The Sun.

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The Graft Charges in Manila.

Secretary TAFT has ordered an investigation of a system of petty graft alleged to have existed in the Philippines among army officers stationed in the islands. It appears that some of the army men have gone too far in providing for their physical comfort and their personal welfare at public expense. The evil complained of is undoubtedly a development of the practice begun in Cuba, although there were a few trifling abuses in the first days of American rule in the Philippines.

In Cuba some very heavy drafts were made by officers on the insular revenues for comforts and conveniences, for horses, carriages and servants. The statement of expenditures includes all sorts of things, from horses, carriages and furniture to waffle irons, lemon squeezers, newspapers and magazines, and bath sponges for personal use. Some of these articles were duly accounted for, but more of them were lost in the shuffle. Some even escaped from the palace at Havana, and no man knows where they went.

In the early days in Manila it was deemed proper and necessary to provide officers and officials with equipages of one kind or another for use in the discharge of their duties. When it was found that the officials walked or hired a quilez by the trip, while Mrs. Official used the Government carriage for shopping, calling and pleasure driving, General OTIS curtailed the privileges. In Cuba there were horses, carriages, servants, furniture and the like to the end of our stay for Generals, Captains and Lieutenants. Some of these beneficiaries fell into a careless habit of taking a little more than was really due to them, because so much came so easily, and they carried their Cuban habits with them when they went to the Philippines.

It is improbable that there has been in any of the cases reported from Manila a criminal intent. It is more likely that officers who would not dream of asking the Quartermaster to supply them with sealskin overcoats at Fort Niobrara or Fort Ethan Allen have expected the Department to give to them shower baths, easy chairs and other trifles in Luzon and Panay.

Fruits of Colonel Bryan's Trip.

Colonel BRYAN continues to emit information. Now he is in Paris, silent on the sacred ratio, but willing to talk on any other subject. What has impressed the Great Conservative Force in the far countries he has visited? It is the "democratic development," and the Colonel reports:

"I noticed it in India, Japan and China. Everywhere one sees the same evidence of popular awakening."

Wherein is the cause of this "popular awakening"? The question is easily answered. The Grand Awakener has been about opening the eyes of the people. Before Colonel BRYAN started on his travels all was quiet and calm. Contented with their slavish lot, the natives of China, India and Japan lived happily, ignorant of the sorrow of their state. Now they are in arms. They have been taught their rights and their wrongs. Colonel BRYAN has illuminated their minds and extended their horizons. A world revolution will follow in his trail. The old order must change. He has pulled its foundations from under it.

An international political reformation is a noble achievement. Yet for BILL the Taint Killer it is but a small thing. He has accomplished it on a pleasure trip from West to East.

Story of American Imports.

Although the classification is of necessity somewhat arbitrary, American merchandise imports are divided into five groups. An interesting phase of the economic development of the United States appears in a review of the increase shown in these classes. General independence of the rest of the world in the matter of food products is shown in the purchases of "articles of food and animals." Imports of this kind show a considerable fluctuation, but little or no actual increase. Using the figures of five year periods, the record is this:

1890	$248,600,646	1900	$216,107,903
1895	226,422,171	1905	264,686,795

The largest year within that time was 1892, when the figures were a fraction below $300,000,000. The smallest year was 1898, when the imports only a little exceeded $170,000,000. These various sums are represented chiefly by our purchases of tea, coffee, sugar, fruits, cocoa, fish, &c. The comparative fixity of the total value is due mainly to lower prices of the articles imported. The quantities bought are larger. Thus the price of sugar is given as 3.28 in 1890 and as 2.65 in 1905, while coffee dropped from 16 in 1890 to 8.1 in 1905. These two items are the most important on the list.

A widely different story is told in importations of "raw materials." These have risen from $178,500,000 in 1890 to $364,500,000 in 1905. For the fiscal year just closed they are reported as $415,850,000. From 1890 to 1899 there was some fluctuation but no important gain. Since then they have jumped from $218,000,000 to the present figures. While increase appears in a wide variety of articles, attention may be called to copper, fibres, rubber, raw silk, tin and hides and skins, especially goat skins.

"Articles wholly or partially manufactured, for use as materials in the manufactures and mechanic arts," are, in their economic nature, closely allied to raw materials. They enter into industrial processes and contribute to economic development. These show a wholesome, though perhaps not striking, increase from $84,700,000 in 1890 to $144,400,000 in 1905.

"In articles manufactured, ready for consumption," the increase is almost trivial. The figures of 1890 are $151,500,000 and those of 1905 are $167,500,000. The United States is doing most of its own manufacturing. While the value of the imports seems considerable, it is actually only about 1 per cent. of the value of domestic manufactures. A large item under this head is cotton goods, such as laces, edgings, gloves, hosiery, &c. Other large items are fabrics made from jute, flax, hemp and other fibres. Imports of silk and of woollens are also considerable, although those of woollen goods have fallen from $56,000,000 in 1890 to $18,000,000 in 1905.

"Articles of voluntary use, luxuries, &c.," have increased from $107,500,000 in 1890 to $146,250,000 in 1905. Last year they were nearly $174,000,000. This is no very heavy draft on the yearly income, and the reasonable increase is only an evidence that Americans have the money to spend.

