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Mr. Taft and the Supreme Court.

The retirement for age of more than one Justice of the Supreme Court may be expected during President TAFT'S Administration. It becomes of interest, then, to know what he thinks of his responsibility as a Judge maker and how he will discharge it. Mr. TAFT enlightens the country in the following letter to Judge HORACE H. LURTON read at the dinner given Wednesday night to Judge LURTON by the Nashville Board of Trade:

"It is just the simple truth to tell you that the chief pleasure of my administration, as I have contemplated it in the past, has been to commission you a Justice of the Supreme Court; and I never had any other purpose and was never shaken in it until there was presented to me the challenge whether I was not gratifying my personal desires at the expense of public interest in putting a Judge of your age upon the bench under present conditions. For this reason I took back my determination to appoint you, wiped it off the slate and gave two or three days to the introspective process to know whether I was yielding to personal preference and affection at the expense of the public. I became convinced that I was not—that the circumstances justified the departure from the ordinary rule, and that I had the right to gratify my personal predilection by doing what I have done, because the motive in doing it included a desire to strengthen that court as much as I could strengthen it."

Mr. TAFT seems to hold the view that his responsibility will end when he appoints the best lawyer he can find. He is not going to concern himself about the political opinions of his selections or conjecture what their interpretation of the Constitution will be in celebrated cases. The truth is that a Supreme Court Justice not infrequently delivers an opinion that surprises those who believe they know most about the man and his point of view. The essential thing in Mr. TAFT'S judgment is to put able and experienced lawyers on the bench, men of independence and known high character. For the rest, he is willing to take whatever risk there may be involved in the new Justice's political and social ideas.

The Martians Digging Anew.

It is impossible to avoid a certain degree of admiration for the dogged persistency with which PERCIVAL LOWELL maintains his advocacy of the Martian canals, the theory of life upon that planet which he took over from SCHIAPARELLI. That he has gone far beyond his predecessor is made clear by the figures which he has just presented to the astronomical section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The Italian astronomer had mapped upon the disk of Mars no more than 117 canals; the record from the Flagstaff Observatory brings the number of these doubtful striæ up to the vicinity of 600.

In the main Mr. LOWELL has met the attacks upon his Mars and his Martians with good humor. It has been an uphill fight. Few astronomers have given the theory their approval; the greatest men in that science have set themselves in flat opposition. Yet in the dry atmosphere of Arizona Mr. LOWELL, with all an amateur's enthusiasm, devotes his life to watching just this one planet of all the heavenly host, to drawing the lines upon its surface from visual inspection, to identifying such as he may succeed in fixing on the sensitized plate. Aside from his own assistants at the Flagstaff Observatory almost his only effective supporter is Professor TODD of Amherst and of the peaks of the Andes.

The objections to Mr. LOWELL'S theory fall into two principal schedules.

Of these the former disputes the accuracy of the observation. The objectors along this line of the argument deny that LOWELL, and SCHIAPARELLI before him, have seen markings on the planetary disk of any such regularity, of any such fixity, as to warrant the explanation that they have been produced by volition rendering efficient the intelligence of sentient beings. In effect, they say, it is eye strain and retinal accommodation to the fixed idea. The latest word in this line was spoken at the current session of the British Astronomical Association when the Mount Wilson photographs of Mars were shown to be free of the lines which are the basis of the canal theory.

The other argument rests upon the more general study of the planet. Mr. LOWELL explains his canals as part of a system of conservation and water storage on the surface of our neighbor. This argues the presence of water, an atmospheric envelope, the seasonal change of melting snows. The opponents of the canal theory deny the existence of all these things. The polar ice caps, they say, are not snow, but the deposit of some residual gas of a vanished atmosphere. Water they deny in toto. The atmosphere, if such there be at all, they say is too slight to be measured on any index of refraction. The latest word in this line of opposition is recorded in the spectroscopic observations which the Lick Observatory staff made on the highest Sierras.

Despite these latest assaults upon his theory Mr. LOWELL comes to the front at this Boston meeting. He avers that he has seen canals, he maintains that in this season he is watching the Martians on new canals making the dirt fly. We must admire, at least, the doggedness of his belief in the Martians and in his own vision.

Duels of American Naval Officers.

Most of the papers printed in the *United States Naval Institute Proceedings* deal with more or less technical subjects, and interest in them is confined to studious officers of the navy, but in the December number we find an article that will claim the attention of all the rank and file and be read eagerly, to the exclusion of informing essays like that upon the compensation of the compass and determination of the deviation without the use of observed azimuths. The subject of the absorbing article in question is "Duelling in the Old Navy," and in it Mr. CHARLES OSCAR PAULLIN has assembled many duels fought by American naval officers since there was a navy. It is a long record of sensitive and fantastic honor satisfied with weapons of precision and deadly effect in the hands of men who generally knew how to use them. There is no duelling in the new navy, for both the law and custom inhibit it. To resort to the "code" now would be to cause the elimination of the principals from the service immediately.

