

New-York Tribune.

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The Tribune uses its best endeavors to insure the promptness of every advertisement it prints and to avoid the publication of all advertisements containing misleading statements or claims.

Employing the Siegel Crash Victims.

The community will honor Mr. John Claflin and the other department store proprietors for the promptness with which they offered employment to as many as possible of those who were thrown out of work by the closing of the Siegel stores. Much false and malicious talk has been heard about the indifference of department store proprietors to the welfare of their employes. No report of an investigating committee could have answered it so effectively as the ready sympathy which such proprietors have shown to employes of another store for whose fortunes they were in no way responsible.

The action of Mr. Claflin and the other proprietors has averted in part, we hope in a large part, a great industrial tragedy. There is nothing sadder in the economic world than the closing of a business that throws out of work hundreds of unskilled, not well paid wage earners, fathers perhaps with families to feed, or, in the case of department stores, girls who have no surplus and who will face a long period of idleness.

And in this Siegel failure the situation was made many times worse by the fact that the employes who had been able to save kept their small savings in the bank which was in connection with the Siegel store. All such lost not only employment but the little capital which they had hoarded up against such a catastrophe.

Two thousand men and women turned adrift at a moment when work is notoriously hard to obtain, and with their savings sacrificed to the false confidence which negligent state permitted them to feel in a private bank, their situation was sad indeed. It has been lightened just because of the feeling which other employers of labor also there had for those who had been suddenly thrust upon the streets. The tragedy has not been averted, but it has been lessened. Responsibility for it rests heavily upon the state, whose laws made its aggravation possible.

France at Panama.

France ought, indeed, to have a memorial at Panama, such as is now suggested; if there are to be any monuments besides the colossal works of the canal itself. Her achievements there have been obscured by the circumstances which brought them to an end. But they were really gigantic and enduring. It is to their credit that they have been so far higher recognition than they have normally received.

Nothing could be more unfair than the bald record that the French failed while the Americans succeeded. Truth and justice require recognition of the radical contrast in conditions. The French were not baffled by the engineering problem. They were defeated by diplomatic and sanitary circumstances. The Monroe Doctrine and the New Granada treaty prevented them from getting control of a canal zone and doomed them to subservience to Colombia; and as the secret of suppressing yellow fever and malaria had not yet been discovered, they were left helpless victims of those plagues.

The Anonymous Letter Writer.

Now that the cause célèbre of Elizabeth has departed from the boards it seems worth while to point out again the utter meanness and cowardice of the enemy who turns to an anonymous letter for revenge.

This New Jersey trial has resulted as have most trials based on the identification of written material. The handwriting experts long since lost most of their authority hereabout, and when it is attempted to apply such expert evidence to typewriting it is easy to forecast the result. Occasionally typewritten copy furnishes a peculiarly good clue. But in most cases the machine made letter is barren of all to trace. And, as in the Pollard case, even if there is some evidence to identify the particular machine, you have still to identify the particular hands which touched the keys.

Thus the anonymous letter writer of to-day with sense enough to take proper precautions is practically certain to escape detection. Hitting a man from behind in the dark is a perilous method of attack compared to this game. The latter stands out as quite the most cowardly crime on the statute books. It deserves all the contempt that society gives it. The law is all but helpless before it and nothing but public opinion working upon private conscience can keep it down.

Underground Wires in Rural Regions.

One lesson of the recent snowstorm seems to have been taken to heart, after having been vainly presented by many other storms in many preceding winters. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, we are told, will at once begin to put into underground conduits all the telegraph and telephone wires which are now strung on poles across New Jersey and Pennsylvania, from Jersey City to Philadelphia. We should think it would do so, and we should think that other corporations using many wires would follow the example. In that one storm thousands of poles and tens of thousands of miles of wire were broken down. The cost of repairs will be enormous. The inconvenience, the monetary loss and the peril to property and life caused by

many days of disorganization if not total suspension of the telegraph, telephone, fire alarm and electric lighting systems are beyond all calculation. It would probably be impracticable to put all wires in rural regions underground. But in closely inhabited suburbs and along railroads and common roads where there are many wires the underground system should be made compulsory. Such a reform would save the public from the evils of the last dozen days, and it would probably in time be for the direct profit of the companies themselves.

