The Sun.

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What! To Be Driven Out of Panama?

Before we begin work on the Panama Canal, before we have even taken title to the French company's property there, this awful warning appears in the *National Review* of London:

"When Panama becomes the centre about which the whole world gravitates, America, we may be convinced, will not be left to enjoy the possession of the Isthmus in peace and to reap therefrom advantages at the cost of all the other [*sic*] European Powers. If she should come into contact with the whole of Europe, into hostile contact, the result would hardly be dubious."

This depressing prophecy derives importance only from the publication in which it appears. It is a comforting circumstance that the ominous prediction comes from no more authoritative a pen than that of Dr. EMIL REICH, a Hungarian historian and philosopher of laborious rather than acute intellect and the author of a "History of Civilization." In attempting to widen his visual angle, this well meaning gentleman has spent five years in the United States, four in France and nine in England in what he terms "the study of realities"; eighteen years, we should judge, pretty much wasted.

We hope that Dr. EMIL REICH will persuade the "whole of Europe" to allow this republic at least to finish the canal at our own expense, and open the same formally as a neutral waterway for the commerce of all the world, before proceeding to evict us by armed force from the Isthmus of Panama.

The Successor of Porfirio Diaz.

A correspondent who is in close touch with the Mexican Administration is our authority for the statement that José Ives Limantour and Bernardo Reyes are both practically out of the running for the Presidential succession in Mexico. Our informant states that LIMANTOUR told President DIAZ that not only was he to be regarded as in no way a candidate for the Presidency, but also that he would not accept the Vice-Presidency provided for by the recent constitutional amendment. His desire is to remain Secretary of Finance as long as that shall be the wish of DIAZ or his successor.

Gen. REYES has announced that he will not accept the Vice-Presidency, and a redistricting of the troops which have been a central exponent of his power and popularity has deprived him of a measure of his influence. Yet so long as he lives Gen. REYES will undoubtedly remain a man to be considered in all political proceedings in Mexico. He is still the Governor of the important State of Nuevo Leon and Federal Commander of the troops in his district. Many of his most loyal military followers have been removed to other parts of the country, and their place has been taken by those over whom REYES has less power.

The immediate probability is that MARISCAL, the present Secretary of Foreign Relations, will be chosen as Vice-President, and this may mark him as the logical successor of PORFIRIO DIAZ. The constitutional amendment creating the office of Vice-President is now in process of approval by the different States, and its promulgation may occur at any time.

The provisions concerning the new office in Mexico are generally similar to those of our own Constitution, but there is one marked difference. The President of Mexico may designate the Vice-President as a member of his Cabinet. It is believed that this system will serve two purposes. It will keep the Vice-President in close touch with all processes and acts of the Administration, and he will thereby become directly and personally responsible for the acts of the Administration.

The political situation in Mexico is somewhat critical. The death or disability of PORFIRIO DIAZ might precipitate a condition of serious disturbance, if not of revolution. The longer such an unfortunate incident is deferred the better the chances for the avoidance of evil results. Every year of Mexico's present evolution sees the country more firmly on its feet as a land of order and good government.

The Chinese Exclusion Question.

Congress and the President now have the "yellow peril" before them for consideration in a concrete and definite form. The treaty between our Government and the Emperor of China negotiated in 1894 has been denounced by the Chinese Government and will expire by limitation on Dec. 7. There is much confusion in the minds of the Washington authorities as to the status of Chinese arriving at this country after that date. Senator PATTERSON of Colorado, in whose State the feeling against Chinese is strong, believes that if our policy of exclusion is to be maintained toward the Chinese, additional legislation at this session of Congress is necessary. In a speech in the Senate last week Mr. PATTERSON said:

"Unless additional legislation is had before Congress adjourns, every barrier against Chinese immigration that has been built will be removed on Dec. 7 next and the ports of the country thrown open to the unrestricted coming of the Chinese hordes whose invasion of the United States was arrested twenty-two years ago."

The treaty of 1894 between the United States and China provided for the exclusion from this country of all Chinese laborers. The treaty of 1880 provided only for the restriction, suspension and limiting of their immigration. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 permitted unrestricted immigration of Chinese subjects to this country. SAMUEL GOMPERS has taken legal advice on the subject, and his lawyers, RALSTON & SIDDONS of Washington, share the belief of Senator PATTERSON. Their opinion, in part, is expressed in these words:

"Inasmuch as existing laws are only to be considered as valid when consistent with treaty obligations, it becomes important to us to determine whether from and after Dec. 7, 1904, there will be any law prohibiting immigration of Chinese laborers into the United States. In our opinion, the immigration of Chinese laborers from and after the date given, China giving the required notice to terminate the treaty, will be absolutely legal."

The treaty of 1894 expiring, it is held that the legislation based upon it—the only legislation prohibiting the entrance of Chinese laborers into this country—will lapse with it. The "regulation, limitation or suspension" of the immigration of Chinese laborers under the treaty of 1880 is the only possible restriction to be put upon it.

