The Sun.

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If our friends who favor us with manuscripts for publication wish to have rejected articles returned, they must in all cases send stamps for that purpose.

A Broad and Liberal Use of the Mails.

Senator MASON of Illinois now becomes the chairman of the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads through the accident of the simultaneous departure of his three seniors on that important committee, Mr. WOLCOTT of Colorado, Mr. CHANDLER of New Hampshire and Mr. CARTER of Montana.

From a signed article on postal affairs contributed by Mr. MASON to the December number of a Chicago periodical known as *Advertising Experience* we derive the subjoined declaration:

"Personally, I am for a broad, liberal use of the mails."

We should say there was no doubt of that. About twenty months ago Mr. MASON delivered in the Senate a speech entitled "Food and Drink," which was really more or less of an advertisement of the sparkling beverages produced by the legitimate enterprise of certain American manufacturers of "true champagne," as Senator MASON styled it.

During those twenty months or so, we do not know how many dozens, or scores, or hundreds of copies of Mr. MASON'S great speech on true champagne have found their way to this office, accompanied by the Senator's characteristically rolling and bubbling signature in facsimile by way of a frank through the mails.

There is nothing illegal in this method of advertising, since the true champagne speech, as an excerpt from the *Congressional Record*, is technically entitled to free transit through the United States mails.

But the peculiar and persistent enthusiasm of the chairman of Post Offices and Post Roads for the dissemination of this particular gem of oratory had already prepared us to believe his announcement that he favors a broad and liberal use of the mails.

Those Asphalt Contracts.

The injunction issued on Tuesday by Supreme Court Justice MAREAN in Brooklyn restraining JAMES P. KEATING, the Commissioner of Highways in this town, from giving out asphalt contracts aggregating nearly $3,000,000, as he proposed to do on Friday, and also restraining him from letting out any more asphalt contracts of any sort, should be a matter of sincere public thanksgiving. The injunction was brought at the nominal suit of a taxpayer, but it is well understood that the chief mover in the proceedings is Mr. EDWARD M. GROUT, the new Comptroller-elect. Mr. GROUT has been carrying on a sturdy fight against this asphalt monopoly for some time, and all good people hereabouts ought to praise him for it and to hold up his hands.

The affidavits submitted to Justice MAREAN on which the injunction was granted declare that the proposed contracts were to be awarded upon specifications precluding fair and reasonable competition and specifically preventing any person or persons bidding on the work except the National Asphalt Company. It is asserted that the specifications set up a test which is artificial and fallacious and of no value in determining the true quality of the asphalt or of obtaining good and durable pavements. The general allegation is, in fact, that the specifications, as laid down by Commissioner KEATING, were simply ones for the purpose of stifling competition in these asphalt bids. They required submission of samples to the Commissioner four days before the bids were opened, and made it compulsory upon the bidder to furnish a certificate that he had laid at least 10,000 yards of pavement in some other city and that it had worn well for at least two years. The charge is that all the specifications were drawn in the interests of persons controlling the so-called Asphalt Trust, and that the results of the bidding under them would simply be that the city of New York would pay a higher price for such pavements than if the work was thrown open to fair competition.

It is not necessary at this time to pass upon the truth of these charges. It is sufficient cause for congratulation now that the whole affair is in the courts, and that in the meantime the letting of contracts has been stopped.

The Treasury Report.

The Secretary of the Treasury, in his annual report submitted to Congress yesterday, makes a complete statement of the financial operations of the Government during the last fiscal year and discusses in a very interesting way those great problems of a financial nature which the Government has yet to solve.

The report shows that the Treasury's surplus of receipts over expenditures during the year was $[illegible]. The estimated surplus for the fiscal year 1902 is, if present revenues are unchanged, about $[illegible], and the estimated surplus for 1903, under similar circumstances, is placed at slightly over $[illegible]. The gold held in the Treasury is $[illegible], an amount of coin and bullion never held except once temporarily by any other Government. The circulation per capita on Oct. 1, 1901, stood at $[illegible]. The national debt has been reduced by bond purchases and other means from $1,[illegible] on Nov. 1, 1899, to $[illegible] on Nov. 15, 1901. Interest charges, however, have been so further curtailed by the Government's bond refunding operation that the annual interest charge on account of the public debt has been reduced from $40,347,884 on Nov. 1, 1899, to $28,471,228 on Nov. 15, 1901. Inasmuch as our revenues are now greatly in excess of our expenditures, the Secretary of the Treasury recommends that the revenues be reduced to the extent of $50,000,000, and he proposes as a first step in that direction the repeal of all the miscellaneous war taxes.