Travellers' Tales of the Colonel's Fees.

Colonel Roosevelt may not be the safest guide for this country politically, but he has always borne the reputation of being a model of financial disinterestedness. Therefore it is with surprise and incredulity that the public hears travellers' tales of his presenting bills to astonished Brazilians for his lectures, after having been "royalty feted" by them, for all the world like our canny Secretary of State among his admirers on the Chautauqua Circuit.

The Colonel went down to South America to deliver a lecture, for which an honorarium was promised, as is customary the world over when a distinguished foreigner is asked to make an expensive trip to talk before a learned society. If while down there he developed the habit of presenting bills to people who sought to honor him it will occasion astonishment; for if the Colonel chose to turn into riches the distinction which the American people have conferred upon him he need not have gone abroad to do so. All Chautauqua was open to him. The stories from South America are not in keeping with his character. The Tribune does not admit Colonel Roosevelt's doctrine, but it takes pleasure in saying that it never detected him in trying to get rich out of preaching it.

International Slangwhanging.

Much as any interference with the freedom of the press is generally to be deprecated, there is room for sympathy with the action which the German government is reported to have taken toward some of the more rabid anti-Russian papers of that country. For those papers have gone far beyond the bounds of legitimate record and comment. They have conducted a venomous propaganda with the deliberate purpose of causing ill feeling, strained relations, and perhaps even war, between two friendly countries.

Such conduct comes, indeed, very close to a violation of the neutrality laws. It is forbidden to wage war with powder and shot against a friendly nation. Morally, it is as bad to wage war with false witness and malevolent invective. If such utterances should provoke war, as it is within the range of possibilities for them to do, their authors would be as responsible, morally, as though they had marched across the border in military array. If newspapers transform themselves into filibusters they must expect to meet filibusters' fate.

The Post Mortem on a Might-Have-Been Humorist.

Explaining a pleasantry which will not explain itself is one of the most harrowing experiences a humorist can suffer. As John G. Whittier would have put it: "Of all sad jokes of tongue or pen, the saddest is that which might have been." Ambassador Walter H. Page would be either more or less than human if his faith in himself as a humorist had not been soured by the failure of the rest of the world to appreciate his after-dinner inspirations and to classify him enthusiastically as another Mark Twain or George Ade.

Mr. Page has endeavored to correct the impression caused by his pleasantries in London by cabling a verbatim report of what he said. Here is the passage in which he gave his humor the freest rein:

I will not say that we have constructed the Panama Canal for you (laughter), for I am speaking with great frankness and not with what is sometimes called diplomatic indirection (laughter), but I will say most truly that it adds greatly to the pleasure of building that great work that it is you who will most profit by it (laughter).

This looks in type suspiciously like one of those "leave-to-print" speeches in "The Congressional Record" in which the solitary midnight lamp orator furnishes his own bracketfuls of uproarious interruption. These brackets will never impress our sophisticated and canny Senators.

We fear that an earnest judge of humor like Secretary Bryan could read the Page jeu d'esprit twice over, backward and forward, and never find anything funny in it. Either as humor or as serious opinion, any Secretary of State in his senses would have blue pencilled it had he had a chance to do so. Mr. Bryan is a busy man, and it would be cruel perhaps to tie him down still further to desk work in Washington. Yet it might appease the Senate and it would certainly reassure the country if he should dedicate himself from now on to the great task of censoring in advance all Mr. Page's threatened after-dinner humor.

Working for Christian Unity.

The project to hold an interdenominational conference of Christians throughout the world to discuss the question of Christian unity is a hopeful and suggestive sign of the times. It had its inception in the Episcopal Church, which appointed a commission in 1910 to take the question up with the other religious bodies. The response of these bodies has been prompt and cordial, and representative committees have been appointed by thirty-seven religious bodies to arrange when and where the world conference of Christian churches shall be held.