The opposition of the labor unions to any relaxation of the restrictions now placed on Chinese labor is as strong now as in the days of DENNIS KEARNEY and the sand lot riots.

The Electoral Votes of 1904.

The Electoral votes of the forty-five States of the Union, under the Apportionment Act of 1900, aggregate 476. A majority of these necessary to elect a President is 239 votes.

The Electoral votes of Southern States which may surely be counted for the Democratic candidate for President number 151. The States of Delaware and Maryland, having together 11 Electoral votes, may also be given to the Democrats with reasonable confidence, making a total of 162 Democratic votes.

To get a majority of the Electoral votes, 77 more will be required by the Democrats.

States which may be set down as doubtful are Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, West Virginia, with an aggregate of 69 Electoral votes. If New York, with its 39 votes, is carried by the Democracy, it is possible that Connecticut, with 7 votes, will go in the same way, and that New Jersey also will return to its old Democratic allegiance. Nor can either Rhode Island or West Virginia be safely counted for the Republicans.

Even if the Democrats secure the Electoral votes of all the five States we have classed as doubtful, they will still need 8 votes to get the required majority of the whole number, 239.

It is plain, therefore, that the Democrats cannot elect a President without securing, in addition, either in New England or the West, 8 Electoral votes, at least.

Unless there comes a political revolution of the most extensive sort, the Democrats will have no chance of winning any other of the New England States than Connecticut and Rhode Island, and they must get the 8 additional votes required from some one or from a combination of these Western and Pacific Coast States:

California	10	Nebraska	8
Colorado	5	Nevada	3
Idaho	3	North Dakota	4
Illinois	27	South Dakota	4
Indiana	15	Ohio	23
Iowa	13	Oregon	4
Kansas	10	Utah	3
Michigan	14	Washington	5
Minnesota	11	Wisconsin	13
Montana	3	Wyoming	3

It needs only a glance at these indubitable facts of our political federation to forecast a Presidential campaign for 1904 which will be one of the fiercest in our history. The Democrats to win will not only have to make a hard fight to resume political control of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and West Virginia, but must push the war successfully in the West also.

Startling Figures From Porto Rico.

The recently published report of the Superior Board of Health of Porto Rico is not a particularly entertaining volume, yet it presents an array of facts and figures which should be of no small interest to American readers. The report indicates a persistent and fairly active effort to improve the general health conditions of the island by means of laws and regulations, and presents figures of vital statistics which compel attention.

The mortality for the island appears as 26.8 per 1,000 inhabitants. This is much better than the records of some of the worst of the countries of the world, but it is very much worse than the records of many of the best. It is, however, unduly high for a land of such generally salubrious conditions as Porto Rico, and the occasion of its excess is shown in the details of the report.

Out of 25,552 deaths reported in the island from June 30, 1902, to July 1, 1903, tuberculosis accounted for 1,443; bronchitis for 998, and pneumonia for 631. Tuberculosis is widely prevalent, as it is in Cuba and in many other tropical and sub-tropical lands. Its prevalence in such regions appears to refute the now strongly supported theory that the disease is curable by an outdoor life, for the life of many of these people is little short of being such. But the ravages of the disease are greatest in the cities, where the homes of the poorer people are dingy and badly ventilated or even wholly unventilated, quarters in which too large a number of persons are crowded. Contagion is inevitable.

Heart disease, cerebro-spinal fever and intestinal disorders account for others. Deaths from such epidemics as smallpox, typhoid fever and scarlet fever were few in number, and the island has had no yellow fever for six years.

An analysis of the submitted tables discloses three items which are appalling. The fact that very nearly 40 per cent. of all the births on the island are set down as illegitimate is to be accounted for on other grounds than those of a general immorality. For various reasons, marriage by consent has been a common practice in Porto Rico, as it has in Cuba, and it cannot be said that any marked social demoralization has resulted. But this condition has nothing to do with the recorded item of 1,411 still births, or 5 per cent. of the total registration. Some of this may be accounted for by maternal ignorance, but much more of it must be attributed to the lack of proper and sufficient nourishment for the child-bearer.

Another of these appalling items is the fact that 9,485 deaths, or 37 per cent. of the total number, were of children under five years of age. A large percentage of these is due to infantile tetanus, occasioned by unsanitary practices which are rooted in ignorance and superstition. The disease is entirely preventible, and prompt measures are imperative for the redemption of Porto Rican child life from this and from other evils by which it is assailed, and from which springs this fearful mortality.

The third of these items records the deaths which are set down under the head of "anæmia." During the year covered by this report, these numbered 6,708, or about 25 per cent. of the total deaths, and seven-tenths of 1 per cent. of the total population of the island. In the important coffee district of Utuado, more than half of all the deaths are charged to anæmia. According to the record, 1.25 per cent. of the entire population of the district died from anæmia in this single year. Yellow fever in Cuba, in its worst days, never showed anything approaching this record.