The chief feature of the Secretary's report, however, is his suggestion for reform in our system of national banking. Pointing out that the chief function of banking is to extend and contract credit at proper times, he shows how undue inflation arises from an improper extension of credit, and panics similarly occur from a frightened contraction of it. If some means could be adopted whereby the strength of association could be secured and the "surplus power of the safe and strong extended in confidence to the support of the weak and exposed," the evil results of panics would be minimized. The Secretary indicates his opinion that a large central bank with multiplied branches would, indeed, give the highest assurance of protection against the present evil of individual banks, but declares that such a proposition, in the present state of popular sentiment, must be regarded as impossible of realization. It is also understood that a bank circulation based entirely upon Government bonds is not flexible enough, for it makes the amount of the circulation dependent upon the price of the bonds rather than upon the needs of the country. At present the tendency seems clearly to be toward a greater relative increase in the requirements of the business community for currency than in the quantity of Government bonds with which the note issue can be secured.

Mr. GAGE suggests, therefore, that any national banking association depositing 30 per cent. of its capital in the form of United States bonds at their par value and 20 per cent. of its capital in greenbacks with the Treasurer of the United States shall be entitled to issue its circulating notes to an amount equal to its capital, such banks paying in addition semi-annually to the Treasury of the United States in trust an amount equal to one-eighth of 1 per cent. on their capital stock respectively, such payments to constitute a Guaranty Fund for the protection of any bank which may become insolvent. If this were done, there is a possibility of a safe expansion of banking currency of about $300,000,000, while at the same time the much-hoped-for redemption of the greenbacks would be virtually secured to the extent of about $200,000,000. Mr. GAGE contends that an examination of banking operations in the country for the last thirty-six years shows that if some such plan as this had been adopted, all bank currency would have been safe at all times and there would have accumulated already an unused surplus to the credit of the Guaranty Fund of $27,421,950.

Entire comprehension of Mr. GAGE'S plan can be obtained only by reading his argument for it as printed in to-day's SUN. Opinions concerning it will by no means be unanimous, but it will be admitted by all that the Secretary has made an interesting and eloquent plea.

The Democratic Party.

The Democratic party as a national party is now disorganized more than at any time before in its history. We do not except the long period during and after the Civil War when, at times, it could not muster an opposition in Congress which commanded or deserved the respectful consideration of its political enemies or of the country. In the Senate of the present Congress it has from no State of the rich and populous North a single spokesman and even from the South few of notable strength. In the House of Representatives it is without leadership worthy of respect, and its minority is made up almost wholly of men of mediocre abilities who have not even the strength as an opposition which disciplined uniformity of policy and conviction gives.

More than all, both the conservatism and the sane aggressiveness of the Union, without regard to party lines, are distrustful of the Democratic party. Prudent business in every State is in dread of the possibilities of the confusion which would result from the triumph of a party in which there are radically conflicting elements, with the more conservative, apparently, the weaker. That struggle, begun so fiercely in 1896 and continuing unabated in 1900, has not yet been composed, not even lessened in its intensity. Even if the currency question strictly shall now be set aside as a hopeless issue for any party, the Populistic spirit which entered into the Democracy five years ago has not been expelled. If it does not find an outlet in the Democratic party may it not again seek expression in a distinct party fatal to Democratic hopes of national succession and menacing to the repose of security upon which business prosperity depends?

Meantime, it must not be forgotten that as a State party the Democratic party is still strong. It is now dominant in every border State, except West Virginia, and in the States of the old Southern Confederacy it is assuredly in control. In 1898 ROOSEVELT was elected Governor of New York by a narrow margin of only about seventeen thousand votes out of an aggregate Republican and Democratic poll of more than twelve hundred thousand votes, and in the city of New York the Democrats were ahead by eighty thousand votes. The last municipal election, of course, is of no significance as indicating the relative strength of the parties, but even the Fusion was able to beat the Democratic candidate for Mayor by only about five thousand votes.