The first duel on the list was between Lieutenant STEPHEN DECATUR and the mate of an East Indiaman (unnamed), which took place in 1799, the challenge being provoked by the profanity and abuse of the mate when DECATUR boarded his ship looking for deserters. The mate was wounded in the hip. Twenty-one years later DECATUR was mortally wounded at Bladensburg, the favorite duelling ground of those days, by Commodore JAMES BARRON. The last duel recorded was fought in 1849 at Old Point Comfort by Mr. JAMES HOPE, a civilian, and Midshipman J. P. JONES, who used the pistol with which his grandfather, Commodore BARRON, killed Commodore DECATUR; both HOPE and JONES were wounded, but not seriously, at this meeting. Between the first and the last of these encounters some eighty duels occurred, with a mortality truly appalling. Occasionally the provocation was most grave, but sometimes it was trivial. The combatants were usually youngsters, very jealous of their modest rank and quick to construe and resent an affront from sailor or civilian. Duel 68, between two midshipmen whose names are suppressed, was the result of a quarrel about leaving open a scuttle above their adjoining cots in Malayan waters. They landed the next day to have it out, at the instigation of a superior officer who had overheard the heated words between the boys, and one of them fell mortally wounded. In all cases duels in the old navy were fought at a distance of ten paces or less, which accounts for the great number of fatal casualties and severe wounds.

The Barron-Decatur duel is the most celebrated affair in naval annals, because the service lost its ablest, bravest, most high minded and most useful officer, and because the principals were both Commodores—BARRON was two numbers from the head of the naval list, and DECATUR five. There had been bad blood between these officers from the time of BARRON'S suspension for five years for his failure when in command of the Chesapeake on June 22, 1807, to return the fire of the British ship of war Leopard, which had demanded unavailingly the surrender of deserters on board the Chesapeake. BARRON'S scandalous exhibition was not due to cowardice, but to lack of discipline and unpreparedness for such an emergency; his ship, not in a condition to discharge her guns, surrendered. DECATUR, who had asked to be excused from the duty because he had previously formed a low opinion of BARRON'S professional capacity, sat on the court of inquiry. BARRON returned to active service, and brooding over what he considered a wrong engaged in a long and acrimonious correspondence with DECATUR, who was never slow to express his opinion about BARRON as a man and an officer. Both considered duelling a barbarous practice, "but, sir," wrote Commodore BARRON to Commodore DECATUR, "there may be cases of such extraordinary and aggravated insult and injury received by an individual as to render an appeal to arms on his part absolutely necessary." Upon receipt of this epistle, which it is only fair to say was provoked by a contemptuous communication, DECATUR agreed to meet BARRON on "the field of honor." They fought at eight paces and DECATUR was mortally wounded. For thirteen years and until his death, nearly thirty years later, BARRON was senior officer of the navy, but an unhappy man, living under a cloud; and to this day he is held responsible for forcing a duel upon a gallant and popular officer.

Another memorable duel was that between the immortal PERRY and Captain JOHN HEATH of the marines, which was caused by a blow that PERRY always bitterly regretted and which was dealt HEATH in a moment of passion for a breach of discipline. Commodore STEPHEN DECATUR acted as PERRY'S second; the duel took place on October 8, 1818, at Weehawken, and PERRY, who was not hit, fired in the air. Commodore TATNALL, the author of the famous phrase "blood is thicker than water," a hot tempered and fearless officer, fought two duels with British officers in Lord COCHRANE'S Chilean squadron, wounding both of them. In an encounter near Bladensburg on June 23, 1836, Midshipman DANIEL M. KEY, a son of FRANCIS SCOTT KEY, author of "The Star Spangled Banner," was killed by Midshipman JOHN H. SHERBURNE after SHERBURNE had said, "Mr. KEY, I have no desire to kill you," and KEY had responded, "I came to kill you," to which SHERBURNE rejoined, "Very well, then; I will kill you." In an affair near Norfolk on December 22, 1811, Midshipman LANDON MERCER and Mr. ROBERTS, a civilian, the latter the aggressor, standing at three paces apart, killed each other instantly.

Duelling in the old navy was at its height from 1799 to 1836. Mr. PAULLIN records eighty-two duels, in fifty-two of which midshipmen participated. Thirty-six of the principals were killed and one-half of them were wounded. "During the first fifty years of the old navy, 1798-1848, the mortality of naval officers resulting from duels," says Mr. PAULLIN, "was two-thirds that resulting from naval wars." Lieutenant RICHARD SOMERS, who fought three duels one after the other with brother officers, to prove his courage, which they had doubted, was wounded in the first two and fought the third in a sitting posture, wounding his antagonist.

On July 17, 1862, Congress enacted a law that made the sending of a challenge by a naval officer a court-martial offence, but long before that time duelling in the navy had gone out of fashion, although occasionally rumor whispered of a clandestine resort to the "code."

