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WILLIAM M. LAFFAN.

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Littlefield on the Unconstitutionality of the Amended Littlefield Bill.

Senator PLATT of Connecticut is right when he describes the amended Littlefield bill as not only dangerous but also undoubtedly unconstitutional.

Mr. PLATT's name stands next to that of Mr. HOAR on the list of the Senate Judiciary Committee, of which Mr. HOAR is chairman. With the assistance of the Democrats of the committee and two Republicans, Mr. MCCOMAS of Maryland and Mr. NELSON of Minnesota, the venerable enthusiast on trust-busting has succeeded in reviving the Littlefield bill, to the extent of reporting the same back to the Senate in an amended form and putting it on the calendar.

The unconstitutionality of the Hoar-amended Littlefield bill is flagrantly apparent in the several provisions excluding from the rights of interstate commerce existing corporations which the Federal Government may regard as monopolistic, and likewise corporations hereafter organized which the Federal Government hereafter may regard as overcapitalized.

That is to say, the amended Littlefield bill proposes to employ the Federal power to regulate commerce between the States for the punishment of Federally created offences within the States.

If Mr. PLATT needed any support for his proposition he has it in the opinion of a supereminent authority on the Constitution and on the Constitutional rights of trusts.

It is less than three years since this supereminent authority was discussing on the floor of the House a plan of Mr. BRYAN's to prevent monopoly and to prevent overcapitalization and to secure publicity by requiring State-organized corporations to obtain a Federal license before they were permitted to extend their business into other States. The Constitutionality of such a law having been questioned, Mr. BRYAN had added: "If it is unconstitutional, and so declared by the Supreme Court, I am in favor of an amendment to the Constitution that will give to Congress the power to destroy every trust in the country." And the supereminent Constitutional authority, pointing to a Constitutional amendment which he was then advocating that gave Congress control over the trusts, exclaimed:

"This amendment will do it. Under the Constitution as it is Congress cannot do it."

The name of the supereminent authority here quoted is CHARLES EDGAR LITTLEFIELD.

New Way to Collect Old Debts.

A Brooklyn collection agency has prepared a number of wagons in which it is proposed to send around a collector to the homes of people who are alleged to have failed to pay their bills. On each of the wagons, in large letters, the following words are painted:

"COLLECTOR OF BAD DEBTS (INC.)."

There can be no question whatsoever about the impropriety of this coercive scheme.

As is well known, lawyers are forbidden by the Code of Civil Procedure to buy or be in any manner interested in buying a promissory note or other thing in action for the purpose of suing thereon, and are also forbidden to give a valuable consideration as an inducement to placing in their hands for collection a demand of any kind for the purpose of bringing an action. And both of these acts prohibited are also made misdemeanors by the Penal Code. While under the Penal Code common barratry, or exciting groundless judicial proceeding, is a misdemeanor.

There is no special provision of the criminal law which covers this new "bad-debt" scheme, but, on general principles, it would seem to us that the driver of such a wagon should be arrested for disorderly conduct, and should be locked up until he promised to refrain from thus exciting individuals to commit a breach of the peace.

The courts are open to litigants who desire to collect bad or doubtful debts, and no debt should be collected through the fear of having an obnoxious wagon stop in front of a man's home. Take the wagons off the streets!

Trucks, Cars and Hours.

A letter printed in another column asserting the rights of the trucks in connection with the debate over the betterment of street traffic is timely. The case for the travelling public has been ably presented by the president of the Metropolitan Street Railway Company, on whose cars the public have to ride. This equally able championship of the trucks gives to the contest the evenness which it should have for a fair and wise conclusion.

In our opinion, there has been no undue effort to plant in the truck driver's mind the idea that he must give to the street cars greater consideration than he has given. It would be better to take the cars off the streets than the trucks, for with the trucks would go the business that brings our passengers; nevertheless, the drivers should be made to understand that, whereas whether they drive near the track or the street curb may make little difference to them, it makes all the difference in the world to the motorman and his passengers. Minutes saved in a truck's journey may mean hours lost to passengers. It will undoubtedly be to the benefit of the general public to have the trucks kept off the tracks more than they are kept off now, and it was to accomplish the maximum in this direction without unduly interfering with trucking that President VREELAND aimed.

Great improvement in the police regulation of Broadway has been perceptible recently. The truck that draws up opposite its store, instead of carelessly stopping with its wheels inches or feet away from the curb, now takes care to have both wheels touch the curb. An inch of space thus saved may save another truck's interference with a passing car. Yet there still remains possibility of immense improvement in the rigidity with which truckmen are compelled to observe this new custom. And the regulation of crossings at such important thoroughfares as Chambers street, Canal street, Grand street, Spring street, Houston street and Eighth street and still higher up has not yet been seriously attempted.

It would be well for merchants, also, to inquire of themselves whether, in view of the peculiar demands for cars during the passenger rush hours, rush hours for trucking cannot be arranged to come about noon.