In the State of New York, therefore, the Democracy is still a party very much alive, so far at least as State and municipal affairs are concerned. Its partisan spirit is of undiminished intensity. Even Democrats who are driven by their political sanity to voting with the Republicans at a national election return eagerly to their party on State issues merely. So it is not in New York only, but also very generally in the States. As an organization for State politics the Democratic party seems to be gaining strength rather than losing it. At least, it is preserving its compactness.

In national politics, however, it has no homogeneity of purpose. The difference in principle and policy between its conservative and radical elements is so complete as to make of them virtually two distinct parties. Each is struggling for the mastery of the party organization, each has its representatives in the feeble minority of the present Congress, and as yet no common ground on which they can get is made manifest. The attempt of certain Democratic politicians in New York to bring the party together on a platform of sound money, tariff revision looking to free trade, opposition to trusts and a distinct policy toward our possessions acquired by the Spanish war, seems likely to provoke a clashing of jealousies rather than to produce the desired harmony. It involves, apparently, the displacement of Mr. HILL as a leader of the Democracy of New York, and consequently as a possible Democratic candidate for President in 1904, and the substitution of a new leader and a new possibility, with consequences dangerous to the party in the election for a Governor next year. Moreover, actually there is no agreement but radical difference between the Democracy of the Union concerning those very questions, and the suggestion of this common policy coming from New York and from an element which resisted the nomination and opposed the election of Mr. BRYAN in 1896, more especially, it is likely to prove the seed of discord rather than harmony. To say nothing of Mr. BRYAN, there are many aspirants in other States than New York for the leadership of the Democracy in 1904 who will be slow to contribute to the building up of a successful rival here.

The opinion of Mr. HILL is that the true Democratic policy is not to lay down any platform now, but to wait and watch for chances to take advantage of Republican slips in this Fifty-seventh Congress; and it seems to be the prevailing view among Democratic politicians of the Union generally. That is, the only hope of the Democrats is that the Republicans will give them an issue with which to restore their party to national solidity.

Is there any need of drawing the lesson from all this?

Finding Fault With Jurors.

Is it proper for a Judge to scold a Grand Jury from the bench for refusing to indict a person whom the Judge thinks ought to be indicted?

This question is suggested by an occurrence on Tuesday in the Court of Quarter Sessions of Hudson county, New Jersey. In discharging the Grand Jury, Judge JOHN A. BLAIR said:

"The whole Court has examined the testimony taken before you in the Sullivan case, and it is the unanimous and unqualified opinion of the Court that the evidence was such and sufficient for you to have founded an indictment. To take no notice of such negligent or wilful disregard of duty on your part, and to permit you to depart with the thanks of the public from the Court would be equivalent to an acknowledgment of an agreement between the Grand Jury and the Court not to prosecute and punish manifest violations of law."

It seems that the jurors thus addressed constituted the third Grand Jury which had refused to find an indictment against the person mentioned by Judge BLAIR. The foreman asked the Judge for leave to say a word in response to the rebuke from the bench, but this favor was peremptorily refused.

Now, it is to be noted that the Constitution and the laws of those States in which the Grand Jury system is preserved do not leave it to the Judges to say who shall be indicted. That function is conferred upon the Grand Jury; and if they determine that a man ought not to be indicted and that they will not find an indictment against him, all the Judges in the State together cannot change the result.

Of course, if a Grand Jury is induced by corruption or friendship or cowardice to ignore an accusation where they ought to find an indictment, they are properly censurable by somebody; but should they be reprimanded publicly by the Judge of the court in which they are serving, simply because the evidence which he has read in a certain case convinces him that they should have indicted a person against whom no indictment has been found? And should such a rebuke have been followed by a refusal to permit any explanation from the foreman? Might it not well be that testimony which *reads* like the truth seemed unworthy of credit when heard from the mouths of the witnesses before the Grand Jury?

It should be borne in mind that juries, whether Grand Juries or trial juries, are intended to be as independent in their sphere of action as are Judges in theirs; and, except in cases of manifest misconduct, so plain as to be beyond question, a Judge has really no more right to scold a jury, or impugn their motives, or hold them up to public contempt, from his place on the bench, than they have to criticise the Judge from their places in the jury box.

This tendency to "scold juries," as the phrase is, needs somewhat to be repressed.