On the whole, the story told by the imports is satisfactory.

The Coming Peace Congress and Our Commercial and Naval Interests.

It is obvious that this country, like every other signatory of the Hague convention, is deeply concerned in the scope of the agreement that may be reached by the coming peace congress concerning the submission of disputes to arbitration. There are other matters, however, certain to be brought up for debate in which likewise we are much interested, namely, the proposed changes in the provisions of international law which relate to maritime warfare, including the definitions not only of the rights and duties of neutrals but also of the rights of belligerents at sea. Several incidents in the recent war between Russia and Japan have shown that the law needs readjustment with reference to those points, and it might be well for our Federal Government to consider beforehand whether it means to adhere to the position which it took with regard to one of them at the preceding congress. The course which Great Britain shall pursue has already become a subject of earnest discussion. Since the close approach to disappearance of our merchant navy from the ocean the status of neutral ships has become a matter of much less consequence to us than it used to be, but the status of neutral cargoes is still for us a question of very great importance, and it remains open to argument whether, as a conceivable belligerent, this country ought to renounce the right of seizing the private property of an enemy's subjects at sea.

It is probable enough that the next peace congress will reach an agreement respecting the laying of mines and the bombardment of unfortified ports, towns and villages by naval forces. It ought also to be possible to bring about a consensus defining the conditions under which the sea borne trade of a neutral should be immune in time of war. What stands in the way of such a consensus is the practice of excepting contraband of war from the commodities that may be covered by a neutral flag. It is pretty clear that our interests would dispose us to do away with the exception and to concede immunity to goods of all kinds carried under a neutral flag, though, of course, the right of visit would have to be maintained in order to establish a ship's nationality. If such complete immunity were granted to a neutral flag by international law, the conveyance of contraband of war to an enemy's ports could be prevented only by the strict maintenance of a blockade. The right of blockade should, of course, be preserved intact, the proposed immunity for a neutral flag being restricted to vessels encountered on the high seas. If so valuable a concession as the establishment of the principle that a neutral's flag shall cover not only a belligerent's property but even contraband of war should be made to the advocates of the extension of neutral rights, it is certain that the congress would be justified in exacting in return a rigorous formulation of a neutral's duties. That those duties need to be restated with authority is plain to any one who marked the different conceptions of them exemplified in the conduct of France, Germany, China and the United States toward Russia during the war that ended with the Peace of Portsmouth. The opportunities of recoaling, revictualling and repairing given by France in Madagascan and Indo-Chinese waters to the Russian fleet under ROJESTVENSKY bore witness to a very lax interpretation of a neutral's duties toward Japan.

We come to the question on which the next peace congress is almost certain to be divided—the question, namely, whether the private property of belligerents at sea shall, though found under the belligerent's flag, be immune from seizure, contraband of war alone excepted. There is no doubt about our former attitude touching the matter. It was defined in a letter signed by all our representatives at The Hague on June 20, 1899, and was set forth more at length about a fortnight later in an address by Mr. WHITE. The peace congress was requested to adopt the principle embodied in the twelfth article of the treaty of 1871 between the United States and Italy. The parties to that treaty agreed that in the unfortunate event of a war between them the private property of their respective citizens and subjects, with the exception of contraband of war, should be exempt from seizure or capture on the high seas or elsewhere by the armed vessels or by the military forces of either party, it being, however, understood that the exemption should not extend to vessels and their cargoes which might attempt to enter a port blockaded by the naval forces of either party.

Are we still convinced of the expediency of persisting in this attitude? Let us suppose that we were engaged in a war with Great Britain or with Germany. It is probable in the case of Great Britain, and if we cut down our programme of naval construction, at least conceivable in the case of Germany, that after one or more tests we should find ourselves unable to compete in squadron warfare. How should we then like to see our surviving war vessels condemned to innocuous desuetude or restricted to duels, as in the War of 1812, when one of them should happen to encounter an enemy's warship of equal or inferior armament? How should we then feel to find ourselves cut off by an agreement to which we had become a party from employing our remaining war vessels in the rôle of commerce destroyers? From the general application by belligerents of their warships to that function we should have very little to lose, since we have relatively few merchantmen employed in the ocean carrying trade. The injury, on the other hand, which our navy, even if crippled, could inflict upon the ocean borne commerce of Great Britain or of Germany could not fail to be enormous. The bare apprehension of such an injury would cause Great Britain or Germany to hesitate long before provoking us to hostilities, and the huge dimensions of the loss that would actually be incurred in the event of a conflict with the United States, were we committed to a policy of commerce destruction, would furnish Great Britain or Germany with the strongest incentive to the quick conclusion of a peace. From the viewpoint, then, of humanity, is it far sighted or short sighted so to narrow the arena of legal warfare as to minimize its destructiveness and thus cause a prospective belligerent to regard with relative equanimity a recourse to war? It might be well for our State Department once more to consider seriously whether to make war on the United States might not seem to some European Powers less inexpedient were we to renounce the right to employ our warships as commerce destroyers. It is pretty certain that no such renunciation will be made by Great Britain or France. In 1899, it may be remembered, Sir JULIAN PAUNCEFOTE and M. BOURGEOIS abstained at The Hague from voting on the question on the plea that they had received no explicit instructions from their Governments on the subject.