In connection with this item, we quote from the report, on pages 27 and 28:

"Anæmia, even when it is not directly fatal, results in a condition of chronic misery that utterly incapacitates the sufferer and renders him an easy prey to any acute disease. It is most prevalent in the remote and mountainous regions. In some places almost the entire population is anæmic. * * * It may be taken as proved that, in Porto Rico, a large proportion of the anæmia is due to the parasitic worm *Anchylostomum duodenale*, and it is also certain that the disease can be controlled and possibly eradicated. * * * Chronic semi-starvation is the ordinary condition of the poor in Porto Rico, and in their case the slightest cause of malnutrition may be sufficient to turn the scale against them in the struggle for existence. It will be readily understood that the problem of conquest of this disease presents many difficulties in a country where poverty of an extreme type is the lot of the majority, and where the means to afford medical assistance are so scanty. * * * We have hopes that the next Legislature will rise to the occasion and devise some plan to stop the awful loss of life and to check the propagation of a race enfeebled by disease in mind and body."

This official report would seem to indicate an unusual opportunity for some active medical missionary work in a land in which we now have a proprietary interest. An annual death list of nearly 7,000 from a disease officially declared to be capable of control and eradication, and an annual infant mortality of nearly 10,000, officially declared to be preventible in many cases, imperatively demand American attention.

Is the American Man Becoming Feminized?

A typical example of the "new woman" seems to be Miss BERTHA LIEBSON, a young Jewess of the East Side. She is the feminine leader of the revolt in that district against the increase in the prices of rents of tenements and apartments which has taken place there and generally in the town, and she has been called the "Joan of Arc" of the movement. Miss LIEBSON is pictured as a young woman whose face is indicative of much strength of character, of great earnestness and of remarkable intellectual acuteness.

These characteristics of Miss LIEBSON may be said to distinguish a large part of the young Jewish women of the East Side Ghetto. They are very quick intellectually, and when they have been educated in our public schools these natural abilities are developed in a high degree. Men of affairs not Jews, who come into contact with them when they appear as interpreters for their Yiddish speaking fathers with reference to real estate transactions, purchases or mortgages or what not, relate that they are greatly impressed by the alert apprehension of these young women in the matters of business involved and by their power of lucid statement.

They seem to be very remarkable young women. In the schools they are among the cleverest and most assiduous of the pupils, and when they are thoroughly relieved of the East Side dialect, a compound of Yiddish and of English street slang, they are likely to be the most successful of the graduates of the Normal College and the Teachers' Training School in winning places as public school teachers.

The Rev. ANNA SPENCER, in an address at the Brooklyn Institute last Friday, spoke of "Woman's Contribution to Educational Interests" in this country and gave statistics from the last census to prove that it is of chief importance as compared with that of man. In the United States there are three times as many women teachers as men teachers, said the Rev. Mrs. SPENCER. She put the number of women in that employment at half a million, though so far as we can find from the census it is somewhat less. It is great enough, however, to be very impressive and to sustain her in contending that "the soul of democracy" is in the women teachers of America. This "soul," however, according to the majority opinion expressed in the report of the Mosely Education Commission, recently in this country to examine our educational methods, is becoming too feminine for real strength. All the commissioners except two are somewhat alarmed by the growing preponderance of women teachers. Their notion seems to be that the consequence is the breeding of feminine rather than masculine qualities in boys. It is a debatable question if such an inculcation of feminine virtues would not be for the boys' advantage and for the advantage of our society generally; but it is not easy to discover traces of any such modifying influence. So far as masculine manners go, the tendency during the last generation seems to have been to a rudeness not suggestive of feminine influence.

On the contrary, there seems to have been a modification in the feminine type which suggests the greater potency of masculine influence. Young women of more fortunate circumstances, so far as money goes, have become comrades of men and competitors with them in field sports, and women generally are invading largely professions and occupations formerly confined to men. They are coming out of their past seclusion. They are public speakers and agitators like Miss LIEBSON, are leaders of popular movements, are combined in clubs and societies and are making themselves heard everywhere in public life. As Mrs. SPENCER remarked in Brooklyn, there are now in the United States more women preachers than men dressmakers—in 1900 there were of the one 3,373 to 2,090 of the other.

Because of our system of coeducation, in the opinion of Prof. ARMSTRONG, one of the Mosely commissioners, "there is a strange, indefinable feminine air coming over the men, a tendency toward a common, if I may call it, a sexless, tone of thought." Is it not possible that the masculine influence over the feminine is still greater? The experience of this present generation of American men in the victories of war and in the industrial triumphs of peace does not suggest their feminization.

It is undoubtedly true that the feminine sensibility which recoils from suffering of all kinds, human and in beasts, has extended to men in a marked degree during the last generation, but that modification is not peculiarly American. It is a characteristic of this modern time. Sensitiveness, even supersensitiveness, distinguishes this period as compared with past periods, but it is the spirit of our religion and of modern civilization. A charge like that made by Prof. ARMSTRONG against our men might be made with equal force against the spirit of Christianity as it was exemplified in JESUS.

