The Sun.

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Turn On the Light!

Our praiseworthy Baltimore namesake and other organs of accurate information have announced the vanguard of the big stick and the square deal—*à la* Roosevelt—in respect of certain naval officers who, according to the gossip of the antechamber, have been talking too much. It is proposed, indeed, if the henchmen and the courtiers shall by any chance know what they are talking about, that no less important persons than Admirals McCalla, Goodrich and Melville are to be called to account because of their "recent outspoken utterances" in connection with the Navy Department. There is also a grisly whisper to the effect that one of President Roosevelt's very latest favorites may be sucked into the maelstrom of Executive indignation.

It has already been made plain to us, however, in the case of Admiral Brownson, that the favor of the White House is a mighty delicate and perishable article. We need therefore squander no emotion on that prospect. But it seems opportune to venture the remark that the American people will be vastly benefited as the result of any arrangement that presents them with the honest, undiluted and untrammelled views of naval officers so experienced, so intelligent and so thoroughly equipped for verdict as McCalla, Goodrich and Melville. It would be an inestimable privilege to hear exactly what they think as regards the bureau system of the navy, with its conflicts of purpose and authority, the demoralizing struggle between line and staff, the whole record of futile and stupid cross purposes, and the extent and character of the nation's martyrdom to these abhorrent circumstances. They could tell us a great deal that we ought to know and have a right to know. The question of supreme importance is whether they will get the opportunity and will be sufficiently protected in its comprehensive exploitation. Freemen are scarce and growing scarcer in the public service nowadays. Both in the military and the civil branches it has come to pass that "Hail to the Chief!" is the only song the official of any class can sing with safety.

Senator Hale would add greatly to his record of useful and important achievement were he to summon the three Admirals in question and enable them to speak freely for the benefit of the country at large. A naval court of inquiry would for obvious reasons fail to satisfy the public mind. We need an open tribunal and an unrestricted chronicle of its proceedings. We want to know the facts and to enjoy the incidental assurance that those who impart them for our information will go unscathed personally, financially and otherwise. Moreover, McCalla, Goodrich and Melville are not the only founts of knowledge and disclosure at our disposal. There are others, and many of them.

Delighted.

A delegation of beet growers and sugar producers from Michigan who called upon Secretary Taft in Washington the other day are said to have been delighted when he told them that if the United States were to lower by degrees the duty on Philippine sugar to the amount of 300,000 tons annually until at last it should be allowed to come in free, "the object he desired would be accomplished." When the people from Michigan, headed by Mr. Fred Warren, the accredited representative of the sugar interests in that State, left the presence of the Secretary it was noised abroad that the objections of the domestic sugar industry to the candidacy of William H. Taft had been removed, and that Colorado, Utah and other intermountain States besides Michigan would fall into line for him. The members of the Michigan delegation must have been surprised as well as delighted if they had normal memories.

In the spring of 1906 Mr. Taft was for free trade with the Philippines absolutely. In a lecture at Yale in the William Edge course he said on April 30:

"One must feed a son's belly before he develops his mind or gives him political rights. The pendulum must swing in favor of the islands and prosperity must come. It will be greatly aided if free trade between the United States and the islands should be established. Whether this will happen in the present Congress I do not know. That it will come ultimately I am confident. That it ought to come at once I am sure."

Addressing, on the same subject, the National Association of Manufacturers in this city on May 16, 1906, Mr. Taft, after explaining that 2,700,000 tons of sugar were consumed in the United States every year, of which amount 1,600,000 tons were imported, said, in advocacy of the Philippine tariff bill:

"The objection is raised that the Philippines would soon produce the whole 1,600,000 tons, but the Philippine production would have to increase sixteen times the present output before that could happen. Gentlemen, that is a dream so far ahead it ought to be disregarded altogether."

In his keynote speech in the district of Representative Charles E. Littlefield of Maine Mr. Taft said on September 5, 1906, after repeating the same argument for the relief of the Philippine producers, that there was "no more important piece of legislation" than the proposed tariff bill. Up to that time and until some months later William H. Taft was not a candidate for President. At Washington on October 18, 1906, he declared: "I am not going to be the next President. You can feel very sure of that." It was not until December 29, 1906, that Mr. Taft, in a statement given out at Washington, acknowledged that he was a receptive candidate. His boom was launched with his sanction at Trenton on April 26, 1907, by Representative Theodore E. Burton at a dinner of the Republican Club. In his elaborate Columbus speech officially opening his campaign on August 19, 1907, Mr. Taft had nothing to say about the relief of the Filipinos. It was one of the topics which, as he said, he passed over "for lack of time."

Thus by slow, sure and timely degrees Mr. Taft's ardor for free trade in sugar, as well as in other products, for the wistful wards of the nation has cooled. Formerly a champion of no duties at all, of free trade with the islands at once, now he delights the beet sugar men at home with a proposal of limited imports of Philippine sugar at reduced and gradually decreasing duties, to be taken off entirely in the nebulous future!