Harvard's Great Reform.

The members of the submerged tenth, or it may be eighth, among the Harvard undergraduates, which has been old fashioned enough to pursue the classics and read HORACE, may use a hackneyed quotation, "Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus," when they read the report of the committee which is to revolutionize the elective system in their university.

All the electives, that is to say, the sum of human knowledge recognized by Harvard University, are arranged in four great divisions; one includes all languages and literatures with art and music, another all the natural sciences, a third history and social science, the last, a curious union, philosophy and mathematics. Why should these two branches of knowledge be joined, unless to conceal in the statistics the smallness of the number of mathematicians by mixing them with the swarm of embryo physiopsychologists? The combination of music or of logic alone with mathematics would have been a return to mediæval notions; a classification with engineering or physics would savor of modern utilitarianism. Each student after the freshman year must choose six studies within one of these groups and six outside; as twelve courses in the last three years constitute the work required for a degree, the student is called upon to put half his time into one of these very broad divisions and to scatter the rest among the others.

If the present system is wrong the report barely touches it; it leaves matters practically as they are. This may be the result of a compromise between opposing ideas, or it may be due to the fact that the time has been too brief for the committee to formulate a thorough and scientific plan of studies. Whenever it does that it must deal with one crying evil: it must limit the number of historical and general culture courses that a student may take. We do not mean the courses in history, but those which the prevalence of the historical method of treatment has developed in nearly every department; where students learn not the subject itself but more or less about it.

The number of students at Harvard or any other college that devote themselves to the mastery of the knowledge which really tells, whether it be a language, a science, mathematics, or a course involving research, is painfully small in comparison with the crowds that seek for the smattering to be obtained from descriptive or historical courses, and that waste their time on questions of the day instead of learning to use the implements they will need when they go out into life. They are not to blame because they are tempted by their instructors and the university. There lies a reform that President LOWELL and his committee may study for the benefit of Harvard and the other universities.

The Roof of the World.

Even if the great things in exploration have all been done, if there are no more Americas or Australias to discover, no more Africas to open up, no new poles to attain, no more delusions for a new JAMES COOK to dissipate, there is plenty about the surface of this globe of ours to be found out still, and the number of smaller geographical problems awaiting solution, the lesser things about which we know nothing at all, is infinite. The attention of explorers has been attracted to the heart of Asia of late, and in the last few years remarkable journeys, involving great hardship and endurance and yielding valuable information, have been made in those regions by men of all nationalities, British, French, German, Russian, Scandinavian, Hindu and Chinese. What they have discovered has hardly found its way to the scientific maps; the ordinary geographies know nothing of it as yet.

They find it difficult to interest the outside world in what they are doing. Their stories are usually accounts of patient toiling for weeks and months through monotonous and dreary deserts and mountains, of tracing dried up river beds or streams that end in swamps and evaporating salt lakes, of work as hard and as uninspiring as dragging sledges over polar ice. It is possible to comprehend their ardor when they are archæologists like Dr. STEIN, and the discovery of cities buried in the sand and abandoned for centuries, or of caves full of manuscripts and art treasures, excites the imagination. Where the explorer, however, is merely attempting to rectify the map, to fill in blank spaces with accurate information and with names which seem to mean little, even though we must admire his effort, his object arouses little sympathy and seems hardly to justify his exertions. He must look for his reward to the geographical societies, which alone can appreciate his achievement.

The region in which the Asiatic explorers have busied themselves lies north of Hindustan. On the school maps it is marked Turkestan, Mongolia, Tibet, and over it are distributed at random deserts and mountain chains. To the difficulties which nature provides in abundance is added the effective objection of Tibetans and Chinese to admit Europeans within their borders. Much has been done in expeditions across the deserts, from west to east, most of which, like the Siberian explorations of the eighteenth century, will remain hidden in the Russian archives. A great deal that is divulged immediately is being accomplished in unravelling the tangle of high mountains, which there form the greatest excrescence on the earth's crust and which has been called, appropriately, the "roof of the world."

Even the names are hardly known save to students of geography, and they too have to struggle with the confusion of the nomenclature. The Himalaya, the wall that shuts off India from the north, every one has heard of, and we all know that it contains the highest known peak, Mount Everest, or as the purists prefer it, Gaurisankar. Many are also familiar with the Hindu Kush, as the region in which our Aryan ancestors did or did not arise. Other ranges have appeared on the maps for some years, stretching at a guess from west to east, the Karakoram, the Kuen Lun, the Altyn Tagh, the Thian Shan, the Nag Shan—the names and spelling vary indefinitely. Yet only a year ago SVEN HEDIN was able to report that a range bigger than the Himalaya, if not with such high peaks, constituted the northern border of the valley of the Brahmaputra, and none of the maps showed it. He has added a definitely surveyed chain of mountains which he calls Transhimalaya, extending for hundreds of miles, to geographical knowledge, and a dozen travellers, at different points, have helped disclose the undiscovered country.