The illustration from the Ghetto with which we began may be cited as an example of a far more distinguishing feature of this time, or the new assertion of the feminine in fields heretofore reserved for masculine influence exclusively. Instead of a "strange, indefinable feminine air coming over the men," may it not be that the modification Prof. ARMSTRONG seemed to see was in the women rather than the men, or that the "strange, indefinable air" was due more to masculine than to feminine influence?

The view of our society presented by him is novel enough to provoke discussion. The American man has been accused of many offences and shortcomings, but never before have we heard imputed to him the tendency Prof. ARMSTRONG thinks he has discovered.

Why This Haste?

A news despatch announces the arrival in Havana of three members of the staff of the Spanish Claims Commission. The object of their visit is said to be an investigation of the method employed in taking testimony in claim cases, with a view to expediting the proceedings. This spasmodic haste is unseemly.

These claims, arising out of the late Cuban revolution, are only a little less than a hundred years younger than the now venerable French claims and are only a few decades more modern than sundry other claims of record and somnolent procedure. They are already becoming mellowed by time. The investigation of them furnishes pleasant and not overstrenuous employment for a number of our fellow citizens, and the claimants have adjusted themselves to a belief that in the fulness of time their descendants may derive a modest benefit. Why disturb this peaceful condition by agitation and a display of energy?

The Spanish claims amount to only about $60,000,000, a quarter to a third of which may possess a measure of validity. Originally there were 542 claimants. The exclusion of the claims of the enlisted seamen of the Maine cut out 152 of these. To one American citizen the sum of $3,000 was awarded for damages to his feelings, his body and his clothes through Spanish arrest and imprisonment. These items are sufficient to show that progress is being made, and so long as the commission can report progress no reason is apparent for any hasty settlement of the matter.

A very considerable national economy can be effected by juggling these claims along peacefully and gently into the company of their predecessors. Should the mere fact that some of the claimants need their money and are entitled to it ruffle the placidity of the Claims Commission or stimulate it to hasty action? The claimants will be dead some time, and then they will not need the money.

The records of the Civil Service Commission show that President MCKINLEY authorized three appointments in the classified civil service under special rules and special exceptions, while President ROOSEVELT has authorized sixty. In spite of these remorseless blows at the foundations of the republic, these persistent efforts to debauch the public service, the Government at Washington still lives. It is just possible that even without the sanctity of civil service classification the business of the country might be carried on.

The mobilization of the army of anglers hereabouts is now progressing rapidly. The rod and reel men may be seen in groups around their boats, every captain armed with a putty knife, a scraper and a paint brush. There is no lack of superintendents. The launches, or "automobile boats," as they are sometimes called, have their summer coats on, and their proud captains turn up their noses at sloops and cats without "kickers."

Early next month the entire fishing fleet will be in commission. Then the rods and reels will come up for examination, and final preparations will be made for the reception of the beautiful Southern visitors, the sea trout.

The coming season, according to the old anglers, will be good. A long and rigorous winter, they say, is always followed by great runs of fish in these waters. Let us hope that the prediction may prove to be sound. May the rods bend! May the lines whiz, and may the scapnets be frequently called out for duty!

Proof That the World Is Flat.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The world is flat. To prove it, imagine some one holding a large ball and imagine yourself standing on the bottom, with your head dangling in the air.

NEW YORK, April 11. HEIMAN SIMON.

Always Something Doing in Jewell.

From the Jewell (Kan.) Republican.

Social life never stagnates in Jewell. As soon as the Mormon elders left, a new batch of life insurance agents came along.

The Behinders.

The man behind the gun and desk
We praise with ringing chimes!
In fact, we cheer them all except
The man behind the times.

TALE OF AN EXECUTOR.

Experience of an Amateur Who Ran Up Against Three States.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* After forty years of faithful work in one family a servant died, and of her modest will and testament I was made executor. Fifteen months ago the machinery of the law was set in motion—and it is still creaking. For a day or two, when I first undertook to carry out the request of this old servant as an expression of her confidence, I must confess to a feeling of considerable superiority as I shouldered my course through the small fry of Broadway and adjacent thoroughfares, wondering if behind my back the cry was passing: "There goes the executor!" Since my contact with the officials in the case, however, I've dropped to an insignificance compared to which the vanishing point of an invisible perspective is a searchlight.

Your readers are requested to follow me to Jersey, for there my administrative labors began. The will in question was signed in New Jersey. Now, when this is the case, a number of strange things happen. In the first place, no matter whether the deceased has any property in the State, one must pay a tax on the entire amount wheresoever found—that is, if he can unearth the official whose duty it is to fix the amount of the tax. Personally, I have acquired a bad case of housemaid's knee, praying to him for ten months to send in his figures; and when he did, and a check for the modest amount was forwarded to Trenton, I was informed by the State Treasurer that there was a penalty for not having settled within a year, and would I kindly pony up the difference? So much for Jersey.