The Question of Reproduction.

President ELIOT explains that his statistics of the marriage and birth rate in certain classes of Harvard twenty-five to thirty years after graduation were not presented by him as affording positive proof that "the highly educated" part of the American people is not increasing the population, but merely as a suggestion that such seemed to be the inference from them.

Statistics of our educational institutions, however, so far as they have been gathered, tend to justify the conclusion that the experience of the Harvard classes is fairly representative of that in the same general social environment, in the older communities of this country, at least. His argument that the "regrettable" result is due "in part to the late postponement of marriage on the part of educated young men," made "almost unavoidable" by the protracted education now prescribed for men who enter the learned and scientific professions, may be sound generally, but it does not apply to the particular classes to which he referred. Those classes, graduating from 1872 to 1877, entered on their professional careers before that cause had begun to operate. Only since then has the condition of which President ELIOT speaks prevailed, so that "now a young physician, lawyer, engineer or architect is fortunate if he marries at twenty-eight or twenty-nine, whereas he should have married at twenty-five or twenty-six." Graduates from Harvard of the period covered by his statistics were not prevented from the earlier marriages by "protracted education" then required. The extension of the prescribed time of study has come in since.

President HADLEY of Yale expresses the opinion that statistics of families of graduates of that university would be somewhat more favorable. Evidently his information is not precise and extensive, but so far as the returns go, he says, they indicate an average of three children to a family instead of the two children each of the married Harvard graduates of the period named. No basis for any safe generalization is afforded by such statistics. Of the Harvard classes, 28 per cent., or 247 out of a total of 881 graduates, had not married, and we have no comparative statistics of the kind from Yale. Moreover, these returns relate to a very limited number of the great body of college graduates in this country.

Statistics obtained by the women's colleges, however, are much more extensive, and they tend to confirm the suggestion of President ELIOT that the "highly educated" part of the community is not increasing the population. Records of the Boston Association of Collegiate Alumnæ, including graduates of twenty-three colleges, indicate that not much more than a quarter are married. Of the women graduates from Barnard College, in New York, during the eleven years of its existence, only about 11 per cent. are reported as married, though they are all of an age when marriage is most frequent, or between twenty and thirty. Of the 1,847 graduates of Smith College, at Northampton, in Massachusetts, since 1879 only 500 have married. Of the single class of 1883, out of 48 members, only 20 have married, and the married have 49 surviving children.

The completeness and accuracy of such statistics, even within their limited field, cannot be relied on; but the inference from them seems to be unquestionably that these "highly educated" men and women are not reproducing themselves, and it is an inference which is confirmed by observation among people of the same general social condition, whether college graduates or not. The average size of families in the districts of New York inhabited by the rich and the well-to-do is much less than in the quarters of the town populated by the poor.

The census of 1890 estimated the birth rate in this country per 1,000 of population at 38.29 among foreign-born and 26.35 among native parents. But there is no trustworthy statistical authority behind the estimate. The statistics of births in the United States are notoriously defective. It may be assumed, however, that the rate is much higher among the foreign-born than the native.

Archbishop FARLEY has lately declared that "there is no shrinking from marriage and the consequences of marriage where true Catholics are found," and, undoubtedly, the assertion is supported by the facts. Nor can it be denied that, as a correspondent remarked in yesterday's SUN, reproduction is opposed by an increasing sentiment among those not under the domination of religious scruples, that it is not desirable either for society or for children introduced into the pain and strife of the world. He contends, and probably with truth, that that sentiment has more to do with the declining marriage and birth rate among educated and thoughtful people than any purely selfish consideration. It is simply a social consequence of the spread of religious scepticism, or of what may be called a prudential philosophy.

Mrs. IDA HUSTED HARPER does not hesitate to argue in the January *North American Review* that it is a "crime to bring children into abject poverty," and that the consciences of husbands and wives, poor and "in moderate circumstances," should compel them to ask if they are "able to provide the birthright of proper food, clothes, shelter, surroundings and education." So far from agreeing with President ROOSEVELT that a declining birth rate would be a calamity for this nation, Mrs. HARPER contends flatly that, on the contrary, it would be desirable for our civilization. She estimates that the population of the United States in 1910 will be 100,000,000, or "all that the area of our country and the condition of our industries require," and that consequently if it remained stationary thereafter only good would result: "all the harassing questions of the present could be solved—the labor problem, the school problem, the social problem and the rest." Under her theory, of course, immigration would have to be stopped, and therein she agrees with labor agitators. Logically, too, their restriction of the number of apprentices allowed in a trade implies agreement with her notions as to reproduction.

The whole subject is sure to become prominent in the social discussions of the future, and merely prudential considerations will determine its decision the farther away people get from the influence of religious faith.

Another Cloud in the East.