Whether or no the next peace congress will agree that all goods carried under a neutral flag, whether such goods have hitherto been regarded as contraband or not, shall be exempt from seizure, we may reasonably hope that the Powers represented at The Hague will concur in declaring that food and the raw material of peaceful industries shall not hereafter be looked upon as contraband of war. This, as we have often pointed out, is a matter of vital import to Great Britain and of great commercial interest to the United States, and may soon become one of scarcely less moment to Germany.

The Same Hobson.

RICHMOND PEARSON HOBSON, formerly a Captain in the United States Navy, will be the next Representative in Congress, from the Sixth district of Alabama. Naval expansion is Captain HOBSON'S hobby. If the Democrats should have a majority in the Sixtieth Congress, Representative HOBSON, as a hero of the Spanish war, would probably be assigned to the Committee on Naval Affairs.

As the American officer who took the Merrimac into the harbor of Santiago under the Spanish guns, Captain HOBSON is well known to the Japanese Government. It may regard him as an American statesman. There are reasons for believing that Captain HOBSON would not resent the misconception.

At any rate, in his double capacity of hero and public man, the importance of what he may say about a possible conflict between Japan and the United States may be exaggerated at Tokio; and Captain HOBSON, with the unquailing bumptiousness so characteristic of him, has commented freely upon the killing of the Japanese seal poachers at Saint Paul Island. His eagle eye discerns a war cloud no larger than a man's hand, and the potential consequences dismay him, hero though he is. Sooner or later, although the matter is not worth cable rates, Captain HOBSON'S misgivings will reach Japan. He fears the worst "if Japan should make the unfortunate affair in the Pribilof Islands the pretext for a quarrel with the United States." Japan would seize the Philippines in spite of the American navy, and never, never give them up, for she would do what we have neglected to do, impregnably fortify them. The Captain-statesman announces significantly that "if Japan wants a row with this country, now is the time for her to have it out."

Japan is not likely to avail herself of the opportunity, for reasons too obvious to mention. But the propriety of an ex-naval officer in his capacity of statesman exposing the helpless American nation to imminent peril and disaster is open to question. In these unjointed times it may be a recommendation to favor at the hands of the Democratic party. In less parlous and less pyrotechnic times the Democratic candidate in the Sixth Alabama district would be sent to the foot of the class in statesmanship, and upon taking the oath in Washington he would be assigned promptly to the Committee on Acoustics and Revolving Fans.

The Schoolma'ams of Sinigaglia.

Sinigaglia, the picturesque little fishing town on the Adriatic above Ancona, seems likely to make a name in Italian history. Hitherto it has been chiefly celebrated as the birthplace of Pope PIUS IX. and for memories of the old Roman days. Hard by is the Metaurus River, where HASDRUBAL was undone, and POMPEY burned down the town in the civil war. The town has its share, too, of mediæval art and romantic renaissance traditions, but it has created very little stir in the twenty-four centuries since the Gauls founded it and gave it its name, Sena Gallica.

The women of Sinigaglia have now changed all this and have filled with consternation the Italian politicians. The Italian country school teacher, like her American sister, is nothing if not bright and energetic. Ten primary school teachers of Sinigaglia, according to the Rome correspondent of the *Tablet*, having advanced ideas about their rights, went before the Board of Registry and demanded that their names should be put on the voting lists. Male Sinigaglia thought this a great joke, till the board complied with the demand. Then the District Attorney got busy; he carried the case to the provincial Court of Appeal at Ancona, and that body has just confirmed the legality of the registration. The case will undoubtedly be carried to the highest tribunal, the Court of Cassation, but lawyers believe that the decision will stand.

In that case the ten Sinigaglia schoolma'ams, by merely insisting on their legal rights, will have gained the suffrage for women throughout Italy, without any parliamentary action. It would be as astonishing an example of judicial legislation as history can show, for however open to the new interpretation the Italian Constitution may be, there is no doubt that its framers had no idea of making women voters.

At any rate, Sinigaglia becomes a war cry for woman suffrage, and the ten primary schoolma'ams enter into history, as collective heroines, like the eleven thousand virgins of Cologne.

RICHARD CROKER has summoned ANDREW FREEDMAN to visit him in Ireland and lay plans for the defeat of WILLIAM R. HEARST. A conference of political giants; a meeting of twin statesmen of majestic mould. The Empire State halts breathless while its fate is decided by these master craftsmen.

A curiosity in journalism is the copy of an esteemed Costa Rican contemporary, the *Limon Weekly News*, which comes to us with two pages of advertisements, a copy of the new printing law and the notice: "Until further notice the issue of the *Limon Weekly News* is suspended, as prescribed by the new law of June 20, 1906."