In one of the savings banks of New York city there was a deposit of inconsiderable amount. Correspondence was opened with a gentleman in Albany who apparently died immediately on receipt of the official papers in the case, for seasons waxed and waned with nothing doing.

I swung on the front gate day after day with my nose flattened against the atmosphere waiting for the postman, but his merry whistle was not for me. Moon after moon filled and fell away and naught broke the stillness save the plaintive cooings of the cats that kept perpetual honeymoon around our humble dwelling. At last the letter came. The gentleman in Albany had resurrected himself enough to give the information, with many whereases, that the money was in the bank, but had not been "appraised!"

Ministers of finance defend us! Appraised! And it took expert talent some months longer to pick out of that bank enough that was legal tender to satisfy my little claim. But I got it—yes, sir, amid the crash of financial worlds and the showering of hayseed on the shoulders of a sobbing board of directors as they shook their heads in dumb despair, the money was transferred. It is merely figurative to say I got it, for after I had been swearing to papers until I was hoarse in the face, the money completely disappeared until one day it found its way to my account, less the New York tax.

Meantime I had also tackled Massachusetts, where a small deposit mentioned in the will instantly aroused the suspicions of the protective elements of the entire State. The programme was varied because a sewing machine had crept into the will, and the mails were clogged and wires were kept hot in the effort to discover its taxable value. The machine had been working overtime for twenty-five years and had cost originally $18.50. I want to testify with gratitude, however, to the fact that Massachusetts, to her everlasting glory, permitted the machine to "go through" and taxed me only on the cold hard cash held within vaults under her jurisdiction. Then, as I say, came the Jersey tax on everything in sight, although tribute had been already paid on the same sums to Massachusetts and New York.

I have not yet been legally "released." Can you tell me, sir, whether in order to do this I must address President Roosevelt? And, again, would you not say I may reasonably hug to my bosom the comfort of knowing that I have had a generous hand in keeping three struggling States of this great Union out of the poorhouse?

GEORGE M. S. HORTON.

NEW YORK, April 11.

Good Wishes for Mr. Payne and the Constitution.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* A humble but real citizen of this republic, I protest against the use by Postmaster-General Payne, Mrs. Payne, his niece and a physician, of the cutter Onondaga on a sea trip for the benefit of Mr. Payne's health.

By the same token and availing myself of a constitutional privilege, I protest against the use of any Government vessel by the Executive or members of his family for purposes not official.

May the Postmaster-General speedily regain his health and may the Constitution survive this era. N. M. S.

NEW YORK, April 10.

The Brooklyn Schools and Fire Alarms.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The tribute contained in your editorial column to the fine discipline of the school children, as evidenced by their passing so successfully through the fire drills, is well deserved. At the fire in School 32, in Brooklyn, a month ago, the children did just as well as they did at the Edgecombe avenue school.

It is a pity that other departments of the city government do not make as great an effort to render our schools and the children therein safe in case of fire. To cite an instance of the latter neglect, I would point to the fact that only 4 out of 130 schools in the Borough of Brooklyn are connected directly with the fire alarm telegraph system. In case of a fire in the unconnected schools, the passerby or somebody in the school would have to run some distance to a firebox after getting a fire key to send in an alarm. Much valuable time may be lost and in case of a sudden blaze a panic is possible which might be allayed or prevented if a body of trained men could be summoned quickly.

Efforts to get the Brooklyn schools connected with the fire alarm telegraph have been made on the part of the Board of Education for the last three years. It has asked for an appropriation of $38,000 to make these connections. The two previous years this has been disallowed entirely. This year the pitiful sum of $1,000 was appropriated by the Board of Estimate. In view of the terrible results at the Iroquois Theatre fire, I do not believe that any one of the members of the Board of Estimate should hesitate a moment about this appropriation. If any of them have children who attend the public schools they should be ashamed to have it go on record that they have refused—an appropriation of $1,000 is in effect a refusal—to connect the schools with the fire department.

I might add that the schools in Manhattan borough are all connected and the request for the connection of the Brooklyn schools is merely an effort to get all the schools put on the same basis.

BROOKLYN, April 9. F. G.

A Defence of All Angels' Rule.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The rector of All Angels' Church certainly needs no defence before his own congregation as to his action on Easter Sunday morning in advising intending communicants, many of them entire strangers, how to proceed in orderly arrangement to the altar rail, but as a correspondent in to-day's issue of your valued and far-reaching paper has seen fit to spread before the world in harsh and unbecoming language his one-man criticism, I venture to submit the protest of one of those strangers who, having worshipped only once or twice at All Angels' Church, was led by the attractiveness of that service and beauty of an edifice second to none in Manhattan (in his humble opinion) to make an early start from Brooklyn to enable him to be present in due season, and it seemed to him that the appropriateness of the rector's remarks was entirely borne out by the exceedingly orderly and prompt manner in which a very numerous and devout congregation, directed in a perfectly decorous way by the courteous and efficient ushers, partook of that elevating sacrament. EDWARD H. GRAY.