Although the turmoil in the Balkans attracts high attention at the moment, the conflict of interests between Great Britain and Russia is developing in the Middle East and threatens to become acute before long. The ostensible cause of it arises out of a dispute between Persians and Afghans over the distribution of the water of the River Helmund in the Nasirabad district of Seistan. The supply for the irrigation canals on the Persian side having run short, the Afghans have been accused of cutting it off, although the Afghans themselves are suffering equally from the drying up of the upper courses of the river.

To quiet the Persians a British commission left India at the end of last month with the intention of meeting a Persian Commissioner, and with him settling the difficulty as far as practicable. Some exception has been taken in Russia to this procedure of the British Indian Government, and the *Novoe Vremya* of St. Petersburg calls upon the Persian Government to free itself from the Treaty of Paris of 1857, made after the war between Great Britain and Persia over the attack by the latter on Afghanistan, under which the British Government contends its intervention in the present case is justified. The length of time that has elapsed since that treaty was concluded has, so the *Novoe Vremya* urges, so changed the political situation in Middle Asia that there really can no longer be any question of its serious application. The Petersburg journal concludes an aggressive article by saying:

"At any rate, Great Britain should understand that the great importance for us of Seistan does not permit us to regard with indifference a display of aggressiveness on her part; and that we are bound to reply to every step she may take in Seistan by taking parallel action ourselves."

As Great Britain has always laid claim to a kind of protectorate over Seistan since a British commission defined its boundary in 1872, the contention of the *Novoe Vremya* appears something like a challenge.

In India the prospect is regarded as far from reassuring, and in order to be ready for eventualities, a completely equipped army corps with the necessary transport is held in readiness for active service at short notice. Its destination is said to be the Persian frontier, and its line of advance the same as that just taken by the British commission to settle the water dispute on the Perso-Afghan frontier. Lord KITCHENER immediately after the conclusion of the coronation durbar at Delhi left there for a critical inspection of the fortified posts west of the Indus and on the roads leading into Afghanistan, whose ruler was said to be anxious for an interview with the Viceroy at some point near the frontier.

For the Organs.

Our City Fathers have most happily taken to music and poetry. Alderman Somebody or other introduced an ordinance to devour the "hoptoads" and to put an end to all street music between 7 P. M. and 7 A. M. But brave MCCALL, the Tammany leader, bounded to the rescue of the "toads," and triumphantly faced the enemies of melody.

"I represent," said he, "a tenement-house district, and we get a lot of enjoyment out of street music. I move to send it back to the committee."

Back it went. MCCALL was splendidly seconded by Alderman STEWART, the poet laureate of the Board. "What is sweeter," asked Alderman STEWART, "than, on a summer's evening, to see a band of little girls dancing to the music of a street organ? Playful, happy, thought-free, they move to the rhythm."

Who that has delved into the depths of history and has among his heart-strings one genuinely attuned to music does not rejoice that the wandering remnants of CÆSAR's legions still pervade the streets of New York, turning from their hand organs sounds that make the children of the curb peers of the ladies in the boxes. Not even the Metropolitan violins, strained with the nerve-searching products of RICHARD WAGNER, can thrill the hearer more than the modern mandolin organ, making itself heard down the street through the rumble and the clatter. And a couple or two of amateur dancers on the flags are worth the operatic ballet.

We have here a story that bears on the situation. A patient on whose account all street music in the neighborhood had been officially stopped some time after recovery communed with a fellow citizen who had been ill at the same time. "I had a trying time," said the latter. "For some unaccountable reason the organ grinders seemed to have left town. I missed them terribly."

Street organs would be terribly missed if they should be silenced. Let them play, while the hoptoads dance.

It is to the everlasting glory of the State of Connecticut that one of her two Senators in Congress, the Hon. ORVILLE H. PLATT, should be the first Republican statesman to get upon his feet in the Senate and say openly and publicly and for record that the anti-trust project which is crazing the venerable mind of Mr. HOAR is unconstitutional and would be mischievous even if it were not unconstitutional.

The refusal of the President to appoint Col. RICHARD H. PRATT, nominally commanding officer of the Thirteenth Cavalry, but actually and for more than twenty years superintendent of the Indian school at Carlisle, to a Brigadier-Generalcy for the purpose of retirement, and the order that Col. PRATT be retired from active service, have been followed immediately by the resignation of his post as superintendent by this distinguished educator. This hasty action is considered to be Col. PRATT's protest against the President's course.

Col. PRATT is a veteran of the Civil War, and as such might have expected the promotion given to other field officers who had similar records; but his case differs from theirs in that he has had no active service since 1879, since which time, with an allowance of $1,000 a year besides his army pay, he has been in Carlisle drawing increased pay each five years and obtaining his army promotion regularly. His work at Carlisle has been noteworthy, but it was not military; and during all the time of his residence there another officer has been performing his army duty. That in a moment of pique he should have given up the superintendency of the school which he has practically created is to be regretted. It is to be hoped that he will withdraw his resignation. The War Department, with much more dignity than the Navy Department exhibited in a recent case, might properly request him to do so; and he should remain at the head of the Carlisle school and continue his work of making citizens out of Indians.