Our Bill Against Cuba.

According to Governor Magoon's report "the direct cost to the national treasury of Cuba of the revolution of August, 1906, calculated to October 31, 1907," has been $8,634,116.64. Figures compiled by the Bureau of Insular Affairs show "extraordinary expenditures on account of the army of pacification in Cuba from October 1, 1906, to June 30, 1907," amounting to $3,376,735.13. If to the $12,000,000 shown by these accounts there be added the sums paid and the expenses incurred since the statement was made up, and the payments which will be made before the account is fully and finally settled, it is evident that the cost of Cuba's little disturbance, in money actually paid, will be not far short of $15,000,000.

Notwithstanding the recent edict from the White House fixing February 1, 1909, as the limit of the term of American occupation, it is not at all certain that the date thus set will see the last of the American army en route for home. The months intervening between the closing of the above mentioned account and the final military evacuation will probably add a million dollars to our claim against Cuba. If it costs as much to get the troops back to their garrisons as it cost to get them to their posts in the island the account will be materially increased. In the report of the Quartermaster's Department the charge for army transportation to and in Cuba appears as $2,013,283. In other words, the claim of the United States against Cuba for expenditures on account of the army of pacification and occupation will probably exceed $6,000,000. The account has been carefully kept. Cuba is not charged with the pay of the troops, but only with the increase of pay allowed to troops on foreign service. About 75 per cent. of the account is represented by the item of transportation.

There is no question that Cuba should pay all the costs of the revolutionary ebullition of 1906. A deficiency bill approved March 4, 1907, provides that:

"The President is hereby authorized to receive from the treasury of the Cuban Republic and pay into the Treasury of the United States from time to time such amounts to reimburse the United States for the expenditures from the United States Treasury made necessary on account of the present intervention as he may consider the Cuban treasury then able to pay without serious embarrassment."

This appears to be rather permissive than mandatory. It might not be amiss to change the nature of the legislation. There is no sound reason for compelling the American people to pay several millions of dollars to enable one set of Cuban politicians to oust another set from salary paying offices. If the Cuban people can be convinced by practical illustration that political revolutions are an expensive amusement they may be reluctant to engage in or to tolerate them. There is certainly no reason for saddling this bill on the people of the United States. Cuba now rejoices in an overflowing treasury. It might be well to ask for a little payment on account.

Lord Curzon and the House of Lords.

The election of Lord Curzon to fill a vacancy in the number of seats allotted in the House of Lords to the Irish peerage directs attention to some curious anomalies in the parliamentary system of the United Kingdom.

Of the 617 members of the House of Lords all but 44 have seats as belonging to one or the other of three classes, namely, peers of England, peers of Great Britain and peers of the United Kingdom. Of the 44 exceptions 16 represent the Scottish peerage, by which they are elected for each Parliament. The remaining 28 are chosen by the Irish peerage for life. Not only has the Irish peerage a larger number of representatives in the upper house than the Scottish peerage, but in another particular it has a great advantage. A Scotch peer cannot become a member of the House of Commons, whereas an Irish peer may. Lord Palmerston, who was an Irish Viscount, remained in the House of Commons up to the time of his death.

Mindful of the last named privilege Mr. George Nathaniel Curzon, who as the eldest son of Lord Scarsdale would in the natural course of events inherit a seat in the House of Lords, expressed a preference for an Irish peerage instead of the English one which was offered him at the time of his appointment as Viceroy of India. His purpose, as he frankly said, was to resume an active political life in the House of Commons on his return from Calcutta. Owing to ill health, however, he has found himself unable to do so, and would like, therefore, to sit in the House of Lords with other Viceroys of India. To bring this about all that was needful was to make him a peer of England, or of Great Britain, or of the United Kingdom. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been done as a matter of course by Mr. A. J. Balfour, who was Prime Minister at the time when Lord Curzon resigned the Viceroyalty. Lord Curzon's case, however, was exceptional, for his resignation had been due to the fact that in his controversy with Lord Kitchener, the Commander in Chief of the Anglo-Indian army, the latter had been supported by Premier Balfour.

So it came to pass that the usual offer of a seat in the upper house was not made by Mr. Balfour, and when his successor, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was requested to make good the omission he declined on the ground that the Unionists already possessed too much preponderance in the hereditary chamber. It looked then as if Lord Curzon might be shut out of public life during the lifetime of his father, but on the recent death of one of the twenty-eight representatives of the Irish peerage the Duke of Abercorn and the Marquis of Londonderry addressed a circular letter to their fellow peers of Ireland strongly urging them to choose Lord Curzon to fill the vacancy. There was some opposition, based upon the ground that Lord Curzon owns no land in Ireland, has never resided there and possesses no first hand knowledge of the country's needs. The Duke of Abercorn and Lord Londonderry in their address to the Irish peers, and Lord Curzon in a letter accepting the nomination, acknowledged that the objection was well founded. Against it could be set, however, the value of Lord Curzon's experience and judgment concerning questions relating to Britain's Indian empire. It was doubtless this consideration that turned the scale in his favor when on Monday, January 20, the Irish peers chose him to fill the vacancy in their representation.