BROOKLYN, April 11.

Some Boom Timber.

Sometimes it's very gauzy, ethereal and light,
Erected like a gas balloon to sail;
Sometimes it goes a-floating as gaily as a kite,
With bombast for a ballast and a tail.

Sometimes it's very mulish with not a word to say,
As dull and unresponsive as a clam;
Sometimes it's very stupid, sometimes it's very gay,
Sometimes it shakes you with a flabby palm.

Sometimes it's loudly spoken, grandiloquent and bluff;
Sometimes it is collapsible and flat;
Sometimes it's smooth as satin—sometimes it's mighty rough
As it jars the patient ether through its hat.

It is the same old boomlet, no matter whence its birth—
A Barkis who is waiting for a strike;
Ah! when it has been punctured, there's nothing here on earth
Like a busted boomlet hiking down the pike.

HORACE SEYMOUR KELLER.

THE CATALOGUE HOUSES.

The West, South and Southwest are now the scenes of an increasingly active conflict between the old commercial system of reaching consumers through jobbing houses which buy from manufacturers and sell to retailers, and the new and rapidly extending system of direct sales to consumers by "catalogue houses" which buy direct from manufacturers. The new system operates to some extent throughout the entire country, but has not yet found such footing in the East as it has obtained in the West.

Not a few jobbers and retailers are becoming seriously alarmed about this comparatively new form of competition. In many lines, staple and otherwise, they are being undersold. The catalogue house buys in large quantities at jobbing prices, if not better, and in many cases is able to undersell the retailer in that area which the retailer regards as his own sphere of influence. This reacts on the sales of the established jobber, and both are now beginning to feel that they must soon fight for their existence.

How widely the catalogue system of retail sales may become operative remains to be seen. So do the results of its manifest advantages and equally manifest disadvantages. The rural store is in itself a small department store. It lives and profits by the supply of everything needed in a rural community; tools, food, clothing, and all the endless miscellany of the familiar country institution. It cannot live on the sales of a few special lines. In many items the catalogue house offers the country customer staple and other wares at about the same price that the country merchant pays the jobber from whom he buys them.

The process affects also the merchant in towns where lines of merchandise are specialized. The hardware man suffers, the boot and shoe man suffers, and the local milliner falls also under the evil spell. The farmer and his wife, the artisan and his family, have perhaps one and perhaps several voluminous illustrated catalogues quoting prices of all sorts and kinds of things needed for use or for personal wear. A cash remittance for the selected articles brings them promptly by mail or by express, and a few cents, dimes, or dollars are saved by the system. The farmer buys a plough, his wife buys a new churn or a dress pattern, the son buys a shotgun, the daughter buys a new spring hat, the hired man buys a jackknife, and the hired girl a new ribbon for her hair. All come from the same place, and the selection is made in a family conference and discussion.

The system has its marked advantages in convenience and in economy. Its broader results are difficult to forecast.

From Hill to Odell.

From the Wall Street Journal.

In the past forty years—to go back no further than 1865—there have been seven changes in the political control of the State of New York.

From 1865 to 1869 there was a Republican Governor, Reuben E. Fenton, serving two terms.

From 1869 to 1873 there was a Democratic Governor, John T. Hoffman, serving two terms.

From 1873 to 1875 there was a Republican Governor, John A. Dix, serving one term.

From 1875 to 1880 there were two Democratic Governors, Tilden and Robinson.

From 1880 to 1883 there was one Republican Governor, A. B. Cornell.

From 1883 to 1895 there were three Democratic Governors, Cleveland, Hill and Flower.

From 1895 to 1905 there have been four Republican Governors, Morton, Black, Roosevelt and Odell.

It may be noted that during much of the time the Democrats were in control of the Governorship the Republicans ruled the Legislature, and thus exercised a power of check upon the Democratic Executive administration. But during the past nine years—going on ten—the Republicans have been in control of both Governor and Legislature. This is the longest continuous lease of power by one party in this State in a century.

With conditions as they are in the State of New York, this is too long a period for one party to remain in control. Long continuance in power breeds corruption.

After twelve years of power, from 1883 to 1895, the Democratic party, even though its control of the State was not complete, as the Legislature much of the time was Republican, finally became intolerable to the people. The party that in 1882 elected and supported Cleveland so far degenerated that, under the leadership of Hill, it stole a Legislature, put Maynard into the Court of Appeals and so outraged public opinion that, although Flower had in 1891 been elected by 48,000 plurality, Hill was in 1894 defeated by 156,000.