Two blank pages represent the reading matter, and the editor carries caution to the point of omitting even his title head and running title. A glance at the provisions of this extraordinary law, worded in quaint English, justifies his caution, for not only are publications of any kind forbidden unless all concerned give security that the Government will find no objections to them, but editors and authors are put under heavy bonds to make sure that whatever fines Costa Rican courts may impose will be paid. The law was passed by the Congress "at the instance of the Executive."

Denying that the overwhelming strength of the Democracy in the South is due to fear of negro domination, the Houston *Post* explains the situation thus:

"The dominant political sentiment of the Southern States represents ancient ideals of republican government. It is shown in economical State governments. The cost of the municipal government in New York city exceeds the cost of all the State, county, city and town governments of the entire South combined."

Yet New York city has been ruled by Democrats, with a few interruptions, time out of mind. Is the Northern Democrat less economical than his fellow partisan of the South?

The Essex Assemblymen are said to favor the selection of ex-Prosecutor of the Pleas CHANDLER W. RIKER for the seat which Senator DRYDEN now holds.—*News from New Jersey.*

The Hon. JOHN FAIRFIELD DRYDEN is not to be allowed to deprive philanthropy of even a part of his time and efforts. Honorable as it is to serve the State, to serve humanity is better, purer, nobler. He who makes the laws is small indeed compared to him from whom the people learn thrift and the virtues of economy.

Cause of Vermont's Heated Term.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Your article of August 8, "Thoughts on the Present Discontents," deals only with the minor causes of the present heated term. Up here in Vermont we all know the real cause, and you have overlooked it entirely. It is caused by overheating of the ball bearing pens of the editorial writers in the offices of the Rutland *Herald* and the lack of sufficient lubrication of the presses of the same paper in getting out the thousands of extra copies of the *Herald* with which the voters of Vermont are being deluged in a desperate attempt to elect the head of the Clemo-Demo State ticket, Percival W. Clement.

The voters of the whole State are receiving a copy of the *Herald*. Mr. Clement is after the Proctors good and hard, and it is not "Young" Proctor alone, but "Old" Proctor, as he was pleased to term him in one of his pseudo addresses the other night.

"Old" Procter still stands quite well in Vermont, and will long after the people have forgotten Mr. Clement and his coon quartet. The vote in September will show that the voters of Vermont have no fears that "Young" Proctor is not made of the same sturdy stuff as "Old" Proctor—his honored father.

One further reason for the excessive heat is advanced by many, i. e., that it is due to the incineration of this great extra edition—wrappers and all. One old farmer said to me to-day: "They are handy for the old woman to kindle the fire with at 4 o'clock in the morning, when everything is wet with dew." Complete files of the *Herald* for August will not be found in many Vermont farmhouses on September 1. J. M. A.

ST. JOHNSBURY, Vt., August 10.

Officers New York County Will Vote For.

At the election on November 6 the voters of New York county must vote for the following officers:

A Governor, in the place of Frank W. Higgins.

A Lieutenant-Governor, in the place of Matthew Linn Bruce.

A Secretary of State, in the place of John F. O'Brien.

A Comptroller, in the place of Otto Kelsey, resigned.

A Treasurer, in the place of John G. Wallenheimer, Jr.

An Attorney-General, in the place of Julius M. Mayer.

A State Engineer and Surveyor, in the place of Henry A. Van Alstyne.

A Justice of the Supreme Court, in the place of Leonard A. Giegerich.

A Justice of the Supreme Court, in the place of Edward S. Clinch, appointed by the Governor in the place of George C. Barrett, resigned.

Eight additional Justices of the Supreme Court, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 693 of the Laws of 1906.

A Representative in the Sixtieth Congress of the United States for each of the Eighth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Congress districts.

A Senator for each of the Eleventh, Twelfth, Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth, Seventeenth, Eighteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth, Twenty-first and Twenty-second Senate districts.

Thirty-five members of Assembly.

A Surrogate, in the place of Frank T. Fitzgerald.

Two Judges of the Court of General Sessions of the Peace, in place of Rufus B. Cowing and Otto A. Rosalsky, appointed by the Governor in place of Martin T. McMahon.

Dress Reformer's Fate.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* When "Reformed" gets his plan of "dress hereafter" into commission, that same old thermometer that was responsible for his idea will prove that its eye was upon him: and with a drop of 30 degrees or so, "Reformed" will be glad to go home with only his crash ends protruding from beneath a borrowed overcoat. J. W. E.

NEW YORK, August 11.

PICTURE PRICES.

From the National Review.

Perhaps no path is more likely to lead to disaster than that of the man who rushes into picture collecting with the avowed intention of making money out of it. The chances are all against him. The professional dealer sometimes makes mistakes, but he more than averages his bad purchases by the profit which he realizes on the others, and the margin in his favor is usually a very substantial one.

During the season just closed there have been many illustrations of wise investments made in pictures by men who never regarded themselves as collectors. Two of these illustrations are quite remarkable. The late Mr. Woods, for over half a century associated with the great firm of Christie's, always insisted that he was not a collector; he had unique opportunities during the last fifty years of buying fine things at low prices, and he not only had the opportunities but he also had an intimate and far seeing knowledge with which few men have been endowed. And yet he simply bought a picture now and then because he liked it, or because he happened to have a blank space on one of his walls. The result is that he scarcely ever made a mistake. I have been permitted to look over a note book in which the prices are entered for most of his purchases, and the comparison of figures is truly enough to make one turn green with envy.