There is some doubt concerning the line that Lord Curzon will take in affairs unconnected with India. He is known, indeed, to be a Unionist in the specific sense of the word, that is to say, a strong believer in the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland. Aside from that fundamental position, nevertheless, it remains to be seen how far he will go in concessions to the Irish people as regards the establishment of the Catholic (teaching) University in Dublin and the expropriation of landlords in the congested districts. It is also as yet undetermined whether Lord Curzon will adhere unswervingly to free trade and to that extent will cooperate with the Duke of Devonshire, or whether he will support Mr. Chamberlain's project of tariff reform, ostensibly intended to give a preference to British colonies in the markets of the mother country. Mr. Balfour, who for a time wavered, has now gone over to Mr. Chamberlain, and is to that extent disqualified to head a political campaign, for the last general election showed that on the naked issue of Protection vs. Free Trade the Protectionists cannot hope to win in Great Britain.

Whatever course Lord Curzon may decide ultimately to follow in these matters, it is plain enough that Lord Lansdowne's claim to lead the Unionist party in the upper house will be challenged.

The Water Board.

Mayor McClellan has been convinced by the Counsel to the Corporation that the action of the Board of Water Supply in not letting the Ashokan dam contract to the lowest bidder does not constitute ground for the removal of the Commissioners, and the end of the incident appears in sight. Its net result seems likely to be to make sensitive men more disinclined than ever to enter the public service.

In rejecting the lowest bid the Commissioners acted within their rights under the law and in obedience to the recommendations of the persons whose judgment they would naturally respect, the engineers in their employ. Their treatment has been such as would be administered to law defying corruptionists, although no hint of wrongdoing has been made against them. It has been evident from the beginning that recklessness in the spending of money was the most serious fault alleged by their prosecutors, and there has been a general neglect to consider the exceptional demands of the work they were to do.

That much of the public criticism of the board has been based on misunderstanding or ignorance is manifest. This does not make it easier to bear. The whole unfortunate effect of the incident will be felt when the time comes for the manning of similar commissions.

Civilization North and South.

Following fast upon the heels of the Whitaker-Evêque melodrama in New Orleans we have a formal promulgation of reconciliation in the Caffery-St. Paul case. We here submit the official culmination of the latter incident, not only because of its importance as the reminder of an ancient custom, but in view of its usefulness in the adjustment of possibly dramatic conflicts:

"A CARD.

"Having ascertained from the gentlemen representing Mr. Caffery in the issue between him and Judge John St. Paul that he, Mr. Caffery, neither in language nor intention, meant to reflect upon the personal character of Judge St. Paul or to charge him with any corrupt conduct, and finding that Mr. Caffery's speech as contained in the *Picayune* was inaccurately reported, Judge St. Paul now retracts the language used by him in the *States* of January 15, 1908, and offers the *amende honorable*.

"John St. Paul,
"Percy S. Benedict,
"Justin F. Denechaud.

"Accepted:
"W. Morgan Gurley,
"W. R. Brashear,
"For Don Caffery.

"New Orleans, January 15, 1908."

This pacific publication appeared in the New Orleans *Picayune* three or four days ago. We point to it with pride and confidence as a convincing illustration of our respect for the restraining influences of the code duello. All violence has been averted. Angry passions are forestalled. There will be no "shooting scrapes" upon the street, not even a vicious and demoralizing lawsuit. The *amende honorable* has been tendered and accepted. That precipitates the rosy atmosphere of amity upon a once stormy and alarming landscape. All is forgiven. Animosities take flight. Sweetest peace comes perching on formerly forbidding eaves, and osculations and embraces load the air. Still, some say that the South is not quite civilized.

As regards the Whitaker-Evêque affair, it is true that Mr. Whitaker, the chief of the New Orleans police establishment, broke into the newspaper office of M. L'Evêque and almost emptied a highly pregnant revolver in the direction of that great journalist's person. This cannot be denied. But Inspector Whitaker has abundantly illustrated through the medium of his futile fusillade the decadence of the Southern marksman and given to us of the North a valuable insight into the harmlessness of once deadly institutions.

We may be mistaken, but it seems to us that the South, whether by force of the duello code or because of wild shooting on the part of its deserters, is gradually acquiring all the outward fruits if not the mere unmeaning forms of our own somewhat overexploited civilization. It begins to occur to us that so far as concerns actual results the peaceful intervention of "friends," combined with the decadent gun play of the "hostiles," leads up to consequences at the South quite as bloodless as the judicial processes, the newspaper denunciations and the rancorous scandals wherewith we ventilate our sense of injury in these parts.