Nearly ten years of unlimited Republican rule in this State has developed a situation that seems to foreshadow another revolution like that which in 1894 drove the Democrats from power. Republican rule has become Republican misrule. There has not been in years such a shameful Legislature as that which is now in session. We have not had in years a Governor who has been as indifferent to an enlightened public opinion as Odell.

Boys and the Navy.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have a son 16 years old, and I am of the opinion that his best interest (and the family's) would be served by his entering the United States navy. He is strong and intelligent, but very self-willed, and, I am sure, could not keep a position, owing to his too impulsive love of sports, baseball, football, basketball and what not. I tried to induce him to take my advice about entering the navy, but he is against it.

Now, as the Government is badly in need of good material, which my boy would no doubt belong to, and as there may be hundreds of similar cases, would it not be in your province to publish one of your lucid articles showing the boys the advantage of navy life? A JERSEY FATHER.

HOBOKEN, N. J., April 8.

Your son, as you describe him, is eligible for enlistment as an apprentice in the navy. A boy to be enlisted must be at least 16 years of age, of a height not less than 5 feet 1 inch, weigh not less than 90 pounds and have a chest measurement not less than 28 inches. He must sign voluntarily an agreement to serve in the navy till he is 21 years old. Enlistments may be made at the Brooklyn, Boston and League Island navy yards, on the ship Constitution at New York, on the Pensacola at San Francisco and at the naval recruiting station at Chicago.

Navy life, unquestionably, has great advantages for boys in the discipline it gives them. None could be better; but that discipline, with the confinement which life on shipboard involves, may become distasteful to a boy, so that desertions among them are frequent. The number of apprentices who continue in the service after their first term of enlistment is over, or after their majority, is not large relatively.

Rathbone.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* It seems to me that the proper disposition of the Rathbone trouble would be for him to obtain a vindication from the Cuban Republic. As I understand the matter, he was accused of violating a Cuban law, and after a trial was convicted and, while undergoing punishment, became subject to a pardon under an amnesty proclamation by the President of Cuba.

Why should he be making trouble in the United States, and demanding a rehearing here, when the crime, if any, was committed in Cuba? Let him return to Cuba and obtain a rehearing, even if he is obliged to ask the good offices of this nation to obtain it, and then, armed with his vindication, he can return to his native land and obtain what he so much desires here.

If Gen. Wood was the cause of his conviction and he can clearly show that that conviction was irregular and unjust the people of this country will do him the justice for which he claims to be seeking.

At present he seems to be, in the expressive language of the old hunter, "barking up the wrong tree." VAN BUREN KINNEY.

PROVIDENCE, R. I., April 11.

THE BROADER RACE QUESTION.

A Southern Editor Who Deems the Negro Superior to the Japanese.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Your contributor "Orientalist" seems, like most Englishmen, to shiver at the thought of Russian expansion. While agreeing with him as to the value to the world of English civilization, one might ask if it is fair to suppose that the only hope for English civilization is the throttling of Russia by interposing obstacles to her further progress.

Would it not be fairer to let the two civilizations run the race side by side on the same ground and the better win? The view has been held in England for more than a century, and with particular force for half a century, that the bottling of Russia was a necessity for England. This view has made strange bedfellows, to say the least. It accounts for the Sultan's continued presence in Europe, when by all the rules he should have been sent about his business years ago.

Americans cannot be blind to the wonderful aggressiveness of Russian civilization in Siberia and the firm hold it has taken of that region, wresting from steppe and inhospitable mountain ranges homes for a busy and happy people. Russia's fitness is proved by the fact of her occupancy for so long a time under such conditions.

Whatever be the result of the war (and the Japs appear to have something of a proposition, to say the least) Russia is going to the Pacific because she wishes to go and because it is right that she should go; and an ice-free port will be the least she will demand and have.

Now, if English civilization be built upon an enduring foundation, why do the English fear to meet Russia on the open field of competition, in the arena of the world's trade? I am an admirer of the English and am of their blood, but here in the South there has been held from a time whence record runs a doctrine that the question of race is supreme, and if there be anything in that then the line must be drawn on the Japs as well as on the negroes. Southern people who insist upon racial purity must insist that the Jap and the Chinaman be kept outside the pale, for the menace of the negro is nothing compared with the menace of these races who have lived without a conception of morals from the dawn of their history and who, according to the best ethnologists, are physically incapable of amalgamating with the white races, even if that were conceivable.

If England wishes to pit herself against Russia, none can say her nay; but the fight when it comes ought to be a man's fight, and such puerile efforts as England has made to prevent Russia from getting into the world through a commodious, ice-free port ought to merit contempt from right thinking people the world over.

Personally, if you will permit the assertion, I believe the negro incomparably superior to the Jap in everything but opportunity, and it is my firm conviction that with the same chances the negro would in everything surpass the Jap. At the same time I am opposed to the negro having any voice in the Government of the United States, now or at any other time. The question of race is supreme.

For these and other reasons, the utter defeat and destruction of Japan as a nation would be in the highest sense gratifying to me. It would remove a menace to the civilization of the entire world. I expect to see this done effectually, despite their boasting and their preliminary success.