Last year Dr. T. G. LONGSTAFF made an excursion into the Karakoram, north of Kashmir, which is well enough known to have attracted alpinists like Dr. and Mrs. WORKMAN and the Duke of the ABRUZZI. He found a stretch of 150 miles which nobody had touched, and made observations which will make it necessary to change the axis of the chain on the maps. He reported the discovery of a great glacier and the following up of the watershed between the Indus and the Yarkand rivers into a new range, which puts their sources many miles further north than had been suspected. He went back in the early fall to examine his discoveries more closely and his results have just been made public.

His glacier, the Siachen, turns out to be more than forty-four miles long, which makes it the longest not only in the Himalaya but anywhere outside of the polar regions. It pierces through the main range of the Karakoram. The crown of the new range is a group of peaks culminating in one called Teram Kangri, which Dr. LONGSTAFF'S measurement made out to be 27,160 feet high. This, according to the London *Times*, brings it into the same class as Mounts Everest, K2 or Godwin Austen, Kinchiujunga and Makalu. It stands out by itself, has not been shown on the maps; it is difficult to understand how it should have escaped the Indian survey. It should be remembered, however, that back of the Himalayas heights do not rise sheer from the sea level. SVEN HEDIN found the bottom of his valleys to be 15,000 feet above the sea, and his mountain passes were generally over 18,000 feet; it takes a pretty high peak to attract notice at such an elevation.

When the precise data are at hand geographers will determine the import of Dr. LONGSTAFF'S discoveries. He is but one of many explorers now busy in the mountains, and his report gives an idea of the kind of geographical research on which months and years of arduous toil are being expended.

The *Outlook* gives this extraordinary conspectus of the liberation of Italy:

"To the eloquence of his [GLADSTONE'S] impassioned appeal against the atrocities of King BOMBA scarcely less than to the diplomacy of CAVOUR, the statesmanship of FERDINAND and the sword of GAVAZZI does Italy owe her emancipation."

Either this comes by wireless from Africa, or the pint of brandy which we recommended Dr. MABIE to use when editing the Contributing Editor's "copy" has got into the wrong inside.

We congratulate the Hon. JOHN BARRETT on his election as president of the Esperanto Association. He needs a new language every year to express the oratory that arises in him.

Senator LA FOLLETTE absolutely refuses to take any hand in the attempt to eliminate gubernatorial candidates on the radical side so as to unite on one man.—*Milwaukee Sentinel.*

And yet he is the greatest common eliminator, as the tools of the Money Devil in the Senate know.

In the Orient, at least, picturesque ceremonial has not been given up. His Highness the Maharajah of Nepaul, one of the most important of the native States, for some mysterious religious reason has had himself measured in the balance with an equal weight of gold; the gold was converted at once into silver coin and distributed among the poor.

The Maharajah's name is DHIRAJI PRITHVI BIR BIKRAM JANG, with many titles attached; he is entitled to a salute of twenty-one guns, and is 34 years of age, but none of the books gives any estimate of how much he weighs. He must be a weighty potentate if the amount of his largess exceeded $100,000.

See WILSON is on the job.—*Boston Globe.*

Our esteemed contemporary sticks to the rigor of its system of abbreviations, but if it has any bowels it will cease to describe Tama JIM in a way that is sure to get him into trouble in Dry districts.

The Profits of the Middlemen in Foodstuffs.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* You need not send West to see what the Western farmers are receiving for their products when you can gather information practically at your own door. One instance alone has been called to my attention of the prices that the truck gardeners have been receiving for cabbage, which is from $5 to $7.50 a ton, about one-quarter or one-third of a cent a head, while the retail price for this product ranges from 12 to 20 cents a head. There is no doubt of the enormous profits that are being made by the refrigerating companies, middlemen, &c.

I would suggest that a corps of competent men be sent to investigate the prices paid by middlemen to the producers of all farm and garden products, including poultry, eggs, hogs, &c., and the prices charged the public by the retail dealers in this vicinity.

I believe that two or three classes of middlemen are making enormous profits.

NEW YORK, January 4. C. L. HUDSON.

THE PARTY CONFLICT IN ENGLAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In England the Liberals seemed pretty sure of a majority, probably reduced but still large enough. In addition to their regular forces they had on their side all the Socialists and voters inclined that way. They had the suffragette, who though she had not a vote had influence and would not be restrained by bashfulness from exerting it. Yet it seems that negotiations have all the time been going on with the Irish Home Rulers. A bargain apparently has at length been struck, and the Government has pledged itself to home rule. Home rule is at once interpreted by one of the Irish leaders as carrying with it repeal of the Union. It would be impossible to govern the two islands on different principles, with Ireland constantly recalcitrant. Ireland would in fact be lost or worse than lost and a perpetual source of trouble. Thus with closer union, naval and military, of the colonies to the mother country is to go moral dismemberment of the United Kingdom. It seems to be forgotten that in the north of Ireland there is a Teutonic and Protestant population, true to England and the Union, but disregarded in these party combinations.