He began collecting in 1852, his first purchase being a pair of pastels by Hubert of a young pierrot and a young girl, for which he gave 36 shillings; this pair realized 8 guineas at his sale in May. In 1859 he bought a Romney Head of Lady Hamilton for £10, which now realized 300 guineas; in the '60s he gave £6 15 shillings for a Drouais portrait of Mme. de Pompadour and this now sold for 170 guineas; 25 shillings for a T. de Keyser portrait of a lady which now sold for 100 guineas; and 7 shillings for a pair of vases of flowers by Baptiste which sold for 54 guineas. In the '70s he gave 26 guineas for Beechey's portrait of Lady Whitbread, which now realized 520 guineas; 50 guineas for Reynolds's portrait of Mrs. Robinson—a version of the picture in the Wallace collection—and it has now realized 480 guineas, and so forth. But his greatest triumphs were Hoppner's portrait of Lady Waldegrave, which he acquired in 1881 for £23 as against 6,000 guineas it brought at his sale, and Lawrence's Miss Emily C. Ogilvie, which cost about 200 guineas and now sold for 3,000 guineas.

Such examples as these are, it may be urged, extreme, but similar ones occur every season. The gentleman whose five pictures were sold at Christie's on June 30, and included Turner's Rape of Europa, was also not a picture collector in the usual sense of the word. He bought a picture just now and then, at unextravagant prices, but with exceedingly good taste and apart from any consideration of future profit; the five pictures which cost him £1,685 brought £8,547, to say nothing of the intellectual enjoyment of possessing them for about thirty years—truly a brilliant illustration of wise buying and wise selling.

There can be no doubt about the fact that the "ups" and "downs" of picture prices form a very interesting and important factor in collecting. One might fill page after page with both the "ups" and the "downs," beginning with the most famous of all examples in the former class, the stolen and recovered Gainsborough Duchess of Devonshire, for which Wynn Ellis gave about £65, and which at his sale realised 10,100 guineas. The enhanced value of pictures by the artists of the early English school and of the old masters generally has been a progressive one for the last quarter of a century, and affords such a volume of material that it is necessary to confine myself in this paper to facts and incidents of the last two seasons. Within about this period the supply of Romneys, Reynoldses and Gainsboroughs has to some extent fallen off and other phases have supervened. The idealized portraits by the three great artists of the early English school have been succeeded by the somewhat hard and realistic examples of Sir H. Raeburn, whose work has made such gigantic strides in price and favor during the last few seasons. At the sale of his remaining works on May 7, 1877, forty-nine portraits realized £6,000, but only one approached four figures.

We have here the amazing spectacle of thirteen pictures by Raeburn producing within two seasons a total of £42,900, probably more than the artist made out of his sitters during the twenty best years of his life! This total gives an average of £3,300 per picture in 1905-06 as against an average of less than £120 realized at the sale in 1877. Raeburn apparently left no pocketbooks such as those of Sir Joshua Reynolds, George Romney and Sir William Beechey, from which we may gather the prices which he received for his potraits.

Romney's prices, for instance, in the early '90s of the eighteenth century were: Head and shoulders, 30x25, 30 guineas; kitcat, 35x26, 40 guineas; half length, 50x40, 60 guineas, and whole length, 93x57, 130 guineas. It may be questioned whether Raeburn obtained anything like these prices until the latter part of his career.

The Aquarium's Seacow.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Will you have the kindness to correct an error which has been making the rounds of the newspapers to the effect that the large seacow that has just died at the Aquarium cost $3,000? As a matter of fact, the animal cost the city nothing. It was presented by A. W. Dimock of Marco, Fla., and was transported to New York by the Florida East Coast Railway Company and the Clyde Line Steamship Company absolutely free of charge.

I think you will agree with me that it is not quite fair to Mr. Dimock and the officers of the transportation companies, who have been so generous, to allow the report to become current that it was purchased.

As the usual price of a Florida seacow (or manatee) is $100, the statement that this specimen cost the city $3,000 is somewhat of a reflection on the judgment of those who purchase for the Aquarium.

The animal was very large and heavy and died from injuries probably received during capture. It was 10 feet 4 inches long and weighed 910 pounds. The specimen has been turned over to the American Museum of Natural History in Mr. Dimock's name. C. H. TOWNSEND, Director of the Aquarium.

NEW YORK, August 11.

The Chivalrous Southerner.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* What "Subscriber" has to say in THE SUN of July 29 about "Southern Chivalry" is not only narrow from a standpoint of common sense but is entirely wrong in its display of sectional feeling.

His silly statement about "idiots" sounds like the clap of a broken bell. A SOUTHERNER.

OMAHA, Neb., August 9.

The Countersigns.

With scythe on his shoulder the Foolkiller paced,
Patrolling earth's regions by sorrow laid waste,
And those who would pass and continue to live
Were forced to advance and the countersign give.

