democrats had a remembrance that it was time for Murphy and his grafting gang to move on. Now it looks as if the vigilant Whitman was going to hasten the exodus.

J. FAIR WELLS, New York, Jan. 23, 1914.

The Housekeepers' Trust.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: I note that one of the new trust bills would make illegal an agreement to prevent competition in the "purchasing of merchandise, produce or any commodity." Would this make it illegal for New Jersey housekeepers who buy their eggs at Washington Market to agree not to buy eggs until the price falls below a certain figure? H. H. F., New York, Jan. 23, 1914.

WILSON'S TRUST BILLS

Some Press Views Not Altogether Complimentary to Them

DEFINITIONS AND STATUTES. From The Buffalo Evening News. Closer definition of the anti-trust act may be desirable, though the courts may be trusted to interpret the law in a reasonable way. But good may arise from making some things more definite in the light of the decisions, and it is well to put the definitions into the statute.

FAILING IN MANY DIRECTIONS. From The New York Globe.

On the whole, the bills are distinctly in the direction of progress, although falling in many directions to measure up to intelligent desire. For example, it is doubtful if there will be satisfactory regulation of interstate corporations until there is federal incorporation. If investors in railroad securities are to be protected against fraudulent issues, so ought investors in industrial securities.

"RAW FRUIT OF COMMITTEE ZEAL." From The New York Times. These bills belie the more than fair assurances of the President's address. Surely they are the raw fruit of committee zeal and cannot have enjoyed the cream or the approval of Mr. Wilson. Measures making such additions to central power, so greatly extending the reach of the federal arm, measures providing for a continuing and organized meddling with business, cannot with safety be applied to enactment.

FEDERAL CENTRALIZATION. From The Philadelphia Press.

President Wilson's programme of railroad, banking and industrial legislation carries federal centralization to a point that the most extreme of oldtime realists would hardly have dreamed of. This from an administration Southern in birth and spirit almost from egg to bird's nest! This from a people who shed blood and dissipated their treasure in vain effort to destroy the Union that slavery and states' rights, as they understood states' rights, might be preserved!

"WOULD SERIOUSLY IMPAIR LIBERTY." From The Boston Herald.

The interstate trade commission, which the administration proposes, will be useful if its service can be limited to that of helping the Attorney General in the vigorous enforcement of his duty. It will make preliminary surveys for him, and will try to do his bidding. But if it is to go further and delve into all the details of private business, as it seems empowered to do under the present form of the bill, it would seriously impair that liberty of which we as a people have boasted.

FOR A UNIFORM POLICY. From The Washington Post.

The central idea of this new body of anti-trust legislation is soundly in the investment of the Sherman law with the vigor difficulties and their treasure in lifting that enactment out of the deadness into the light of reason, and also strengthen the hands of the government in giving force and effect to the new restraints on finance and commerce. Not as all of the new restraints, like the original anti-trust law itself, have completely vain effort to destroy their treasure in their key-note, one would suppose the reasons of logic and consistency might lead the government to pursue that policy uniformly.

NO "WHIP AND SPUR" PASSAGE. From The New York Evening Post. Wise as their authors may be, their work cannot be considered perfect from the beginning. These bills do not seem fully panoplied from the heads of the dove-like framers. They come rather tentative plans, to be fully discussed, searched with lighted candles by the keenest minds in the business world in Congress, and agreed upon only in the form which sober reason and deliberate judgment dictate.