Entangled with the budget question and now with that of home rule is the question of reform of the House of Lords, which Lord Rosebery apparently is seeking to make the main issue and with regard to which he has himself taken a liberal line. To reform the House of Lords, retaining the hereditary principle, is not possible. In the place of the hereditary house must come a national council of legislative revision, composed of men duly qualified and rationally selected for that function. Meantime there can apparently be no real question as to the right of the House of Lords to a veto on the budget bill or any bill brought before it. Power of affirmation carries power of withholding consent, and implies responsibility in either case.

The list of party issues now embraces, besides that of the budget, reform or abolition of the House of Lords, protection, prohibition, female suffrage, and home rule for Ireland, besides local issues, of which there are sure to be some. Will the time come when such carnivals of animosity, social as well as political, as general elections under the party system will cease to trouble?

Speaking of Ireland, there is one wrong which the Irish heart specially feels and which could be very easily redressed. It is the absenteeism of royalty. George IV. was the first King who since the time of the Norman Conquest had come a peaceful visitor to Ireland. He was rapturously received, even O'Connell finding it wise to join the acclaim. Queen Victoria knew her gracious duty. She showed this morally by her resentment, during the latter and greater part of her reign, when she no longer visited Ireland, of any allusion to the subject. She would have been as safe in the wildest quarter of Ireland as she was in Windsor Castle. The present King has visited Ireland, and it may be hoped is conscious of the happy talisman which he bears.

Speaking of Ireland, it is fair to say of the Catholic clergy of that island that in them and in the Catholic clergy of Quebec we have the two best specimens of the moral and social influence of their orders. Still, they are of the past, and if Ireland is cut loose it would not be surprising to see a struggle for supremacy between them and the politician of the nineteenth century who through the struggle for separation from the Protestant Kingdom has found in them a powerful ally. Of this there have been symptoms already.

GOLDWIN SMITH.

THE VALUE OF FOOTBALL.

Its Moral Effect Under a Sportsmanlike Coach Undeniable.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Does football strengthen or weaken the moral character of the players? Many parents keep their sons from playing football for fear that the game will make them coarse and brutal. They have heard of boys penalized for tripping and cursing, and disqualified for slugging, but they never inquire what was the moral character of the boy before he played football. In every sport there are some contestants who commit fouls, who play as "muckers," not as gentlemen. Such undesirable players sometimes appear even in the ultra-gentlemanly game of polo; but there are as few in football as in any other major sport.

Football is such a popular game that when a player is disqualified the news is spread broadcast and exaggerated by gossip. Last season, however, in the important games in the East, the disqualifications did not average one in twenty-five games. Several years ago rough playing was much more common than now. The same movement that revised the rules led to better trained coaches and more expert officials. To-day very few offenders escape punishment. Players are disqualified for slugging, kneeing and kicking, and suspended from the game for any "unsportsmanlike conduct."

Football played according to the rules does not weaken but strengthens the moral character of the players. If it were merely a contest of physical strength it might have a bad effect on a player in arousing in him the savage passions for physical supremacy. But football to-day demands brains and will power as well as muscle. It teaches a boy the value of discipline, of always keeping control of himself, even under trying circumstances. Of all the qualifications of a gentleman self-control is the greatest. Although success in football depends on taking advantage of the failure of others, yet this does not weaken character. All life is a similar struggle, a competition in which a man succeeds not only by his own strength but by the weakness of his rivals.

The moral effect of football depends largely on the coach. If he is a man of good morals his team will play a fair, sportsmanlike game. His influence is often more lasting than that of the boy's teachers. For this reason a school should have a permanent coach whose salary and appointment do not depend on the victories of his team. The ideal coach is a teacher who during the season is relieved of most of his class work.

Such a coach elevates the actions and the speech of the players, not only on the field but everywhere. From him a boy quickly learns that criticising his team mates does not excuse his own shortcomings; that cursing consumes time and energy which could better be spent in action; that success depends on working with others for a common purpose, on instantly taking advantage of his opportunities, on immediately obeying his leader, and on constantly and consistently keeping his body, mind and will under control. GRADUATE.

ARDMORE, Pa., December 31.

Expressing Their Political Convictions.

From the London Chronicle.

Some old time politicians were not content with wearing ribbons as an outward and visible sign of their convictions. "In those days," writes a follower of Pitt who bore the soothing name of James Bland Burges, "men had the courage of their convictions, and would have made motley their garb to distinguish themselves from their opponents. To belong to the Constitutional Club was a very simple affair—no balloting or fees beyond cost of costume.