President WILLCOX has described intelligently, farseeingly and clearly the case of the elevated road in Battery Park. While to the public it may be called indispensable there, its legal status is such as to keep it in danger of blackmail and possibly of expulsion. Consequently Mr. WILLCOX asks for the legislation necessary to make its tenure permanent and secure. The idea of improving the structure itself is well conceived; but that is a minor question.

As Mr. WILLCOX's sympathy with parks as parks is above suspicion, his advice as to the treatment of the elevated road in Battery Park is entitled to all necessary weight. It is very satisfactory to observe that the public clamor raised against the elevated railroad on a similar occasion of years ago has been replaced by sane approval of the scheme as it happens to come from Commissioner WILLCOX.

SHAKESPEARE and the BROWNINGS—or should we say the BROWNINGS and SHAKESPEARE?—are behind the bar, in Boston. We are glad to learn from the *Globe* of that town that the Hon. WILLIAM B. KIRKPATRICK, the new president of the Boston Bartenders' Union, "is a reader and admirer of SHAKESPEARE and the BROWNINGS and can talk interestingly on literary as well as on more practical subjects." Mr. KIRKPATRICK "does not pose as a savant," but he "has read much and remembers all he has read." A rare memory. We don't know whether it is a blessing or a curse to have it. For years Mr. KIRKPATRICK "has made a study of social questions." He is familiar with the works of KARL MARX and other illustrious Socialists. He takes a hand in politics and labor movements. In short, he is an accomplished citizen; and he has never read half a dozen novels in his life. His mind is given to higher things.

These Boston bartenders seem to be learned folk. A few years ago a distinguished Boston art dealer informed us that in his judgment the most trustworthy art critic in Boston was the head barkeeper at a certain hotel. In the crowded ranks of the New York barkeepers there must be much talent and distinction; but we fear they are more frivolous, more given to sport and more cynical than their Boston brethren. Like barkeepers, like customers.

Dyspeptics in these parts may be interested in the "progressive luncheon," more impressively called "interpolated pedestrianism," which is now raging and reigning in the suburbs of Chicago. You eat a little at SMITH's, take a walk to JONES's, where you eat a little more; and so on with legs and appetite to BROWN's and ROBINSON's. We take from the *Inter Ocean* a progressive programme arranged by the Ladies' Aid Society of the Austin Methodist Church:

"1. Soup, at the home of the pastor, the Rev. ABEL M. WHITE.

"2. Meat and vegetables at the home of Mrs. E. CHURCH, 303 North Central avenue.

"3. Salad, at the home of Mrs. F. E. PRAY, 337 North Central avenue.

"4. Dessert, at the home of Mrs. A. E. DAWES, 432 North Pine avenue."

"Progressive" dinners are not unknown in this town, we believe; but the lazy diners drive from house to house. In the Chicago suburbs you are bound to walk. A time card goes with each bill of fare, and the bill of fare is punched after each course. Eating must be a serious matter in Austin and thereabouts.

A New York city Representative, Mr. CREAMER, of the Eighth New York district, introduced in the House of Representatives, and the Committee on the Library has now under consideration, a bill providing for the erection at the Fifth avenue entrance of the Central Park, of a monument to JAMES MONROE. The bill authorizes an appropriation by the Federal Government of $75,000, as part contribution to the expense of the monument, the plans for the erection of which are committed to three public officials, the Secretary of War, the Governor of this State and the Mayor of this city.

The relation of JAMES MONROE to the city of New York was more intimate than that of any one of the earlier Presidents. He resided here for a time after the close of his second term as President and was a resident of this city at the time of his death. The local cemetery where he was buried still holds the Monroe monument, although subsequently a public transfer of his remains to his native State of Virginia was made with much pomp and formality. The scheme to erect a monument to him here is excellent provided it includes no requirement to put the monument at the main Fifth avenue gate of the Central Park.

The Gruet Kind.

Hewitt—What kind of a fellow is Gruet?
Jewett—The kind that always has just one cigar.

Stuck Up.

That pride is quite a common thing
The moralist declares;
Just stand on Broadway and observe
The Flatiron put on airs.

NORWAY AND TURKEY.

Is There a Political Underground Passage Between Them?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Some mysterious connection appears to exist between the Balkan and the Scandinavian peninsulas, although all Europe lies between them. No sooner has it been announced—and this happens once a year at least—that the smouldering fires of Macedonian rebellion once more are threatening to break into open flame than a report comes from the other end of the Continent that the United Kingdoms, as thy are styled officially, are on the verge of separation. An explanation may be found in the fact that both realms, although so far apart, are immediate neighbors of Russia, and that they mark the weakest spots in the barrier which Western Europe interposes between the empire of the Czar and the high seas.