A book borrower of the unreturning sort was disciplined in Chicago the other night. Months ago he borrowed a book and promised to return it as soon as he had read it, a promise made and broken by borrowers ever since books began. To add insult to injury, it occurred to him to call upon the lender and not to bring the book with him. Controversy arose. There was a shot. A man fell dead. It was not the lender. This anecdote teaches that the habit of reading is sometimes dangerous.

It should gladden the hearts of old and young to learn that in this part of the United States there will be no dearth this month of fine young fir trees for Christmas use. The reports of the crop of such trees indicate that the past year has been exceedingly favorable to their growth, and that the harvest of them, about to begin, will be one of the largest ever known in this region.

Most of the evergreen trees seen in New York around Christmas come from this State or those nearby, but in New England, where the children think more of their Christmas tree than of anything else that the holiday season affords, the larger cities look to Maine to furnish them with firs of the choicest variety. In that State, cutting and shipping these trees, plucking innumerable bunches of glossy wintergreen, collecting the scarlet berries of wild shrubs, and gathering the trailing creepers of the ground pine, constitute a business of no small importance. It is estimated that this year it will yield a profit of not less than $150,000 to the industrious farmers of the Pine Tree State.

It is said that no other Army Board ever convened in our service had so many officers of high rank as that now sitting in Washington to prepare a list of army posts to be abandoned. The Lieutenant-General Commanding the Army, four Major-Generals, three Brigadier-Generals, and one Colonel, compose the board; the recorder is a Lieutenant-Colonel. The members of the board are all men of experience, who know the needs of the army and the posts which are no longer of military importance, and it is said that there will be no "junketing trips" of inspection. The board will doubtless report shortly; after its report is made, Congress may be expected to amend the list of army posts recommended for abandonment, so that probably the net advantage to the army and the country in the way of closing up unnecessary stations will be less than the military experts would prefer. The average town or city having an army post near it objects even more strenuously to the abandonment of the post than it did to its establishment.

Some of the Chicago newspapers are making base, envious flings at the Hon. CARTER HARRISON, the Fairy Prince of the Cook County Democracy. They pretend that time and feeding have expanded that once romantic form and that he can no longer buy his clothes ready-made. The story is probably false. There is ready-made clothing for the fattest as well as for the leanest; and CARTER HARRISON is too good a Kansas City platform Democrat to become an expansionist.

The sale of trotting horses which has been going on at Madison Square Garden during the past nine days came to an end yesterday, and, although some of the animals under the hammer brought surprisingly low prices, considering their records and pedigrees, the sale proved conclusively that the day of the harness horse is a long way from its close.

There is doubtless a good deal of truth in the assertion that, as the automobile comes into more general use, the demand for horses will diminish. The sale at the Garden, however, has shown that there is a ready market for really good horses and that a willingness still exists among horsemen to pay fancy prices for choice breeds.

Mr. BRYAN is still demanding in thunder tones that the Philippines shall be independent. So is a former chaplain of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company.

The "Enriched" Grammar School Course.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I don't know so much about the instruction at Harvard, being of another college myself; on that side of the question I suppose all colleges do their best to meet the deficiencies in common English preparation which the freshmen show. But I do know, to my sorrow, what it means to have an "enriched" grammar school course—enriched at the expense of spelling. I have two boys who have passed their Regents' examinations, which include spelling. But neither of them can write a letter that would give him a position as office boy in my own office. They spell with a remarkable originality. In their view, the rules of grammar have no pertinence in a written letter, although they speak with fair correctness.

But while they have never been made to toe the mark in grammar and spelling, they have a smattering of many studies. They have had a dip into Latin, even before they went to high school. They have had courses in elementary geology, in botany, in physiology. They have had text books on bugs, which they have recited from. They have had "supplementary reading" enough to fill a library. I must admit that they have a fine outfit of graceful knowledge, just enough of each subject to make them understand what they may, hereafter, read about it.

But while they have been getting this liberal education in sciences, and in literature, and in music, and in physical culture, and in manual training, they still cannot spell through a short letter, and their heedlessness of grammar is a sorrowful comment on what their schools have been able to do for them.

The fault, it seems to me, is first that there has been too much "enriching" of grammar school courses, and secondly, that the standard set by the Regents in the common branches is not what it should be.

A BELIEVER IN THE OLD SCHOOLS.

NEW YORK, Dec. 3.