The first fool he halted was gay on the way
And happily humming the tune of the day;
The Foolkiller showed her a heart that she broke,
But quick came the answer, "I meant it in joke."

The second came by with a sanctified air;
He gazed on his havoc but seemed not to care,
While those he had injured sought vainly for rest;
His countersign passed him: "'Twas meant for the best."

And thus they went by in an unending stream;
The sages first wondered and then caught a gleam,
And, fearing sometime they might need it, thereat
Took pains to remember the countersign pat.

McLANDBURGH WILSON.

NOISES OF NEW YORK.

Discordant Sounds That Mar the Comfort of Life in Town.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have been in New York for nine years, but have been unable to discover that there is any concerted movement to lessen the nerve wearing, age lessening, sleep destroying noises with which this city is cursed. A few months ago a number of women whose homes are along Riverside Drive got together and started a crusade against the excessive whistling of tugs and steam craft on the North River at night. The majority of the New York newspapers treated this movement as a joke, but the women, nevertheless, worked the matter up so well that they got action from the proper authorities and the niusance has been considerably abated.

I live in a block that I will back against any of the same size in New York or the world for the number of parrots, pianos and phonographs in it, and still it isn't built up solidly. On the front there is a constant stream of hucksters, who make a hell of the daylight hours with their raucous cries in broken English, for nearly all these venders of fruits and vegetables are foreigners, and one could not tell from their unintelligible shouts whether they were selling watermelons or grand pianos without looking out to see what they have on their wagons.

Those who live in the rear flats are pestered from daylight to dark by scissors grinders, each armed with a trumpet, a big bell and a stout pair of lungs; panhandling singers of ballads old and new, Italian harpists, begging women with squeaky fiddles and worse voices, and every day or two a German "gutternsnipe" band.

Driven to desperation by the hucksters and scissors grinders, I screwed up courage one day and went to the police station to see if something couldn't be done. The sergeant, who was a gentleman as well as a policeman, treated me and my complaint with consideration, but he informed me there was no law to prevent a huckster from crying his wares so long as he kept moving. He even was good enough to put a policeman in the street to see that the hucksters didn't stop too long in one place, but that didn't last long. In regard to the scissors grinders, he told me of one who had caused considerable complaint in his precinct. He had been arrested a dozen times or more, but each time was discharged when brought up in court.

There is also a myth floating around New York to the effect that noisy parrots can be seized by the health authorities on complaint of suffering neighbors. I asked a friend of mine in the Board of Health about this, and he laughed at it. He said they "might" do something if the parrot offended in the night hours, but for the poor mortal who works at night and has to sleep in the daytime there is no hope.

I have noticed that no hucksters are to be found in Fifth avenue, West End avenue, Riverside Drive or other parts of the city inhabited by the wealthy. Is this because they, or the most of them, are away nine months in the year and their homes are occupied only by servants and caretakers, or because they have more influence than citizens of more moderate means who have to live in flat houses and in cross streets?

The phonograph is undoubtedly the greatest nuisance of all. It reaches the limit of unbearableness when aimed out of the window of a rear flat against the wall of the abutting building, and the distorted, brazen "music," of all the worst that is perpetrated in music's name, has to be endured by the adjoining tenants. I am told that Thomas A. Edison, the inventor of this horror, runs from it.

This subject of the suppression of unnecessary noises in the daytime as well as at night is a big and serious one. The repaving of many of the streets with creosoted blocks as a substitute for asphalt and Belgian blocks is a long step in the right direction. But nearly all the streets so treated are in the downtown business district, where nobody lives and the only sleepers are the policemen on duty. The whistling of steamboats and the clanging of trolley gongs are sweet music compared with the afflictions I have mentioned. NIGHT WORKER.

NEW YORK, August 10.

The Long Island Baggage System.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* "C. H. R.'s" letter in Saturday's SUN appeals to me. While I cannot afford a parallel case in the checking line, I could mention a few in the express line.

I am on the Oyster Bay branch at Sea Cliff, and my experiences here are a repetition of "C. H. R.'s." There are two methods of sending goods to this place—by boat, controlled by the Long Island Railroad, and by the railroad. To help the railroad the boat people have made a ruling that "all trunks must be crated." Think of crating a trunk! And consider, if you will, the average facilities a house affords for doing it. Of course, nine-tenths of the baggage is sent, as a result, by railroad. There the troubles begin.

Not having heard of the new ruling, you wait for your baggage, to be informed after a few days "that it has probably been sent by express." You make inquiry and learn that it has been received, and "will be sent over when there are enough other articles to make a load." Can you think of anything more up to date, calculated to build up a road's business? I have had others' trunks sent to my cottage in place of mine, and vice versa.

It is truthfully said, not hundreds but thousands of times, by the public that Long Island is retarded by the rottenness of its railroad and all that pertains to it. Rotten is hardly the nicest word to use, but at the moment I cannot think of another that so conveys the depth of my opinion. While not a muck raker, I cannot help feeling that the road and its responsible officers should get a liberal dose to awaken them from their long sleep and to knock into their heads the fact that only by progressive methods, not repressive, can a great business be built. A. G.

SEA CLIFF, August 11.