"A gentleman desirous of becoming a member wrote his name in the club book and hurried to the tailor to be measured for a dark blue frock with a broad orange velvet cape and large yellow buttons, round each of which was inscribed "Constitutional Club." The waistcoat was of blue kerseymere, with yellow buttons, bordered all round with orange colored silk, and the breeches of white kerseymere with yellow buttons. In point of taste we certainly beat the blue and buff of our opponents."

DESOLATION OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

Judaism Said to Have Lost Its Hold on the Living Jewish Generation.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Permit me in a few words to comment upon the Jewish religious statistics of this country according to the official figures of the Bureau of the Census, just issued. The 533 congregations of 1890 have increased to 1,769 in 1906 (i. e., 231 per cent.), four-fifths of them, of course, being miniature congregations made up in rude fashion by our immigrants from eastern Europe. One thousand one hundred and fifty-two which sent their figures report 101,457 members, representing—five persons to a family—about 500,000 Jewish souls affiliated officially with synagogal life. We are certainly within the limits of truth if we assume that the 617 congregations which "neglected" to tell their story possess no larger an average membership than fifty, i. e., 30,850 heads of families, representing 154,250 souls, or, to total up, of the 2,000,000 Jews in this country 654,250, or one-third, only are connected with the synagogue.

The full meaning of these figures, however, will not dawn upon the reader before he becomes aware that the Jewish immigration between 1890 and 1906 amounted to at least 750,000; that the Jews in this country before 1881, the beginning of the east European immigration, numbered no more than 250,000, and finally that the majority of these native Jews and their descendants have long ago forsaken the Jewish religious life and its appurtenances. Or, in other words, even of the 1,700,000 "orthodox" Jews and their offspring who settled on these shores from 1881 to 1909 not more than 500,000 find it worth their while to register at the synagogal offices.

What does all this mean? Simply that Judaism as a religion in its present shape has absolutely lost its hold on the living Jewish generation, for even the most optimistic Jewish statistician will admit that the average Sabbath attendance in the 1,769 congregations hardly averages 100, representing again one-third only even of the officially faithful "remnant of Israel."

NACHMAN KOHEN KROCHMAL.

NEW YORK, January 1.

DEGENERATE MODERNS.

Unequal to Pie and the Strong Diet of the Eighteenth Century.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* A distinguished authority has recently declared that we are eating more heartily than we did fifty years ago. On the contrary, statistics ought to prove to us that we are putting ourselves on the most modest, even a starvation, diet in comparison with what we are pleased to call those "good old times"; those days when our forebears wore flannels of an impassioned crimson and ate pie for breakfast. Yet one sage historian declares it was that pie for breakfast that "caused the hatefulness that was the very backbone of Puritanism." Alas—and are we becoming less hateful?

It is sad but true that when we sneak home late at night and go slinking about the pantry for what we may devour, hygienic cereals and frugal, predigested things do not appeal to us. By some overmastering, passionate instinct, man takes pie if he can find it: and instinct is vastly superior to cold reason at such an hour.

So why be surprised and complain tearfully later when our dreams recall Lewis Carroll's immortal lines:

He thought it was a buffalo
Upon the chimney piece;
He looked again, and saw it was
His sister's husband's niece.

Moreover, when we read the menus of a hundred years ago we can but shudder at the gourmandizing of that age. Twenty courses was only a moderate order for old English dinners, when sheep were served roasted whole in their wool, and fowls by the dozen went into a simple meat pie.

Yet, "by all tell," the eighteenth century digestion rose bravely to the occasion. To be sure, we sometimes read of a few gouty old lords being overtaken by seizures from excessive eating, but this simply proves the rule. They were only a few irascible old parties who doubtless richly deserved their fate; and then, they would have died in time, anyway.

Certainly we are living on the frugal side in these times: and let us not decry the goodies of another age—certainly not the honored pie, sung by Emerson and other immortals. Dante puts ingratitude into the lowest hell: and is it not treasonable in us to kick at the ladder by which we have climbed? LAURA SIMMONS.

STAPLETON, S. I., January 1.

Notes From Abroad.

Our Consul at Tamsui, Formosa, writes that sales of American electrical machinery and supplies, lumbering machinery, bicycles and canned provisions could be increased. Formosa is known to the world generally as the principal source of the camphor supply. The natural resources include exceedingly valuable forests, gold, coal and sulphur mines. The most highly developed industries are sugar, rice, tea, camphor, opium and salt, the last three being Government monopolies.

The ice factory at Smyrna, Asia Minor, erected by an American company of $160,000 capital, capacity seventy tons of crystal ice daily, is a success. A brewery, capacity 400 barrels a day, is to be added. This plant will be the means of selling American ice making machinery for plants in the other large cities of Asia Minor and the islands of the archipelago, reports our Consul at Smyrna.

Exports from the Straits Settlements to the United States and elsewhere consist of cloves, coffee, copra, cubebs, gambier, gums, gutta-percha, gutta-jelatong, hides, mace, nutmegs, pepper, rubber, rattans, sago, tapioca and pineapples. Operating as wholesale distributors for the Orient, the merchants of the Straits Settlements import about everything.