The So-called Panama Hats

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In your paper of Oct. 27 I notice a statement that the straw for making Panama hats is grown in Panama and the hats are made there. Categorically you may be correct, but I am informed by a long time resident of Panama that no hats are made in that city. The hats known in the United States as Panama hats are called in Panama Jipijapa hats. Jipijapa is a town in the Province of Manabi, Ecuador, and it is in Jipijapa and vicinity, including Monte Christo, Mangiaralto, St. Elena, Ancon, with numerous other towns, where the finest hats are produced.

The industry is firmly established also in other parts of Ecuador, Colombia and Peru. The so-called straw is fibre from a bush which, so far as known, perfects itself only in certain areas near the Ecuadorian coast. The stem of this bush is manipulated by boiling in water and otherwise, and is then split to the desired size. Mangiaralto is the chief point whence the fibre is exported [illegible] European countries as well as the United States [illegible] purchase the fibre for machine made hats.

Victoria, Ecuador, Nov. 15. [illegible]

Satolli's Fight for Plain Chant

From the [illegible]

Cardinal Satolli is working hard for the more general adoption of plain chant [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] Victoria [illegible]

From the [illegible]

[illegible]

THE CHEAP HOTELS.

When Huge Two-dollar-a-day Hostelries Will be Provided in New York.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The present discussion in your paper of the need of huge "two-dollar-a-day" hotels in New York suggests the great advance in expenditure in this country during the last generation. About forty or more years ago the standard price at hotels of the very best class was $2.50 a day, including both board and lodging, for the "American plan" prevailed quite universally; and it was regarded then as a high price. Those were the days when Paran Stevens was the notable landlord of a chain of hotels out of which he made the large fortune left by him, or the nucleus of it.

As to huge "two-dollar-day hotels" in New York, the only argument for their provision which will avail practically is that of the profit to be made from them. If it can be shown that they will pay handsomely the great amount of capital required for sites and buildings will be supplied readily. Does not the very fact that your correspondents are complaining that while expensive hotels and apartment houses with hotel features, so far especially as concerns common restaurant provisions, have increased rapidly during the last ten years and many plans for others on a scale of great magnificance are now made, suggest that investments in these are proved to be better and safer than in the cheap hotels they demand?

The great cost in running a hotel of the more expensive kind is for service. Reduce that item of outlay largely and lower prices to patrons might be made profitable. The average, I think it may be said, is a servant to every "guest" in hotels of the best sort. In certain cheap restaurants now run on a large scale in New York the patrons are left to wait on themselves, so that the number of servants is made relatively very small and a great saving to the proprietors results, enabling them to charge low prices for food. If hotel service could be reduced thus the consequence would be the same.

Another matter is deserving of consideration, and that is the American indisposition to be relegated to any second class. A large number of people would object to going to a hotel provided ostentatiously for people of second-rate purses and thus distinguished as such, and they are to be found among those for whom it is proposed that a "two-dollar-a-day" hotel shall be built rather than among those to whom even that rate would be too high.

A correspondent in THE SUN to-day says that the cheap hotel would provide accommodations for people who now go to the high-priced places, but are not wanted there because they spend no money on the "extras" on which such hotels rely so largely for their profits; but for the same reason might they not be undesirable patrons of the cheap hotel? Besides, does not the very fact that they strain a point in order to hail from the grander place indicate that they are just the sort of people who would not want to "hang out" at an inferior hotel?

It is all a question of the profitable use of capital. "Some day," says your correspondent, "some man with a good eye to business will put up a big 500 or 1,000-room hotel of the cheaper class," and will make a pile of money by charging $1 a day for a room, 25 cents each for breakfast and lunch and 50 cents for dinner, "to be taken or not as the guest pleases." But that day will not come until it can be ciphered out by men with a good eye to business that the large capital required for such an enterprise will earn sure and handsome dividends, and the present deficiency of which your correspondents complain would seem to be evidence that it has not yet come. Whenever sagacious capitalists see profit in the undertaking no other argument will be needed to induce them to go into it, and they will not make the investment until then.

If your friends can prove by incontestable figures that their cheap hotel would be a better investment than are the high-priced hotels they will find no difficulty in raising all the capital they need to start it.

NEW YORK, Dec. 4. REAL ESTATE.

TO DISMISS MAINE CLAIMS.