Flogging in British Prisons.

From the Humanitarian.

On June 26 Mr. E. H. Pickersgill, M. P., asked the Home Secretary how many floggings were inflicted in the convict and local prisons of England and Wales during the years 1905 and 1906. He received the following reply:

"In the year ending March 31, 1905, eight in convict prisons and fifteen in local prisons; and in the year ending March 31, 1906, seventeen in convict prisons and thirty in local prisons. Only one prisoner had received corporal punishment twice during the two years."

In anwer to another question on the same subject, put by Mr. Lloyd Morgan, M. P., on July 4, Mr. Gladstone stated that flogging can only be imposed for prison offences of the following description: Mutiny, incitement to mutiny and gross personal violence to prison officers. During the last five years—down to March, 1905—flogging with "cat" or birch has been ordered in 196 cases, but the medical officers have interfered with the carrying out of the sentence on eight occasions.

The prison cat has 18 inch lashes and a five-foot wielding leverage. The lashes are cleared between the fingers after every stroke. The victim in prison is given a minimum of twenty-four hours hospital treatment after the infliction of the punishment, but is, as a rule, not able to get about for a week.

The punishment of flogging or birching for offences against the prison rules is ordered by the prison visitors, who are usually local magistrates, and prison officials, as a rule, favor the retention of the "cat" and birch.

Educating the Filipinos.

In the Philippine Islands 800 American and 6,000 Filipino teachers are busy educating nearly 500,000 pupils of all ages.

Mr. Scott, chief clerk of the Philippine Board of Education, said a few days ago that 10 per cent. of the population of the Philippines, nearly 800,000, now speak English, and that the Filipino boy until he reaches the age of 19 is mentally superior to the American of the same age, but there his superiority ends, and our educational system has not existed long enough to enable us to determine his capacity during the second period of his mental development.

The Filipino boy is inferior physically to the American boy at all stages, but the girl of the islands, according to Mr. Scott, though of small physique in early years, exceeds at the age of 16 the stature of the American girl, and is incomparably superior to her native brothers.

All the American teachers and 200 of the Filipinos are paid by the Insular Government. The others are paid by the municipalities.

Tribute to a Gifted Man.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The Twilight Park man who rescued the red squirrel with "one foot frozen to a stone" deserves the palm. That such a gifted one should waste his genius on chipmunks when there is such a mediocrity in new fish and snake stories is too bad. Some accomplished liars write to THE SUN, but there has been no such artistic lying about animals since Seton Thompson quit the business.

ELMER, N. J., August 10. COUNTRY BOY.

Baseball and Fame.

From the Oil City Blizzard.

That a baseball club is effective as an advertising medium is nicely illustrated in the case of Patton, Pa., which was unknown before the enthusiasts of the place purchased the Hornell franchise.

NATIONAL HUMOR.

Narrow Limits Within Which Jokes Are Understood.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Mr. Ford may have achieved humor, or perhaps he was born that way, but in any case the honor of it is thrust on him in season and out of season, and therefore much latitude must be allowed when his attempts verge on bathos. Of course those who are not convulsed by the humor of being "touched by a widow" should be held up as lunatics; but, strangely, of the whole column of jokes put in his mouth by the press on Wednesday, the only one worth while has to be explained to 70 per cent. of the citizens of this land of humor. It was revenge delectable for a benighted Britisher to be forced to listen to score after score against himself, and then to catch the critics at their own game. The pitfall was Mr. Ford's story of the style of address adopted by Mr. Murphy abroad. "In France he became C. François Pomme de Terre" was too much for the average New Yorker, and if you doubt it try it on Tom, Dick and Harry and see if they feel the point.

If the average American joke has to be explained to the uninitiated Britisher, he gets it all back when he has an uninitiated American on the other side. Quite recently I had to explain to some very bright New Yorkers the point of a score of British jokes which were quite up to your average, only they hinged on "bob," "tanner," the army colloquialisms "clink" and "pawnee," a political quip on Balfour with "Dizzy," a meaningless nothing to those who did not know Beaconsfield's sobriquet, and the "jerry built" walls of Jericho. "Ploughing his furrow alone" and the "Hotel Cecil" are inexplicable to those unversed in contemporary British politics. Last week a newly returned American consul did not crack a smile over "skiddoo" and "23," because they had arrived in his absence, and so had to be explained.

If wit "must woo St. Giles and not St. George or Stephen," a very small text book would give any stranger the key to present day humor. Explain con, pipe, dead one, out for the goods, beat it, the lemon, ringer, cold proposition, and the other hundred of the Boweryesque vocabulary, add the peculiarities of Hoboken, Philadelphia and Boston, and the alien at a glance can master the situation. During my first visit I was the subject of much good natured banter because, at a play, I did not catch the point when a New Yorker seeing a Philadelphian with a newspaper said: "Here, give me yesterday's paper." But we have just as provincial a quip about Brixton which has to be explained to every American. Not long ago a census of American humorists proved that 30 per cent. were English born, 18 per cent. were Irish, and only 47 per cent. were American born. But please don't take *Punch* and *Komik Kuttings* as typical of British humor, I mean humour. JOHN C. CHAMBERS.