The latest news from the northern storm-centre encourages a belief that nothing less than open war could satisfy the feeling of hostility aroused between Sweden and Norway. Such alarming rumors should not be credited, however, until every allowance has been made for exaggeration and misrepresentation and misperception. The clamorous shouts of the professional politicians, of which class Norway especially has its full share, are heard wide and far, while small heed is paid to the deep, still voices of the nations. In the critical moment these voices will undoubtedly be raised for peace based on mutual concessions.

But it would be futile to pretend that the conditions on the peninsula are satisfactory, or that war between its sister nations is an impossibility. A series of unfortunate utterances and actions by members of the Norwegian Government, now in the hands of the Radical party, have increased the mutual irritation and rendered the situation more critical than it has been for years.

Stang, the Norwegian Prime Minister, recently inspected the fortifications along the Swedish boundary in an unnecessarily ostentatious manner. One of his colleagues objected publicly to the sending of a Norwegian man-of-war to Venezuela on the ground that it might be much better needed nearer home. Lieut.-Col. Störck, chairman of the Storthing Committee on Military Affairs and military adviser to the Stockholm contingent of the Norwegian Cabinet, is said to have dropped the remark in the course of a wine-inspired address at the Army Club of Christiania, that if the Swedes could not be taught reason in any other way, there always remained the expedient of "marching to the frontier." Individual newspapers have spoken in the same strain, recalling the days, 500 years ago, when the Swedish people rose in arms to break off the hateful union with Denmark, although this was surrounded by all kinds of constitutional guarantees.

More serious in effect than any kind of inflammatory talk has been the recent action of the Storthing majority in adopting an order of the day, declaring that the question of separating the consular services of the two countries must be settled at once. The Swedes regard this step as a gauntlet thrown at them in view of the fact that the consular question is now in the hands of a joint Swedish-Norwegian committee appointed by the two Governments for the purpose of proposing a solution that will satisfy both sides.

The provocative attitude of the Radical leaders may be easily explained. Elections to the Storthing are pending. The part which has been in control of the national legislative body for more than a decade has lately been losing ground among the voters. The signs of increasing popular dissatisfaction have been so unmistakable that the leaders have become scared. The necessity of some coup for the purpose of regaining popular favor has been strongly felt and the plan resorted to is one which has proved successful on several previous occasions, namely, to present Sweden in the light of an enemy against which the entire Norwegian people must unite for the protection of its freedom and its rights.

The success of this stratagem in the past has depended not on any natural antipathy between the two nations, but on the anomalous position Norway holds in the union. While each country has its own Government and is wholly independent of the other in all other respects, there is only one Minister of Foreign Affairs. He must be a Swede, and he is responsible only to the Swedish Riksdag. Diplomatic and consular representation is common to both countries, appointments to those services being made without regard to nationality. The Norwegian people as a whole is undoubtedly dissatisfied with this state of affairs. The Radical party proposes to force Sweden into permitting Norway to have its own Foreign Minister and a diplomatic and consular service wholly distinct from that of Sweden. To this the Swedes object on the ground that it would mean the practical dissolution of the union. They are willing to grant separate consular service and to make the Foreign Minister responsible to the Storthing as well as the Riksdag. The matter is now in the hands of a joint committee, as has been mentioned already, and the Swedes think that nothing should be done until a report has been received from that body.

There are many indications that the effort of the Radical leaders to force a crisis in order to retain the power which they feel to be slipping out of their hands may be balked by the people when the polls are opened next August. Protesting voices have already been raised. The *Verdens Gang*, which is the foremost of the Norwegian newspapers and once was the mainstay of the Radical party, is in open opposition to the present leaders and their inflammatory policy. The most probable outcome of the present troubles will not be a split in the union, but in the ranks of the Radical party.

B.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.

President Eliot's Class Statistics.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* As President Eliot's statement in his annual report with regard to the failure of college classes to reproduce themselves is arousing much comment and discussion, it is just as well to point out that the statistics he quotes are utterly irrelevant.

His argument is that the increased requirements of the professional schools are raising the age at which a college man can marry and settle down to a point dangerous for society, and he supports his argument by the domestic statistics of the classes from 1872 to 1877, inclusive. He seems to have overlooked the fact that none of these classes was touched in the least by any of the changes which he has in mind, whether increased requirements for admission to Harvard College or length of study in the professional schools. They could all obtain their law and divinity degrees in two years and their medical degrees in three; that is to say, they were in the conditions as regards time which President Eliot is now striving to work back to.

For purposes of comparison of the college's effect on population, the six classes are no more representative of present conditions than the classes that preceded President Eliot's administration; less so than classes that are wholly extinct. The comparison should be between them and those classes which have been subjected to the newer educational burdens, a comparison that will be impossible for many years to come. Some may doubt whether any great difference will be found then between college men and other members of the class in society to which they belong as regards the number of children they have. Some may also doubt whether the birth-rate for the classes from 1892 to 1897 will be very different from that of their predecessors by twenty years. The fact remains that the statistics presented by President Eliot have nothing to do with the point he wished to make, which was not a general indictment of all college men.