JAMES HENRY RICE, JR.,
Editor of the *Field*.

CONWAY, S. C., April 9.

Stay at Home Clubs in Kentucky.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Under such a man as President McKinley there was a good chance to swing Kentucky and other Southern States into the Republican column. Kentucky had a Republican Governor (Bradley) not so many years ago. Under the "bronco busting" methods of Theodore Roosevelt and the horde of officeholders of his Administration in this and other States, everything is planned and arranged to keep a tight hold on the fat of patronage without regard to common honesty, decency or the rights of the people. Under the shameful conditions now prevailing, which are expected to continue to prevail under the wing and authority of the Administration, a very large number of Republicans are already deciding to join the "Stay at Home Club" and refrain from voting at the next Presidential election. This, of course, if Theodore Roosevelt is the Republican nominee. The "Stay at Home" Republicans will cut a very large figure in the election. D. BOONE.

COVINGTON, Ky., April 9.

What Herbert Spencer Thought of Homer and of John Ruskin.

Extracts from the Autobiography in the London Times.

My feeling was well shown when, some twenty years ago, I took up a translation of the "Iliad" for the purpose of studying the superstitions of the early Greeks, and, after reading some six books, felt what a task it would be to go on—felt that I would rather give a large sum than read to the end. Passing over its tedious enumerations of details of dresses and arms, of chariots and horses, of blows given and received, filling page after page—saying nothing of the boyish practice of repeating descriptive names, such as well-greaved Greeks, long-haired Achæans, horse-breaking Trojans, and so forth (epithets which when not relevant to the issue are injurious); passing over, too, the many absurdities, such as giving the genealogy of a horse while in the midst of a battle; and not objecting that the subject matter appeals continually to brutal passions and the instincts of the savage; it suffices to say that to me the ceaseless repetition of battles and speeches is intolerable. Even did the ideas presented raise pleasurable feelings, a lack of sufficiently broad contrasts in matter and manner would repel me.

When, some years before, there had appeared "Modern Painters" by Mr. Ruskin, I was delighted to find in him one who dared to express unfavorable opinions about some of Raphael's works; for then as always I stood alone in insisting on the various faults of these, as of most other paintings by the old masters. Naturally, therefore, when there came to the *Economist* his just issued "Stones of Venice," I opened it with raised expectations. On looking at the illustrations, however, and reading the adjacent text, I presently found myself called upon to admire a piece of work which seemed to me sheer barbarism. My faith in Mr. Ruskin's judgment was at once destroyed; and thereafter I paid no further attention to his writings than was implied by reading portions quoted in reviews or elsewhere. These, joined with current statements about his sayings and doings, sufficiently justified the opinion I had formed. Doubtless, he has a fine style, writes passages of great eloquence, and here and there expresses truths; but that one who has written and uttered such multitudinous absurdities should have acquired so great an influence is to me both surprising and disheartening.

Gus Was With Them.

From the Kansas City Journal.

The election of Gus Romasser as Mayor of Maryville recalls an incident that happened several years ago when he was running for Alderman. The burning issue in Maryville municipal politics then was what was known as the "cow question." It was proposed to pass an ordinance requiring the owners of live stock to keep their beasts from running at large. The proposition was strongly combated by many of the owners of the aforesaid beasts. There was doubt as to how Mr. Romasser stood on this most important question. One morning a rather greasy looking delegation waited upon him at his store, and as soon as the merchant got through waiting on a customer the spokesman approached him and said: "Gus, we has come in to see how you stand on this here cow question." It was a trying moment. Mr. Romasser didn't know what his visitors wanted him to say, and his answer might defeat or elect him. After a moment's hesitation and reflection, he laid his hand confidingly on the spokesman's arm, and said: "Boys, I'm with you." The delegation filed out satisfied, and Romasser was triumphantly elected. He doesn't know yet how his visitors themselves stood on the cow question.

He Is Ready for the Test.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

"Dis is de snake season," said the old Georgia darky, "en de sayin' is dat ef you swallers a quarter whiskey w'en a snake bites you de snake'll die en you go free. But dar's a question dat comes in right dar."

"And what is that?"

"I well knows whar plenty er snakes is, but—whar is I gwine git de whiskey?"

Bride Never Saw Bridegroom Until He Came to Wed.

From the Topeka Capital.

The marriage of Miss Belva Lockwood Davis of Wahoo, Neb., and Melvin A. Hathaway of Arkansas City, Kan., March 23 ended a novel and romantic courtship. The bride had never seen the bridegroom until he came to claim her hand. She first heard of him as a faithful comrade of her brother, who died in the Philippines. Their courtship and engagement was entirely through correspondence.

Opportunity of the Old Shoe Family.

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe and had so many children she didn't know what to do.

"That is easy," they cried, "you should write to the President and get a beautiful letter saying he is de-e-e-lighted."