The conference, of course, will have no legislative powers; it will be simply an advisory and consultative body. But the fact that such a representative gathering is to be held to discuss unity as a practical and live question is in itself a strong proof that Christians are more and more coming to see the moral and economic waste of maintaining so many religious organizations, which often expend most of their vitality in competing with each other. The folly of denominationalism has indeed become so evident in the foreign mission field that many of the missionaries are as much as possible working along the lines of a common understanding. The now famous Kikuyu case in East Africa is a striking evidence of this tendency, while the criticism in England of the missionaries who held the union meeting in Kikuyu shows that any real Christian unity is yet far distant in the future.

Nevertheless, this great movement, which has been so hopefully launched, will be most valuable as an object lesson. Composed, as the conference will be, of the most famous and influential men in the various Christian bodies, their discussions and suggestions will bring home to every Christian man and woman the absurdity and needlessness of sectarian divisions. The economic waste of a small town or village desperately trying to support ten or twelve churches, when it is really able by rights to main-



THE PEOPLE'S COLUMN

An Open Forum for Public Debate.

LET US ABOLISH CONGRESS

LET US ABOLISH CONGRESS. An Irate Celt suggests that our Ambassadors Tell Us What Laws Foreign Nations Desire. To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: It would appear that the present Democratic administration at Washington had about made up its mind that no legislation objectionable to foreign powers is to be passed by Congress. The fact that much of this legislation is desirable and in some cases even vital, for the welfare of the Republic does not alter the situation from the point of view of our "peerless" Secretary of State.

RECOGNIZE HUERTA

Only by So Doing Can We Avoid a Bloody War. To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: We have been waiting and watching with patience for one year and one day, and are much worse off to-day as regards the Mexican situation than we were one year ago, when Diaz, Huerta and Orozco were together representing the only government that Mexico had. The previous administration reached its position through the death of many citizens of Mexico, as any one acquainted with the ways of that country knows that death and cruelty have been the only routes by which any one becomes President of that unfortunate republic. And the death of Madero should have been no reason why we should virtually claim the right to name their next President.

THE TALK OF THE DAY.

The Federal League magnates missed a point when they failed to flash their bank rolls before "Jim" Thorpe, the only real "jumper" with the McGraw-Comiskey band of baseball tourists. The Indian won fame as a "jumper" at the Olympic games at Stockholm in 1912. He would have been a "Tip-Top" drawing card.

THE "NEUTERISTS"

So an "Anti" Suggests That the Feminists Be Named. To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Allow me to recommend to "A Mere Man," whose letter of March 10 is answered by your correspondent "Feminist" in this morning's issue, that he attend one of the meetings where he can hear the desired propaganda. At such a meeting, held a short time ago, some half a dozen speakers occupied about twenty minutes each, endeavoring to convince their audience of woman's right to do the several things which they (the speakers, who were, of course, women) had already accomplished with unquestionable success, unrestricted by law or society!

THE ARMY AND HORSE SHOWS

Protest is Made Against Congress' Effort to Stop Exhibiting by Officers. To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: It is with great regret that I perceive a provision was made in the army appropriation bill and passed the House which, if accepted by the Senate, would preclude army officers owning good horses from exhibiting them at our and other horse shows, unless the officers themselves bear all the expenses of exhibiting. The amendment was offered by Representative Webb, of North Carolina, who urged it on the ground that it would reduce expenses. It follows an item allowing \$500,000 for army horses, and provides "that hereafter no part of this or any other appropriation shall be expended for defraying the expenses of officers, enlisted men or horses attending or taking part in horse shows."

THE INVENTION OF THE AIR BRAKE.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: The New York papers give George Westinghouse the honor of inventing the air brake. Is it possible not one of them knows the true inventor of the steam or

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air brake, the late Henry Miller, of Chappaqua, N. Y. "Honor to whom honor belongs." Do you not think it just to this man and his family that it be stated correctly in the papers? WILLIAM P. FIERO. No. 70 Waller avenue, White Plains, N. Y., March 14, 1914.

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