Roller skating is more popular than ever in Great Britain, with American made skates greatly in favor.

House rents in Rio de Janeiro are extremely high, three or four room houses far in the suburbs renting at $30 to $45 a month. Families with $225 a month or less income are paying $75 to $120 a month for five or seven room houses. Taxes are high—12 per cent. of all rents must be paid to the city treasury as taxes. Then there are special taxes, sanitary, water, street cleaning, &c. About $3,800,000 a year is collected for taxes on rentals. In real estate transfers the city collects 20 per cent. of the purchase price as a special tax. The municipal government, however, furnishes homes at reasonable rents for workingmen's families and for others who live in congested sections of the city.

A Japanese syndicate has purchased a large tract of land in Brazil to establish a Japanese colony there. This colony is about forty miles from Rio de Janeiro, only four miles from a railroad and along the coast.

In the first nine months of this year 222,537 Italians emigrated to the United States, against 48,997 in the corresponding period of 1908, an increase of 173,540. From Patras, Greece, in the first half of 1909 came 12,345 persons, nearly four times as many as in the whole of 1908, and more than twice as many as in all 1907.

Hamburg, Germany, offers a new market for the canned pineapples of Hawaii.

The British Government will spend $3,000,000 on highway improvements this coming first year of the new roads department. All kinds of road making machinery, tools, maintenance implements, &c., will be needed, also stone and slag crushing machinery and water carts.

Exports $30,993,563 and imports $27,792,397 is the record of the Philippine Islands for 1909 fiscal year, according to the last quarterly summary issued by the Bureau of Insular Affairs, Washington, D. C. Exports, compared with 1908, decreased about $2,000,000 and imports about $3,000,000. Great Britain secured $2,600,000 of the $4,600,000 cotton goods import trade. The United States came in for only $452,000 worth of it. The rest went to Japan, Switzerland, British India, China and Spain. In iron and steel goods and machinery the United States led with $818,000 out of $1,933,000. The only other American lead was in kerosene.

The Canadian banks have total assets valued at $1,135,000,000.

Another Malthusian.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The time is coming when there will be more people on the earth than it can feed. I shall be dead then, so I will give my advice now. Don't let men and women marry till they are thirty-five or forty years old. This law would bring relief in a generation or two. Such a remedy would only have to be used every two or three hundred years.

NEW YORK, January 1. W. W. STICKLEY.

The Rev. Calabar Bean's Famous Grandson.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Did not that venerable librarian Jared Bean that you recently discovered spell his name with a double "r"?

BROOKLYN, January 1. H. P. D.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY.

The Apostles' Creed as a Whole No Longer Commands Belief.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I have read the letters in THE SUN of "Experimenter" and "Inquirer" upon present Christianity and the state of the churches. "Experimenter" says in effect that people do not go to churches because they do not believe in the creeds. This is probably the chief reason. "Inquirer" gives what he considers the gist of the Apostles' Creed. He does not give it all.

It calls for belief in the existence of a personal God and the creation of the world by Him; belief in the birth of a God on this earth; belief in the birth of a man of a virgin; belief in a personal spirit called the Holy Ghost; belief in resurrection of the dead; belief in the immortality of the soul. It calls for a belief in a work of the "supernatural," in the ordinary sense of the word. There does not exist a particle of scientific evidence or reputable testimony in favor of any of these beliefs. Very few laymen in these days and no men of science can aid or abet any such teachings. Clergymen even are troubled, as they grow older and wiser, by the so-called beliefs to which they subscribed when they took orders in the enthusiasm and ignorance of youth. What scientific men and educated laymen cannot accept, cultivated clergymen cannot defend. I have talked to many. I will give you an account of one interview with a distinguished clergyman of the church in which I was brought up and confirmed. When I was in college, more than twenty-five years ago, I had several discussions with Endicott Peabody, now headmaster of Groton, over the difficulty of squaring the Apostles' Creed with the modern conception of the universe, and as we could not agree he advised me to go to Phillips Brooks, whom I knew, and to talk with him. At first I refused, but finally, for two reasons, first, because I did not wish to appear obstinate, and then again because I was curious to hear what Phillips Brooks would say, I went.

He was the rector of Trinity in Boston and he saw me in his large study at the rectory. I had put my difficulties with the Creed into as small compass as I could, and he let me talk for twenty minutes. Finally he got up and walked once up and down the room without saying anything. Then he stopped before me and said: "Chapman, I cannot help you: these are things you must thresh out for yourself."

That, with the exception of a few friendly inquiries as to other matters, ended the interview. Whatever admiration I had had before for Phillips Brooks was doubled and fixed for his straightforward and manly answer. He showed that whatever his personal convictions might be he respected the intellectual integrity of another man, however young.

It was the right thing, the only thing, for him to say, but it was not, for a future Bishop, a very strong defence of the Creed.