FIGURES WILL LIE.

NEW YORK, Feb. 18.

No Fire at This Elevated Station.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* This morning at the Eighth street station of the Sixth avenue elevated road there was no fire in the women's waiting room. The men's waiting room was pretty well filled with men and dirty pails that smelled bad. On the platform there were many women who were trying to board trains, but could not do so because they were so crowded. The station agent and the porter, when complained to, were both rather surly about it and the station agent remarked that he did not have charge of the matter of fires. I gathered from these two employees, although they did not say so directly, that the Manhattan elevated had forbidden the building of fires in the women's waiting rooms. If this is so it is a scandalous matter.

AN UNHAPPY TRAVELLER.

This Snap.

A week ago they told us,
When the sun was shining bright,
That winter's back was broken
And soon we'd have a sight
Of the bursting buds of flowers,
And hear the bluebirds sing,
For the sun, they said, was a harbinger,
A harbinger of spring.

But what of this blooming blizzard,
And the weather all frappéed,
And the ice, and the snow, and the shivers,
And the sunshine gone to shade,
And the furs, and the wraps, and the blankets,
And the white, snowed-under town,
And the jingling of the sleighbells,
And the dazzling Frost King's crown,
And the swipe of the sweeper's shovel,
And the creak of the turning wheel,
And the piles of white in the gutter,
And the clang of the skater's steel?

Where are the buds of flowers,
And where do the bluebirds sing?
Oh,
Say,
Do they call this snap a harbinger,
A harbinger of Spring?

W. J. L.

PLEA FOR THE TRUCKS.

The Trying Conflict of Their Interests With Those of the Street Cars.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have been considerably interested in the discussions of the street traffic of this city and the recommendations made by Mr. Vreeland, president of the Metropolitan Street Railway. Mr. Vreeland claims that the trucking should give way to the street railroads, but can Mr. Vreeland show the merchants of New York any street or avenue running the length of the island that is not occupied by one of his lines, excepting Fifth avenue, of course? What streets are there downtown that run from river to river that are not occupied by the street cars? Beekman street has a line of rails over which a car never passes; so has a portion of William and Ann streets. Park place has two lines of rail that have not borne a car in several years, so has Worth street.

The city was put to considerable expense and the property owners and the business men to a considerable loss for the extension and opening of Elm street. Before this was completed and before the subway was planned, the Metropolitan Street Railway were asking for a franchise to cover that street. Elm street primarily was opened for the purpose of relieving Broadway of the trucking.

The life of New York and its wealth come from its business, and it is impossible to do business without trucks, and the more trucking we do, naturally, the more business we are doing. If the trucking is going to be hampered, what becomes of the business? We have an exposition of the conditions accentuated in the present storm. The railway lines have cleared the tracks of snow and heaped it up on both sides; the sidewalks are cleared off, adding to the quantity, resulting in every main thoroughfare being completely blockaded for trucking, excepting as the drivers may here and there sandwich in between street cars. When the street railway lines get good and ready they may or may not comply with their franchises and clear the streets of snow. Until this is done trucking must, perforce, be carried on between street cars. Do the business men or their trucks have any right to the streets? Are there any more fair-sized business arteries lying around loose outdoors that are available for street-car tracks?

The authorities of this city and the management of the Metropolitan Street Railway should recollect that what gives the city its prominence is its business men. They and their clerks patronize the elevated and street railways. Drive the business men out of the city, and the question of going to and from the offices will soon cease to be a problem. Smaller municipalities offer large inducements for manufacturing concerns to locate with them. New York offers nothing but the most stringent regulations as to the conduct of their business. Even if Mr. Vreeland's suggestions are not carried out, there has been enough said to cause considerable thought about locating business houses where trucking facilities will not be so hampered, and where the street railway lines may not be in a position to dictate as to how or by whom streets shall be used.

As the business stands now, the street car lines control the traffic. When a business man sends a truck off with a load, he never knows when the burning out of a fuse in a car is going to create a block, or when to expect his truck back. He says "good-by" to the truck. If it turns up again in several hours, he is surprised and gratified.

HERBERT M. BINGHAM.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.

The Question of the Negro's Brain.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* A correspondent, in to-day's SUN, Mr. Reynolds of Poughkeepsie, claims that the "physical differences" separating the negro from the white man are due to the early union of the cranial sutures, the arrested development of the cranium, and, consequently, compressing the contents of the cranial cavity, resulting in producing backward intellect in the colored race.

Is this claim scientific? Has it a truthful warrant? Certain of the older ethnic writers laid great stress upon this difference. But nowhere do we find that the leading anatomists teach this erroneous view.