Herein we take no sides. It is our purpose simply to offer food for thought.

A Great Idea.

The Hon. Morrison I. Swift, an experienced marching and demonstrating Boston economist, has in his programme a principle which must commend itself to at least two other illustrious demonstrators and manifestants:

"State pensions for the unemployed."

If this "demand" is not new, it is indisputably of fruitful promise. It is true that, with an inconsistency a little surprising in such a thinker, Mr. Swift proposes "the suppression of private employment agencies and the formation of a complete State employment agency system." Of course the fulfilment of Mr. Swift's State pension plan will make the State a non-employment relief agency. Only a few negligible fanatics will disgrace themselves by working when the State pays the unemployed for non-employment.

Oceans of words have surged around "the abolition of poverty." Our Boston marching friend attacks the ancient evil in its midst. He shows how to settle "the problem of the unemployed" by paying the unemployed for their unemployment. Poverty can be borne. The older trouble, work, Swift teaches the world how to stop.

Those quick assimilators of ideas Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Bryan have here new matter for messages, speeches and documents.

We have received from the Department of Agriculture an able document entitled "The Production of Veneer in 1906."

Yet was not that the year of grace which witnessed an almost unprecedented destruction or excoriation of the articie in question?

From the ease with which miscreants of various degrees succeed in personating official dignitaries in European countries it is evident that to a certain extent at least clothes do make the man. If German soldiers are deceived by a thief dressed as a Captain and Russian guards pass impostors clad in imitation of the Governor and his staff, the ordinary waiter need not feel badly if he is sometimes mistaken for a guest.

Captain Amundsen's plan to drift in a ship across the north polar area is now quite certain to be carried out. All students of the winds and currents in that region believe that a vessel entering the Arctic through Bering Strait and pushing into the ice in about the latitude of Point Barrow would be carried across the unknown part of the north polar sea and in about five years would reach the other side somewhere near the northeast coast of Greenland. The vessel would probably take about the same course as that of the drift cask that was placed on the ice northwest of Point Barrow in 1899 and was found six years later on the north coast of Iceland. There is no doubt that the cask actually drifted across the unknown region nearer the pole than the routes of the Jeanette and the Fram.

Amundsen's drift voyage will be for scientific purposes and not for the discovery of the pole, though its proximity might make it possible to attain this elusive goal during the journey. But physical geography will be enriched by the discovery of the depths of the sea, the nature of the ocean floor, the water temperatures and the kinds of sea life at various depths in this wholly unknown region. Such work will be the real purpose of the journey.

The activities which so becomingly distinguish Alderman Little Tim Sullivan on behalf of public morals have not caused a display of sympathetic activity by restaurant keepers or any financially responsible persons acting in their interests. It may be that the Aldermanic committee whose fine sense of public duty must be in painful conflict with its distaste for imposing troublesome restraint on a profitable business is suffering unwarranted pangs. It is not unlikely that restaurant keepers would welcome an Aldermanic ban against cigarette smoking by women. They know that the custom would offend some patrons, as does cigarette smoking by men in such places, but unsupported by ordinance they would be compelled, in the assault by women as in that by men, to surrender on demand of their most profitable patrons.

Judge Laney, who is willing to take a nomination for Congress in the Third Florida district, has a hopeful spirit clothed with humor:

"I would like to see Maréchal Niel roses blooming along the banks of the Choctawhatchie River and aromatic creepers climbing down the sunny slopes of the Perdido Bay.

"I would like to see uniformed letter carriers distributing patent office reports in automobiles throughout the entire district."

It "makes" Judge Laney "tired to see certain men who have affiliated with the corporations all their lives wake up suddenly with some spasm of virtue and abuse the railroads because it has lately become popular to do so." "Most of his friends have advised him to keep out of the race." Solemnity, not satire, is the aim of the public man who isn't looking for trouble.

The Broken Mirror.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* The writer would be glad to learn the views of the readers of The Sun regarding the superstition of seven years of hard luck following the breaking of a mirror.

New York, January 21. Reader.

From a citizen of this town, in whom prosperity has impaired neither conscience nor Christian sentiment, The Sun has received seven hundred dollars.

THE PHILIPPINES AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Washington, Jan. 21.—Notwithstanding the "presumptive evidence" arising out of the success of the Egyptian bank of profit in an agricultural bank in the Philippines, the scheme has not proved alluring to capital, either American or foreign. A bill authorizing the establishment of such an institution was passed by Congress last winter and approved by the President on March 4. Under it "the Philippine Government is empowered to guarantee an income of not exceeding 4 per centum per annum upon cash capital actually invested by individuals or corporations" in an agricultural bank in the Philippines. Thus far the knocks at this door of investment opportunity have been feeble and ineffective.