HENRY GRAFTON CHAPMAN.

NEW YORK, January 1.

Why Liberal Christianity Is Not That of the Catholic Church.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The discordant ideas expressed by some of the writers of the letters on Christianity that are appearing in THE SUN would keep a Catholic busy replying and contradicting. They seem to know more about us than we know about ourselves. Would it not be more reasonable for them to credit us with a right understanding of Catholic truth and to acknowledge that it is for us to maintain and defend it?

Some too are professing Christians! The old pagans used to exclaim: "How these Christians love one another!" What must unbelievers to-day think and say who regard Catholics and Protestants alike as the followers of Christ? No wonder they ridicule us for this never ending war we wage between ourselves.

Mr. Jardine misquotes me in my letter of December 17. I did not "concede that the tide of immigration explains the marvellous growth of the Catholic Church." What I said was that "the tide of immigration by no means explains this marvellous growth." He goes on expanding from this misquotation and cites another to show that the Catholic Church would cease to be in fifty years if immigration ceased. This is ridiculously untrue. How to care for the immigrant classes and at the same time attend to the growing Catholic population at home is the perplexing problem of every Catholic Bishop and priest. That there should be some leakage from the Church among the immigrants is inevitable. That the stopping of this leakage would double her membership is absurd.

It is true that liberal Christianity is not the Christianity of the Catholic Church; neither was it, as far as I understand, the Christianity of Christ. It is the Christianity of those who profess not the faith of Christ, but their own faith; who maintain the right to interpret the Scriptures and think for themselves in matters of faith and morals.

The Christianity of the Catholic Church is the body of doctrine delivered by Christ to His Apostles with the commission from Him to "preach the Gospel to every creature"; to "teach them all things whatsoever I have commanded"; with the promise of the "Spirit of Truth" to "remain with you forever," against which even "the gates of hell shall not prevail."

This Christianity leaves no Christian free to accept or reject or interpret it as he pleases. Catholics believe in the authority of their Church to teach infallibly and to interpret the faith delivered by Christ to His Apostles and their successors.

Because Catholics submit to the teaching authority of the Church it is said of them that they do not think; that they are not free to think. The very opposite is true. Catholics are thoroughly and systematically taught. The sole reason for the existence of the parochial school system in the Church is that children may be taught religion daily. The Sunday school is not deemed sufficient for the instruction of a thorough Catholic. In accepting freely the authority of the Church in teaching divine truth a Catholic makes the most perfect use of his liberty by choosing wisely and well a safe guide in a most vital matter, the salvation of his immortal soul.

How simple it is to insinuate that all the thinking is done by non-Catholics or by Catholics who have fallen away from the Church! I have long since felt that the "Modernist movement" is dead and buried as far as the Catholic Church is concerned; killed, if you wish to put it that way, by a stroke of the Pope's pen; which is only another way of saying that "Rome has spoken."

Of course Mr. Jardine's modernist is a martyr to the cause of "honest investigation into the so-called truths of Christianity." I fail to discover that "saner, nobler and more intellectual appreciation of Jesus that is gaining ground everywhere," save among believing Christians who worship Jesus as God.

There are people to be found everywhere who see but the evil side of their Catholic neighbors and who draw conclusions about Catholics in general and the Catholic Church in particular. Well, the Catholic Church is not made up of saints. At the same time the spiritual life of every Catholic parish is "vigorous and healthy, fruitful in the sanctity of many true Christians."

GEORGE F. BROWN.

RAHWAY, N. J., December 31.

Astræa Redux.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Please accept the sincere thanks of all Red Cross workers for the editorial article of December 30 on the abuse of the stamp idea. It is to be feared, however, that the suffragists will not take the broad views advocated by THE SUN. A prominent suffragist on having her attention called to the article replied oracularly, "The greater includes the less."

This being a self-evident proposition the interlocutor waited in patience for further wisdom, which came as follows: "There would be no more tuberculosis if women voted. There would be no more unsanitary conditions, and there would be no more vice or intemperance." To the query how that was to be managed came the reply: "Within five years after women secured the franchise we should have a woman Mayor of New York; we should have a city government composed entirely of women, with possibly a few well tested male reformers. Every saloon would be closed, every prohibitive ordinance strictly enforced. The people, having no temptation to spend money on drink or amusements, would eat better food and tuberculosis would disappear."

After such a forecast has THE SUN the heart to retard the coming of the millennium?

NEW YORK, January 1. A. B. H.

A Case of "Laboratory Cholera."

From the Lancet.

The Russian medical journal the *Vratch* published in July last the following interesting details of a case of cholera contracted in the course of laboratory work. A lady student working in a laboratory in St. Petersburg was investigating the agglutination characters of a cholera vibrio isolated from a sample of water taken from a manufactory in the city. By accident some of the contents of a pipette entered her mouth. In spite of immediate efforts to disinfect the mouth a typical attack of cholera followed. Fortunately the patient recovered.