If by the early ossification of the cranial sutures the skull bones matured early, compressing the brain substance, then irritation of the brain centre would be caused, and this would produce spasm. If the brain substance were compressed by the skull-vault then there would be idiocy, paralysis, &c. And since all of the colored people of the continent do not find themselves stupid idiots we may believe that Mr. Reynolds's statement lacks scientific warrant.

If the cranial sutures of the colored child become obliterated earlier than the average white child there is a scientific reason for that fact. Why is it that the colored people's teeth are white, pearly and strong? Therapeutists of all our American medical colleges teach that the white man's teeth decay early. Why? In the first place, the closing of the sutures and fontanelles of the colored baby takes place slightly earlier than in the average poor white man's child, for the scientific reason that the colored people's food consists, in a large measure, of proteids, whereas the white race's food is largely taken from the hydrocarbons.

The colored man's bread, in the South, is made from the whole grain, the pulp as well as the outer shell, which is rich in phosphorus and lime salts. These elements, then, go to build up the osseous structure of the individual; whereas the European races, which have bad teeth that decay early, eat the proverbial "white bread," which consists only of the pulp of the grain ground up and made into flour cakes and foodstuff. The outer shell of the grain, which is most essential to the nourishment of the bony structure, is thrown away.

Hence, the white mother, in nursing her child, does not give the nursing baby the essential elements to build up the white child's bony skeleton, as the black mother does. The black baby and black boy, eating more of the simpler foods, which are rich in lime salts, phosphorus, &c., naturally receive more nutrition that goes to build up this particular system.

These, then, are the reasons, having a scientific warrant, for the negro baby's cranial sutures ossifying earlier than the average white baby's. And, perhaps, another scientific reason why, as Mr. Reynolds claims, the sutures of a white child remain open longer than a colored child's may be due to the pathological condition of rickets, a disease that invariably attacks the white or European races.

There is no scientific evidence that should lead us to believe in the views expressed by your correspondent on this matter. If such were true then there would be more marked evidence.

HOMO.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.

An Airship for Mars.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The writer has plans under way for a new kind of airship to work its way to Mars or some other planet. The ship is to be run by motors run by diluted radium, from condensers which can supply enough to run a motor a hundred years.

The airship will be small, as no one will be in it. It will be set in the direction of Mars and allowed to work its way up as long as it will run. Underneath is a small wind wheel which will cause the fan wheels or paddles to revolve in case the motor or radium doesn't work.

The radium will give off a great light, which can be seen miles away. A small quantity of radium is diluted and condensed and made to run the motors, so they will no doubt run for years or until they get worn out; then the windwheel would keep on working the fan wheels after that even, but at slower speed. This plan may look foolish to many, but it is based on the latest scientific discoveries, and it will be only a question of time and money before we are able to send a new kind of airship to some other planet.

FRANCIS SHEPARD.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.

Our Fire Department and Motor Engines.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* THE SUN of Feb. 17 quotes from the *Motor World* that the New York Fire Department is behind the European fire departments in regards to motor fire engines. The New York Fire Department used motor fire engines years ago.

In 1875 I was sent to take charge of a steam fire engine and I had her in my care for ten years, doing the same work that horses are doing to-day. The only reason I know that they were taken out of the department after ten years of success was because they were not popular with the public, as the exhaust steam from the engine while going to a fire would frighten horses; but now people and horses are more used to it and I think it would come in favor.

I hope the public will not be misinformed in regard to the New York Fire Department being behind those of Europe.

CHARLES A. WOODRUFF,
Retired Engineer, N. Y. F. D.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.

Dr. Hale's Brief Reply.

From the Boston Evening Transcript.

"I received my invitation nineteen hundred years ago," is all the comment that Edward Everett Hale has had to make in regard to the bitter attack on him for partaking of communion at the Phillips Brooks memorial service in Trinity Church last month.

Inspired by Their Pictures.

I want to be an author—
My hand up to my face,
A thought upon my forehead—
An air of studied grace!
I want to be an author,
With genius on my brow;
I want to be an author,
And I want to be it now!

DROCH.

MAY STOP BARCUS & CO.

Bill Drafted to Prohibit Deception in Sale of Government Publications.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18.—The resolution introduced in the House by Representative Henry C. Smith (Rep., Mich.) several weeks ago, to further inquire into the printing and distribution by the National Bureau of Art and Literature (Limited) of Representative Richardson's compilation of the messages and papers of the Presidents, may be productive of an act which will effectively stop the operations of Barcus & Co., and other like concerns dealing in Government publications.

A measure has been drafted and is now under consideration by the Committee on Printing, although it has not yet been formally introduced in the House, intended to cover the matter. In substance, it prohibits the abuse of the copyright, proposes to impose punishment upon persons found guilty of printing and distributing public documents under representation of being authorized as "committees of distribution," or adopting any means of deception in the sale of Government publications, as have been practised by Barcus & Co. and others. It is also intended to prevent the desecration of the American flag, the American shield, and other devices by their use for advertising and other purposes for private gain.