In April, 1903, the Philippine Commission instructed the insular treasurer to provide a plan for an agricultural bank. According to the census there are in the islands about 7,000,000 acres of agricultural land, 46 per cent. of which is under cultivation. Loans on landed security are obtained with difficulty and only at usurious rates of interest. The local banks limit their operations to commercial paper, chiefly foreign exchange. Interest on agricultural loans, when they can be had at all, ranges from 3 to 10 per cent. *a month*, an influence calculated to discourage productive industry. Conditions not unlike this existed in Egypt ten years ago. In 1898 the National Bank of Egypt was established, partly for the purpose of advancing money to the fellaheen on the security of their crops. Its operations in that direction extended so rapidly and proved so profitable that in 1902 a distinct institution known as the Agricultural Bank of Egypt was organized. Within five years its paid up stock and debenture capital increased from £1,250,000 to £7,240,000. It has paid liberal dividends, accumulated a good surplus and has been of great value to the small farmers. Speaking of the loans of the bank, Sir Eldon Gorst, the successor of Lord Cromer, says that "the total annual payment of principal and interest is less than the usurers formerly charged for interest alone."

In presenting the success of the Egyptian bank as "presumptive evidence" of a similar success in the Philippines it may be that too little attention was paid to the difference in local conditions. There is also the fact that England opens her doors to the products of Egypt, while we close ours to the products of the Philippines. However, the case of the bank is not entirely hopeless. There are those who believe that even under present conditions the opportunity is good and that some one will take it up.

HOW THE CANTEEN WORKS.

Until One Was Installed at Fort Saskatchewan Drunkenness Prevailed.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* In an editorial upon the army canteen in The Sun of January 17 it is said that the worst time to agitate for an army canteen is the period preceding a national election. For the politicians seeking election, perhaps yes. But how about the soldier boy? My experience teaches me that any time, the sooner the better, is a good time to agitate for a canteen in so far as he is concerned.

During a period of five years service with the mounted police of Northwestern Canada I had the misfortune to spend a part of my time at the headquarters of "G" division at Fort Saskatchewan, a post where up to within a year or so ago there had been no canteen since the mutiny of 1885. Barracks life there is similar to the life the majority of your soldiers live at the many posts throughout your country. The work is much the same, surroundings, influences and amusements all of the same sort, and it seems a fair supposition that if the canteen, or the absence of it, were found to be a mistake in the one instance it would be so in the other.

The first two years I spent at Fort Saskatchewan on duty there was no canteen. But there were a couple of hotels in the village which sold a concoction known as "tanglefoot" or "red eye." There was also a road house across the river which did a thriving trade with the half breeds in home brewed firewater, Jamaica ginger and painkiller. To the police these places were like home. There was no other place to go to. Just as soon as retreat sounded you could see the men trooping out of barracks. There was no fun in staying at home, and, barring the guards and pickets, nobody stayed.

At "last post" we were supposed to report for the night. It was not considered sportsmanlike to act like a soldier or a gentleman. If a man did not stumble over the stile into the barricade, or report in a maudlin, groggy tone to the division orderly, there was something radically wrong. It was not considered etiquette to go to one's barracks room without a bottle or a flask tucked away in one's coat for use before stables in the morning, and I have seen many a man roughly handled for not bringing back a bit of wet ammunition when he was known to have the price. In fact nearly everybody from the officer commanding to the bugler boy went to bed drunk, or pretty nearly so.

Two years ago I returned to Fort Saskatchewan after an absence of about a year and a half. A canteen had been established during my absence. The change in every respect was most marked and peculiar. The spirit and morality of the whole troop had changed, although it was composed of nearly the same men as when I was first stationed there. The hotels and road houses "over town" were tabooed. If a man drank "tanglefoot" he was severely "sat upon," not only by the officers but by his comrades. Men stayed in barracks. The canteen gave them amusement and something decent to drink as well. Instead of going outside and filling up on a lot of "red eye" and bringing home with them a supply to keep up the debauch, they sat at home, sipped beer and stayed sober. They knew they could get a drink for the asking, and, true to human nature, they did not ask as frequently as they would have done if there were no chance of getting it.

I don't believe in "booze," but I do believe in canteens. Give them to your soldier boys and see the difference.

Forbes D. Sutherland.

Montreal, Canada, January 18.

American Rhodes Scholars.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* The interview with a Rhodes scholar published in yesterday's Sun is utterly misleading. If the Rhodes scholar in question got nothing out of Oxford but debts he has had a unique experience. Most of the other Rhodes scholars of his year managed to live within their scholarship incomes, and their successors, profiting by the experience of the first Rhodes scholars, find it less difficult to do so. Three hundred pounds is a sufficient provision not only for comfortable (though not extravagant) living at any Oxford college but also for a moderate amount of travel during vacations.

As to what was said about Oxford education no refutation is necessary, since the value of an Oxford training is a matter of common knowledge.

Rhodes Scholar.

Princeton, N. J., January 20.