Government Brief Says Spain Has Atoned for Any Supposed Responsibility.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—A brief on behalf of the Government has been filed with the Spanish Treaty Claims Commission, supporting the motion made to dismiss claims growing out of the sinking of the battleship Maine. The brief recites that the destruction of Spanish lives and the loss of Spanish possessions atoned for and settled any supposed responsibility of Spain for the destruction of the Maine with its officers and crew. On March 30, 1898, Congress passed an act for the relief of the Maine sufferers, and this action, it is contended, proved that the Government of the United States, after the report of a commission had made it clear that evidence could not be found to prove the authorship of the destruction of the Maine, decided not to adopt and present claims for money indemnity on behalf of its citizens based upon such destruction, but to recognize, instead of a claim of that kind against Spain, a claim against itself, which latter claim it proceeded to settle in full.

Continuing, the brief says: "Spain had offered to submit to an impartial investigation by some third Power, and had herself made an investigation, with the same indefinite result, it seems, as that made by the United States.

"To suppose that this commission, after all that has been furnished to it, suitable only for the ordinary purposes of a claims commission, was intended to open up and undo and do over again this inquiry into the responsibility of the Spanish Government, with the result of disgracing Spain on the one hand and on the other discrediting the Government of the United States, is entirely unreasonable."

The Ill-Matched [illegible]

From London [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

REVISION COMMITTEE AT WORK.

To Hold Two Sessions Daily—Expect to Finish in Two Weeks.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—The committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church upon the general subject of revision of the Confession of Faith met in the Church of the Covenant here to-day. The absentees were the Rev. Drs. Charles A. Dickey of Philadelphia, S. J. Nicholls of St. Louis and Henry Van Dyke of Princeton Seminary and Elder John E. Parsons, New York. It was stated that these members would be in attendance by to-morrow.

It was decided to begin at once the consideration of the several subjects referred to it by the General Assembly in full committee, instead of by sections, and the three sections, into which the committee was divided at Saratoga, were discharged. Dr. Nicholls, who was chairman of the section charged with the preparation of the supplementary statements regarding "The love of God for all men," "The work of the Holy Spirit," and "Missions," sent to the committee a draft of the proposed additions.

The section to prepare a statement of the Reformed faith, which has been in session here the past week, submitted to the committee half a dozen different statements, three of which were the production of members of the section and the other three of professors of systematic theology in church seminaries, sent at the invitation of Dr. De Witt. One by Prof. William Adams Brown of Union Seminary is said to have created a very favorable impression. Some members of the committee, however, do not hold optimistic views regarding the outcome of the work. One of them illustrated his opinion by telling the story of two ruling elders who became involved in a business quarrel. When they learned of each other's religious views, one said: "We are two elders: we ought to settle our difficulties without trouble." To which the other responded: "That's the very reason why we won't."

The committee will hold two daily sessions morning and afternoon and expect to get away inside of two weeks. Work on the declaratory statement, that being the first subject mentioned in the assembly's orders, was begun at this afternoon's session.

President Roosevelt will receive the members of the committee in the White House at 10 o'clock to-morrow; on Friday night there will be a dinner and reception at the residence of Gen. Foster; on Saturday night a dinner by the Men's Society of the Church of the Covenant, and on the 10th inst. the committee will be entertained by the Presbyterian Union of Baltimore.

ROBBING HILL OF FAME.

Author Neville Says Cleveland First Used the Phrase, "I Am a Democrat."

SYRACUSE, Dec. 4.—The Hill Democrats in Syracuse and the other cities in central New York are very much incensed over the publication of the book, "Famous Sayings of Famous Americans," which was issued yesterday by James J. Neville, city editor of the *Telegram*. The book contains the notable utterances of President Roosevelt, the late Presidents McKinley and Harrison, Grover Cleveland, Gen. Grant, James G. Blaine, Roscoe Conkling, William H. Seward and William M. Evarts, and, strange as it may appear to many, the book disputes the heretofore undisputed claim that the Hon. David Bennett Hill of Albany and "Wolfert's Roost" has a copyright on the famous saying, "I am a Democrat."