Mr. Heatwole, chairman of the Printing Committee, is said to favor such a measure, and if the committee agrees with him it will be favorably reported to the House. Several bills have been introduced to prevent the desecration of the flag, but none goes so far as the measure now before the committee.

It develops that the excuse made by the Librarian of Congress for issuing a copyright to the National Bureau of Art and Literature on the "Messages and Papers of the Presidents" is that the index and certain annotations were not in the original Government publication and were subject to copyright. The publishers have used the copyright, however, for the entire set of volumes, thus making it appear that the "Messages and Papers" were copyrighted.

CRUM'S CONFIRMATION URGED.

Petition of P. B. S. Pinchback and Others Submitted to the Senate.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18.—A long petition urging the confirmation of Dr. Crum as Collector of the Port of Charleston, S. C., and signed by P. B. S. Pinchback, Charles H. Purvis, M. D., John F. Cook, Kelly Miller and Whitefield McKinley, was submitted to the Senate this afternoon. The petition asserts that, as the attempts to impeach Dr. Crum's integrity have failed, the issue has been reduced solely to the question of color and that it remains with the Senate to decide whether, if an American citizen is in every other respect qualified for the discharge of civic duties, his color shall be a bar to his political preferment. This decision of the Senate involves, the petition says, not only the future recognition of colored men for office, but also the basic principles upon which the Government of the United States is founded.

Attention is called to the fact that there are now fewer colored men holding Federal offices in the South than under any other Republican administration since that of President Grant, and the petition says that if the Senate should refuse to confirm the nomination of Dr. Crum it would not only "further encourage and embolden the enemies of the colored race, but also be conducive to a revival of the infamous doctrine cited in the Dred Scott decision; that is, that a negro has no rights a white man is bound to respect."

TO WITHDRAW NAVAL VESSELS.

Bureau of Navigation Recommends Return of All Ships Loaned to the States.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18.—The Bureau of Navigation has recommended to the Assistant Secretary of the Navy that steps be taken to withdraw from the various State militias the vessels loaned to them by the Government. This action grew out of the request of the State of North Carolina for return of the converted gunboat Hornet, which had been turned back to the Government by the State because the State could not keep it in repair. The Hornet is now being fitted out as a tender to the receiving ship Franklin.

"The work that these small vessels do," the bureau says, "is of the greatest value to the navy, especially at this time when the deficiency in properly trained men is great, and the bureau is decidedly of the opinion that it would be very detrimental to the service to withdraw the Hornet from this duty."

It then recommends that the Government secure the return of the following vessels now loaned to the respective States named: From Massachusetts, the Inca; Connecticut, Elfrida; New York, Aileen; New Jersey, Huntress; District of Columbia, Oneida; Maryland, Sylvia; Louisiana, Stranger; Ohio, Hawk; Illinois, Dorothea.

CLAIM AGAINST SAN DOMINGO.

Arbitrators Met Here Yesterday, but Will Begin Proceedings in Washington.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 18.—Señor Fernando E. Guachalla, Minister of Argentina, and Frederick A. Van Dyne, Assistant Solicitor of the State Department, are in New York to-day, in conformity with the requirements of a protocol between the United States and the Dominican republic, for the arbitration of a claim of J. Sala & Co. of New York against San Domingo, Señor Guachalla and Mr. Van Dyne being the arbitrators.

The protocol provides that the arbitration proceedings should be held in New York, but the arbitrators have the right to change the place of meeting. Both Señor Guachalla and Mr. Van Dyne decided that they could conduct the business better in Washington, but they found that under the terms of the protocol there was no getting away from holding the initial meeting in New York. So they have gone there for the purpose of saying to each other that they think the arbitration should be held in Washington. They will be back here to-morrow, ready to begin proceedings.

SCHOOLS TO TEACH COOKING.

Board of Education Orders Appliances—Now for School Pies!

The Executive Committee of the Board of Education at its meeting yesterday adopted a resolution authorizing the purchase of stoves and kitchen utensils for practical lessons in cooking to the girl pupils in some of the public schools. At the next graduation exercises the girls will have to be expert in making bread, cookies and pies, as well as being proficient in history, mathematics and the other studies.

In some parts of the city the girls will not be so fortunate as others, because there are comparatively few schools which will have a kitchen attachment. It was decided yesterday to have cooking rooms in Public Schools 184, 52, 169, 30 and 20 in Manhattan and 23, 25, 7 and 17 in The Bronx.

The Committee on Finance reported that the public schools in Queens are long on pianos and short on coal. A resolution to transfer $182 from the piano account to the fuel account for that borough was adopted without debate.

The same committee reported that a number of the public schools in Brooklyn, Queens and Richmond are poorly equipped with fire escapes, because the buildings are old and the Board of Estimate knocked out of the budget the item of $60,000 for fire escapes. No action was taken on this report.

A Long Run.

Author—What do you think of my play?
Critic—I think you had better advertise souvenirs for the second performance.