A Visit That Was Never Made.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* I read in today's Sun that when the King of England honors anybody with a visit the water and drainage system of the house must be overhauled before the King's arrival.

That reminds me that during the recent German manœuvres a certain manufacturer, known for his wealth as well as bluntness of speech, was informed that Prince X. would stay at his "villa" overnight.

In the statement of details referring to the visit it was mentioned that the house should be disinfected.

The host to be wrote a polite letter asking whether the disinfecting should be done before or after the Prince's visit and is still waiting for both the answer and the visit.

Thomas Postner.

Brooklyn, January 20.

Strange Thoughts of an "American."

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* What are we going to do about the Italians? Every man carries a revolver to protect himself against them. They are a menace to the country's happiness. All sent to prison should be deported when they come out. I am surprised your editorials do not deal with them as they ought to be dealt with.

American.

New York, January 21.

Horatius at the Bridge.

Horatius was holding the bridge.
"But," they queried, "suppose the foe takes the subway?"
Herewith he railed bitterly at modern inventions.

CAN THESE THINGS BE?

The Astonishing Story of the Federal Prosecution and Conviction of the Santa Fe Road for Refunding Freight Money Wrongfully Received From a Customer.

From the Atchison Globe.

For two or three years past the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé Railroad Company has been hauling lime from Nelson, Ariz., to Los Angeles, Cal., for a lime manufacturer. When the cars of lime arrived at Los Angeles it was discovered after a time that some of them had been loaded light, and the consignee refused to pay for lime he had not received. The shipper had been paying freight on forty thousand pounds and complained to the railroad company. The clerk to whom complaint was made found on investigation that the cars had been loaded light owing to a defective loading device, and without saying anything to his superiors he arranged for a settlement with the shipper. Four hundred carloads of lime had been shipped, and the clerk arranged for a refund on seventy-eight of these, the refund ranging from thirty-five cents a car to thirteen dollars. The shipper had been paying for freight that the railroad company had not carried, through a mistake, and no man can justly say the railroad company was not warranted in paying back money it had wrongfully received. The clerk's method was simply a short method of settling an honest claim.

About this time a clerk in the local Santa Fé freight offices in Los Angeles was caught embezzling money. He was discharged, arrested, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to the county jail for ninety days. This clerk had been familiar with the transaction referred to above, and to "get even" complained to the United States District Attorney. This official laid the matter before the United States Grand Jury at Los Angeles, and the matter was looked into with great gravity, particularly as at this time the howling against the railroads was at its worst. The United States District Attorney was unfair; the Judge was unfair, and the result was that the railroad company was fined $330,000.

Could a greater outrage have been perpetrated? Had the victim been an individual, or a county, or a town, a howl would have gone up that would have been heard everywhere. But as the victim was a railroad company the newspapers said nothing about it. We read the newspapers rather carefully, but knew nothing about the incident until last night, when we happened to run across a circular issued by E. P. Ripley, president of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fé, embodying the above facts, which we have shortened somewhat, but no essential detail is left out.

We have no doubt that the statement of Mr. Ripley is true; a man of his prominence would not sign his name to a falsehood, and it must at once be admitted that the action of the California court was a disgraceful travesty on justice. The railroad company did what it should have done; it would have been abused soundly, and with reason, had it refused to refund an overcharge to a customer. Yet a United States Judge instructed a jury to fine the railroad company $330,000 for a perfectly fair and honorable action! The facts are so simple they cannot be disputed.

We speak in all sincerity: the people have gone too far. They have reached the point where they are injuring themselves and their country.

If the people will study the simple statement made by Mr. Ripley and express their opinion of the outrage of which his company has been the victim, the ruinous crusade will stop, for the politicians and newspapers will quickly recognize public sentiment.

Economic Detail of Certain Cases of Exogamy.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* Is there any record of an American man making it a condition of his marriage that the bride elect shall settle a part of her fortune on him?

If an American should propose or insist on such a condition, what do you think would be the fate of his matrimonial pretensions?

How do you account for the complacency with which American parents accede to the demands of foreign bridegrooms for money settlements on themselves?

The old fashioned idea was that love was the only and sufficient qualification for marriage and that any question of money created a disqualifying suspicion of insincerity. These considerations seem, however, to be untouched in the arrangements for marriages between American girls (who are always heiresses) by foreign men of title.

Don't you think that it would be interesting and refreshing to read a report that some titled foreigner had put aside his American bride's fortune and insisted that she should retain the full enjoyment of it? In such a case Cupid would joyously hover over the bridal procession, instead of walking behind it with drooped head and wings, and every one would voice a blessing on the pair and there would be no doubting interrogations as to the poor girl's future.

New York, January 21. American.