Senator Hill achieved fame by using the expression in a speech delivered in the city of Brooklyn on Oct. 24, 1893. The trademark "I am a Democrat," has clung to him ever since. Now Mr. Neville bobs up and takes the honor of uttering this well-worn sentence from Mr. Hill and bestows it upon the Hon. Grover Cleveland of New Jersey. Mr. Neville finds that in the year 1881, exactly 12 years before Mr. Hill made his great speech in Brooklyn, Mr. Cleveland in accepting the nomination for Mayor of Buffalo used the expression, "I am a Democrat."

The Hill men in Syracuse, notably Mayor McGuire, former State Tax Commissioner Henry D. Brewster, Corporation Counsel Melvin Z. Haven, former Mayor Thomas Ryan, former State Committeeman William B. Kirk and Contractor John Dunfee, say that Neville virtually charges Mr. Hill with plagiarism. Mayor McGuire, who thinks that Mr. Hill will be the next Democratic candidate for President, said to-day:

"This man Neville is trying to stir up a row. He probably thinks the Democratic party will demand a court of inquiry to see whether Hill or Cleveland is entitled to the credit of giving national prominence to the 'I am a Democrat' sentence. Senator Hill's name is closely associated with this catch phrase and always will be. I do not want to accuse Mr. Neville, but I think that he has purposely brought out the 'I am a Democrat' sentence and placed it to the credit of the ex-President for the purpose of making a laugh around the country at the expense of Senator Hill. I think that Senator Hill was the first great statesman in the Democratic party to use the expression."

A PLACE FOR DR. RIXEY.

To Be Appointed Surgeon of the Navy to Succeed Rear Admiral Van Reypen.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—Not long before he died President McKinley expressed the intention of appointing Medical Inspector Presley M. Rixey, the McKinley family physician, to be Surgeon of the Navy on the expiration of the term of the incumbent, Rear Admiral William K. Van Reypen. President Roosevelt promised to carry out his predecessor's wishes. Admiral Van Reypen's term will end on Dec. 18, and the failure to reappoint him would reduce him to the grade of Medical Inspector, with the relative rank of Captain. It has been arranged, however, that Admiral Van Reypen is to be reappointed for the period necessary to complete forty years' service, when, under the law, he may be retired on his own application. Admiral Van Reypen will on Dec. 26 eight days after the expiration of his present term as Surgeon-General, have completed forty years in the service of the United States, but three months of this period was in the army. If it is decided that the army service should be included in the forty years, he will be recommissioned for eight days. Otherwise he will be appointed Surgeon-General for the additional three months. Under the law Admiral Van Reypen will be retired as a senior Rear Admiral, ranking with a Major-General of the army.

MURPHY PREPARING TO GO.

[illegible]

[illegible]

The [illegible] Again in Town

From the [illegible]

[illegible]

FULTON'S CLAIMS DISPUTED.

Is the Honor Awarded to Him Due Rather to Fitch and Livingston?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In view of the monument to Fulton to be unveiled on Thursday in Trinity Church yard and at the risk of being considered an iconoclast, I would say that, probably no person has received so much praise, and deserved it so little, as Robert Fulton. A man of no practical ingenuity, of no power of conceiving, much less of executing, an original mechanical idea, his friend Colden has succeeded in persuading the public that to him alone is due the successful navigation of our rivers by steam. The facts, however, as I gathered them from the late Bishop Potter of Pennsylvania, who in turn received them from Chancellor Livingston himself, are as follows:

Thirteen years before Fitch experimented with his steamboat upon the Collect in New York, he had, as is well known, run a little steamer with great success on the Delaware, between Philadelphia and Bordentown. During that period he had experimented with various kinds of propelling power—the screw, the side wheel, and sweeps or long oars. The most primitive thing about his vessel was the boiler, which consisted simply of two potash kettles, riveted together.

Mr. Livingston, who was greatly interested in the success of Fitch's experiments, seized the opportunity, when Minister to France, to visit the workshops of Watt and Bolton, in England, where for the first time, he saw a properly constructed steam boiler. But how was he to introduce it into the United States, unless (which was then impossible) he went there himself? At this crisis he thought of Robert Fulton, who, originally an artist in Philadelphia, was then exhibiting a panorama in Paris. His panorama, however, failing to pay, was attached, and he himself arrested for debt and thrown into prison. Livingston also, at this time, had in his possession the plans, models and drawings of what was afterward the successful steamboat, which he had obtained from the American Consul, then residing at Havre, who, in turn, had purchased them of Fitch, when the latter, completely discouraged, and a stranger in France, utterly destitute, had given up in despair.