VERONA, N. J., August 10.

SILK CULTURE.

Its Slow Progress in the United States in Spite of Bounties.

From the Boston Transcript.

As early as 1732 French Huguenots introduced silk into Georgia, where lands were granted to settlers who would agree to plant 100 mulberry trees to every ten acres of land which they cleared. Seven years later Parliament passed an act exempting from taxation silk grown in Georgia or Carolina, and an Italian expert was sent out to establish a filature. Within a year the receipts of cocoons at this factory exceeded 10,000 pounds, while the quality of raw silk produced brought three shillings a pound in the London market. Toward the latter part of the century the culture of silk was introduced into New England. Mansfield, Conn., became the centre of an important silk growing community and proved the site of the first silk factory in this country.

The Revolution, however, dealt a blow to silk culture, from which it did not recover until 1825. By that time Congressional investigation had given an impetus to it, putting the industry once more on its feet. Soon the culture of silkworms became a mania. Speculation followed, and brought disaster to thousands who had invested their fortunes in what promised to become one of the great money making enterprises of the times. The embers of the industry, which remained were snuffed out by the hard times of 1837 and the drought of 1844. Congress came to the rescue again in 1884 with an appropriation for investigations, which were continued from year to year until 1890. The appropriation was renewed in 1902 and has been granted each year since. In the meantime, aided by State bounties, silk had been grown with profit in Utah, and to-day sericulturists of that State do a paying business in the exportation of silkworm eggs to the south of Europe.

In spite of our slow development of the raw material the United States five years ago passed France and became the leading silk manufacturing nation of the world. It is estimated that 500 silk mills are now in operation, distributing annually to 70,000 persons $21,000,000 in wages and producing silk goods valued at $110,000,000. China leads the world in the production of raw silk, and of the world's annual output of about 61,000,000 pounds produces more than half. Japan comes next with a production of less than a fourth of the total. India, Siam, Persia, Turkey, Greece, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal and the Balkan States follow as producers in this order. That American grown silk can compete in quality with the products of other silk growing countries is evident from the award at the St. Louis exposition of the gold medal for excellence to Louis Borris Magid for fibres grown at Tallulah Falls, Ga., where he has planted more than 200,000 mulberry trees designed for the feeding of millions of silkworms.

Dying Irish Religious Poetry.

From the preface to Douglas Hyde's "Religious Songs of Connacht."

While collecting the poetry of the province of Connacht—a work which I began some twenty years ago—I found that those poems which touched upon piety or religion were very numerous. I found, moreover, that prayers put in a setting of poetry, melodious "paidirs" and short petitions composed in metre, were very numerous also. I found at the same time charms or "orthas" or "amhras." I found pieces concerning the Church, I found pieces praising or dispraising people for their religion, I found stories about the Church or about the persecution of the Church, or about some saint or other, I found blessings, I found curses, and I put all these things down here with the rest. These things are all mixed together in this book. Very few indeed of these things have ever been put upon paper until now, and they will be becoming more scarce from day to day. If the "national schools" ruined the indigenous literature (the love songs, the drinking songs, the keenes), they have torn these religious songs up out of the roots altogether. "In my youth," says Father Walter Conway of Glenaddy, "there was no house in which the 'paidirin' or rosary used not to be said throughout all the year. When I came to this parish some eight or nine years ago this custom had been given up by the majority of people. I frequently inquired the cause and never heard any answer except the one from everybody, 'We cannot say it in English, and the young people will not repeat it with us in Irish.'" And another priest, Father O'Concannon, also gives evidence of the neglect of the ancient Irish prayers and the old religious poems, adding: "It is upon the flagstone of the hearth that the foundations of piety and nationality are laid, and alas! that the foreign schools should be destroying them!"

Big Ben Loses a Minute.

From the London Daily Chronicle.

"Big Ben" is so much above reproach as a national institution that when anything goes wrong with the great clock it is generally assumed that the weather is to blame. Yesterday morning Messrs. Dent, the builders of the clock, were informed that it had lost a minute.

It was the chief item of local interest. Every one said that the poor clock was suffering from the heat, and that the pendulum had got weary of wagging through the tropical hours, but the real cause was given by Mr. Dent.

"When we heard of the unusual occurrence," he said, "we sent down a skilled workman to ascertain the cause. He found that the clock was correct, but that the workmen had been changing the lamps in the clock tower, and in so doing they must have interfered with the dial works and so checked the progress of the clock. At 2 o'clock everything was in order again."

"Big Ben" is the largest striking clock in the world. The minute hands are 14 feet long and weigh 2 cwt. each, the pendulum is 13 feet long and the bob weight 4 cwt. It takes two men five hours to wind the clock, which is done three times a week. Twice a day "Big Ben" telegraphs its time automatically to Greenwich Observatory, which enables its performance to be checked.

Franklin Revised.

Knicker—Take care of the pennies—

Bocker—And the dollars will take care of the campaign fund.

The Postmaster's Plaint.

Summer Boarder—Like these picture post cards?

Village Postmaster—Nope. Folks ain't got room to write anything interesting on 'em.