Some Niceties of Doric.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* I hope The Sun's bright rays will illuminate the darkness that has surrounded the pronunciation of the word "ay," as used in Burns's poem, "Ay wakin' O." The Standard Dictionary says "ay" as an interjection is pronounced "a" as in "pay." Consulting the English dictionary of Stormonth to-day I find he pronounces "ay," the interjection, as if it were "I." Stormonth would bear out Dr. Damrosch. No less an authority on Scotch than Adjutant Thomas R. Fleming of the Thirteenth Regiment, who knows every foot of the banks and braes o' bonnie Doon and is a "gowfer" of no mean reputation, agrees with Dr. Damrosch in giving "ay" the long "I" sound.

However, I hope that Dr. Damrosch does not pronounce the word "wakin'" with a long "a" but gives it the sound almost of "a" in "walk," a sound that better fits the legato quality of Lambeth's arrangement of the song. I trust that Dr. Damrosch has explained to his very interesting Choral Union the exact meaning of the words "lave," "bleer," "een," "greetin'," "eerie," and "heugh," so that the full beauty of the song may be brought out.

M. E. H.

New York, January 21.

Boston Curlingese.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* The other day three little girls, the oldest ten years of age, resident in our most fashionable suburb, stood afar off watching some men curling at the Country Club.

Said Hattie, the oldest of the trio, confidentially to her companions, "Let's go near and see if we can hear the men say some swear words"; and they approached to a place where they could hear the exclamations of the curlers.

Hattie spent the afternoon skating with her aunt, and was much exasperated by the repeated interruption of their enjoyment by first one and then the other heel of her aunt's boots coming off.

Then did little Hattie disclose how greatly she had profited by her attentive observation of the curling country club gentlemen: "Do you know what I'd do with the old boots," she exclaimed in wrath. "I'd take them back to the store, and I'd say to the man: 'Here, to hell with the damn boots!'"

Boston, January 21. James Rushton.

Job No Saint in Spain.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* In a correspondence to you last Saturday "Y. P. B." informs the readers of The Sun that to the Spanish "Santos," Santo Tomás, Santo Tomé and Santo Domingo, mentioned in your issue of Thursday, two more should be added, namely, "Santo Job" and "Santo Toribio." He is perfectly right in claiming a place on the list for "Santo Toribio," but as to "Job," allow me to state that there is neither "Santo Job" nor "San Job." There is not any such saint in the Catholic Almanac, and nobody bears the first name of "Job" in Spain or in any Spanish speaking country.

Washington, D. C., January 20. Hispanus.

One of Many.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* The elevated railroad station of which I made complaint is at Cortlandt street.

E. N. Wolf.

New York, January 21.

The Great Waterway.

In Noah's time they started in
A fine canal to build.
Nine feet, they thought, would be the size
Their fondest hopes to gild.

They saw that growing all too small
Before their very eyes,
And thought they really ought to have
A thousand ton barge size.

That enterprise was taken up,
But still their troubles grew
It soon developed, to their woe,
The locks were all too few.

And then there came along the flood,
The only waterway
Which wasn't proven obsolete
Before its gala day.

McLandburgh Wilson.

AUTOMATIC FIRE PROTECTORS.

Valuable Weapons for Extinguishing Blazes in Their Beginnings.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* There seem to be some curious anomalies running around loose these days. For instance, if the public sees a man take a small stove, fill it with combustible material and touch a match to it it is not surprised if the combustible material is consumed; but if it sees a man build a great big stove and fill it with combustible material which gets afire accidentally it is very much surprised if the combustible material burns. Perhaps it has been misled by a name.

If it had heard less about "fireproof" buildings, "strictly fireproof" construction, and such like, and more about "skyscraper stoves," perhaps it would sense the situation more accurately. Perhaps if it sensed the situation more accurately it would take note of the fact that in the course of almost every fire there is a time when a teacupful or a pailful of water will put it out, and another time, later on, when it takes all or more than all the water that can be pumped by an efficient fire department under the most favorable conditions.

Having arrived at this point, the public will probably seek to provide the water needed to put out fires at the time when little is required. It will then undoubtedly wake up to the fact that there is an old established and well tried scheme for doing this sort of thing which has been in use for so long a time that the patents have expired. I refer, of course, to the automatic sprinkler system which is in general use among the great manufacturing plants in the country but has not yet been very extensively used in such structures as the Parker building, which recently burned. If the use of this system was universal in large cities, as it ought to be, whole sections could not be rendered helpless by the bursting of a water main, nor would the control of any given fire depend upon having hose that was not rotten.

Every building equipped with this device is a unit by itself and not only protects itself but protects its neighbors by preventing the spread of fire. The liability of failure is so small as to be almost negligible. To compel its use by law would be no hardship to owners of buildings, for the simple reason that in a few years it pays for itself in the lowering of insurance rates. It has been proved time and again that there is enough combustible material in the average lawyer's office to make a fire that will spread from floor to floor in a so-called "fireproof" building. The remedy is so certain that the writer, who has used tens of thousands of sprinkler heads in various kinds of buildings and has been enabled thereby to save money as well as to sleep better, is puzzled to understand why it is not more generally adopted.