Livingston, falling into the error, so common to many, of believing that, because an artist can draw cleverly, he must necessarily succeed equally well in mechanical conception and execution, paid off Fulton's debts, and sent him over to New York with one of James Watt's boilers. Fulton, however, thoroughly incompetent and untrustworthy, failed to rise to the occasion; and when Livingston returned a year after, he found his pet project precisely where he had left it several years before. He, therefore, at once took hold of it himself, and by his energy and perseverance finally brought his idea to a successful issue, Fulton whom he could not entirely shake off, acting as a kind of general superintendent.

These facts, moreover, are confirmed not only by the late President William A. Duer, in his "New Yorker" (Letter VII), but by the late Mr. Ranson Cook of Saratoga Springs, N. Y. Mr. Cook informed me that, in the summer of 1837, he was in the city of New York, engaged upon his electro-magnetic machinery. Among his workmen were two who had been employed by Livingston and Fulton, while those gentlemen were perfecting their steamboat. They surprised him greatly by stating that Fulton was a capital draughtsman, and that was all. They added that he was so deficient in a knowledge of the laws of mechanics as to furnish daily mirth for the workmen, and that it was a long time before Livingston could convince him that the "starting bar" of an engine should be made larger at the fulcrum end than at the handle.

On the 7th of August, 1807, the first steamboat, the Clermont, constructed and finished under the nominal superintendence of Robert Fulton, encouraged by Chancellor Livingston, stood in the stream opposite Jersey City, ready at a signal to start on her way to Albany. Thousands of citizens lined both banks of the river, and filled every kind of available water craft, with the expectation of witnessing the utter failure of "Fulton's Folly," as they had tauntingly christened the new boat, and of having the satisfaction of saying, "I told you so." But that sentence was never to be uttered; for, at the word from the alleged inventor, the wheels began to revolve, slowly at first, then faster and faster, until "Fulton's Folly" vanished up the river, leaving the scoffers staring after it with blank visages and open mouths.

The triumph was complete; yet to Fitch, not Fulton, belongs the honor.

WILLIAM L. STONE.

MT. VERNON, Dec. 3.

THE SPEED OF THE TELEGRAPH.

Old-Time Records Examined From the Automatic Point of View.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Replying to the communication of "Slow but Sure" in to-day's SUN, it seems to me that in dealing with automatic telegraphy the gentleman is swift and doubtful. After claiming that there are various people ready to "affirm" that 5,000 words per minute were transmitted and plainly recorded between Philadelphia and New York many years ago, he clinches the statement by pointing to one performance of "historical accuracy" in which 1,000 words were transmitted between the above cities for Sir William Thomson in fifty-six seconds. The only excuse made for not keeping tab on the higher speeds around the 5,000 mark is that the time could not be spared, owing to congestion of traffic likely to ensue. If business at any station "congested" in the face of a transmission of 5,000 words per minute twenty-five years ago, it is not to be wondered at that "Slow but Sure" joined up with an interest bearing that motto.

I had the honor of being associated with Mr. Edison during the short time out of his busy career devoted to automatic telegraphy, and have not lost sight of the fact that in this work he left the impress of his wonderful genius to a marked degree as to what the public have been shown in the way of possibilities or what might be accomplished such matters have no place in a discussion of things proven. There are "words" and words, and the way in which they lend themselves to telegraphic speed is extraordinary. "It" is a word and so is "incomprehensibility." The latter lengths are not chosen for speed trials. The [illegible] English of THE SUN'S editorial columns [illegible] come very close to an average of five letters [illegible] a word, and I would recommend [illegible] word-source to high speed inventors [illegible] after. They will be slower, but [illegible] than your correspondent.

I am indebted to the gentleman for [illegible] discarded "grounds" from the [illegible] raised against automatic telegraphy [illegible] many years by a lot of people who [illegible] have known better, and when I [illegible] that all the other shortcomings [illegible] have been overcome, I trust he will [illegible] agreeing with those who [illegible] in theory that the Pennsylvania [illegible] Empire State Express should [illegible] not make so fast for fear of running [illegible] open switch. [illegible]

[illegible]

A Ticket Speculator Replies to a Police Magistrate

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* [illegible]

[illegible]

NEW YORK, Dec. 4. [illegible]