George Eastman.

Rochester, N. Y., January 20.

WILKES LAND.

A Proposal for an American Naval Expedition to Look It Up.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* For sixty-five years certain eminent geographers, particularly British geographers, but French and German too, have been applying to the United States navy the polite equivalent of a shorter and uglier word. The navy has had nothing to reply except "No such thing," unsupported by evidence. It has never taken the trouble to procure evidence, and most officers of the fleet have forgotten that the great Wilkes-Ross controversy ever stirred up the tempers of their fathers. But those fellows across the water have not forgotten, and they seem to have made a point in the proof that the first scientific expedition ever sent out by the United States Government, a naval expedition manned by enlisted seamen and commanded by officers selected from the few naval men who were willing to volunteer, made a false report of the discovery of about eleven hundred miles of coast.

Plainly the facts are these: In 1836 Congress appropriated a sum of money for an expedition which was to explore the South Seas and other seas and incidentally the Antarctic regions. The process of equipping that expedition was one of the most joyous farces that ever had its echo in the funny papers of any country. However, when cook stoves had been installed and the surplus scientific apparatus had been set ashore and half a dozen commanders had been appointed and had resigned, one of them because he would not have an official historian to record his doings, the United States exploring expedition got off in 1838, but in none of the ships that had been originally assigned for it.

Now, this expedition did good work. To be sure, its commander, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes, did have to undergo, after its return, a court-martial, partly because he pointed his finger at a passed assistant surgeon and ordered him to "Leave the presence, sir! Leave the presence!" (Wilkes being the presence); partly because he had disarmed some savages, thereby exposing them to "the murderous hate and the anthropophagical appetites of their cannibal neighbors," and for other reasons. But the expedition did good work. We still use its charts of the South Sea Islands.

However, and here comes the point of this letter, it brought in a report of land discovered at the Antarctic Circle ranging along from about 140 degrees west to about 166 degrees west, the first land ever sighted of what Wilkes alleged to be an Antarctic continent. There was a question as to whether a French expedition did not have the first view of it, and that was hotly discussed in the days of our grandfathers, but it does not matter now. What matters, concerning the honor of the navy, is that in 1840 Captain James Ross, in command of a British expedition, sailed over a spot where Wilkes had reported land.

Well, Wilkes got out of that by asserting that he had not meant to say that he saw land at that exact place, but that he had heard of an Englishman who had seen it there. In that case Wilkes's latitude was sixty miles out. But after a time most geographers forgave him. They discredited the particular territory over which Wilkes had sailed, but by courtesy they left upon the map Wilkes Land, a chain of isolated peaks extending about eleven hundred miles.

Now, in the twentieth century another expedition from England went to the Antarctic regions, and another from Germany, and another from France, and another from Sweden, and a Belgian expedition and a Scottish expedition and an Argentine expedition: as for ourselves, we have not bothered about the Antarctic regions since the navy did its first great scientific work. The British expedition found new ground for discrediting the reports of Wilkes; it sailed over other territory reported by him. So no one can be really sure that Wilkes Land exists.

They are waked up about Wilkes Land over on the other side. In 1907 another British party set forth to explore the Antarctic regions, and its leader, Lieutenant Shackleton, means to find out whether any of this coast really lies where it has been supposed to lie. Furthermore, the plans of a Belgian expedition to start next year include a search for Wilkes Land.

Is it to the credit of our navy that it leaves to these other chaps the work of proving or disproving the correctness of the information given to the world by its first scientific enterprise? The navy is going to be near the Antarctic regions very soon. There must be plenty of enthusiastic young men aboard the fleet who would be delighted to take a summer cruise along Wilkes Land. Why should not a suitable ship be purchased and manned by them, now that they are down there, to find out about Wilkes Land before the English and Belgians find out about it?

Albert White Vorse.

New York, January 20.

Discrimination in Supreme Court.

From the Washington Herald.

In the Supreme Court the other day, when the phonographic copyright question as relating to musical publications was being considered, two songs which figured in the case were "Molly Cottontail" and "My Kentucky Babe."

Justice Harlan of the Supreme bench is a native of the Blue Grass State. When the hearing reached the point at which these two songs came under consideration Livingston Gifford, who is trying the cases, remarked that he would take up "Molly Cottontail" first.

"Just a moment," remarked Chief Justice Fuller, with the merest suspicion of a smile curving the corners of his mouth, "aren't you discriminating against Justice Harlan?"

The Volunteer Music Critic.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* Shouting is not singing. Noise is not music. Music is a "concourse of sweet sounds," but our vaudeville "singers," and some Metropolitan Opera House singers, seem to think otherwise, and when the former, at least, attempt part singing the result is laughable if not disgusting. Their chords become discords.

New York, January 21. E. H. J.

The Brand of the Emancipated.

Knicker—Think women should smoke?

Bocker—Think what awful cigars the dear things would give each other!