The Sun.

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Mr. Choate and the Eighth Decade.

Yesterday was the birthday of the Hon. JOSEPH HODGES CHOATE, a son of Massachusetts and a citizen of New York for more than half a century. By the conventional and the least significant method of measurement his age appears to be seventy-eight. According to the standards of vital endurance, bodily and mental power, unblunted interest in the world around him and undiminished faculties for public usefulness Mr. JOSEPH H. CHOATE is anywhere in the golden prime.

It is a fact perhaps worth mentioning that at the present time the Senate of the United States contains not less than thirteen members who were born, like Mr. CHOATE, in the prolific '30s of the last century. This is almost exactly one-seventh of the entire Senate, a notable proportion. Three of the Senators belonging to this class are the seniors of the distinguished jurisconsult who stands at the head of the American bar. Two of them, indeed, are his seniors by three years in each case. And Mr. CHOATE, we must observe further, is but two years older by the family Bible than the Hon. CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW, who, if we do not mistake the usual symptoms of continued political expectancy, is now beginning an active campaign to promote his own election to the Senate for the six years from the fourth of March, 1911.

Were we to venture to congratulate Mr. CHOATE upon his status in life according to that truer chronology which does not depend wholly or even chiefly upon arithmetical computation, where could we find a more felicitous formula than in the remarks which he himself addressed at Lincoln's Inn to Lord HALSBURY?

"He is the very incarnation," said Mr. CHOATE, "of perennial youth. Time, like an ever rolling stream, bears all its sons away, but the Lord Chancellor seems to stem the tide of time. Instead of retreating like the rest of us before its advancing waves, he is actually working his way up stream. He demonstrates what I have been trying to prove for the last three years, that the eighth decade of life is far the best, and I am sure he will join with me in advising you all to hurry up and get into it as soon as you can."

The Immunity of the Innocent.

It is just twelve days since the American Sugar Refining Company published this bold asseveration of belief in the innocence of the higher up:

"No attempt whatever has been made to shield any one, and your board has no reason to believe, and does not believe, that any executive officer or director of this company had any knowledge of or participation in this fraudulent underweighing."

The report containing this paragraph was signed by C. R. HEIKE, an executive officer of the company.

Since then Mr. CHARLES R. HEIKE has been indicted for conspiracy to defraud the Government in the matter of this fraudulent underweighing of sugar and he has been brought to the bar of justice to plead.

The special plea of Mr. HEIKE, reported this morning, is to claim immunity from prosecution because he has given evidence to the Grand Jury in the matter of the sugar frauds. This plea is unquestionably within the constitutional rights of the innocent.

The Futile Meat Boycott.

If there is a combination of packers that regulates meat prices and if it is true that the demand for meat exceeds the supply, an assertion often made in the interests of the packers and middlemen, it is plain that the consumers' boycotts reported will not alarm or perplex such a combination. It could send its products where it pleased and restrict the quantity of them. Thus the meat supply of Cleveland, where the boycott started and is robust, has been adjusted to the diminished demand and prices remain about the same. We quote from a Cleveland despatch:

"Although a canvass of all the retail butcher shops in the First ward, a representative middle class section of the city, shows a falling off in trade of from one-half to three-fourths in that locality, the exceedingly small receipts of live stock here have operated, according to the butchers, to keep prices up. The decline on beef has been but 15 cents on the hoof and on lamb 10 cents."

The retailer apparently is the only sufferer; he would be ruined if the supply of meat to Cleveland continued to be small as a result of the boycott, and the combination, assuming that there is one, would divert the meat which Cleveland did not want to other large cities where the demand for it was normal. Logically, prices if under control would remain the same for all meat eaters.

A general boycott including the whole country would bring to terms for the time being any combination that existed, but the boycott will not become general, because consumers cannot be organized to maintain a Spartan front to the packers. Moreover, the labor unions, which alone could expect to enforce a boycott among consumers, are not all agreed as to the wisdom or humanity of the pledge to abstain from eating meat. The Central Trades and Labor Council of St. Louis rejected on Sunday a resolution calling for a boycott on the ground that it would entail unnecessary suffering. In the long run it would play into the hands of consolidated dealers, who could regulate supply and prices. Some other remedy must be found to check monopoly than vows not to consume its products, vows that will be taken only by a small minority of the people, who will be the sufferers by this heroic measure.

The Right Place for the Right Man.

The choice of Mr. GIFFORD PINCHOT to be president and active manager of the National Conservation Association will be universally approved. His knowledge, his zeal and the undoubted honesty of his purposes and methods make him the proper person to direct the popular movement for conservation. The assistance which he will be able to give to Congress and to the Executive will be not the less because unofficial in the governmental sense.

President PINCHOT will have a strong following and a great opportunity, and THE SUN sincerely hopes that he will be able to do much good.

The State Bar Association and the Thaw Case.

The New York State Bar Association was incorporated by the Legislature in 1877 "to cultivate the science of jurisprudence, to promote reform in the law, to facilitate the administration of justice, to elevate the standard of integrity, honor and courtesy in the legal profession and to cherish the spirit of brotherhood among the members thereof."

Thus far its management has been for the most part wise and conservative and well adapted to the attainment of its professed ends. It has obtained recognition of such a character that it might fairly be termed a semi-official or quasi-official organization. It is allowed by the State to occupy rooms in the Capitol at Albany. Among its presidents have been many leaders of the bar; we may mention JOHN K. PORTER, SAMUEL HAND, DAVID B. HILL, WILLIAM B. HORNBLOWER, JOHN G. MILBURN, RICHARD L. HAND, JOSEPH H. CHOATE, FRANCIS LYNDE STETSON, and the president-elect, Senator ELIHU ROOT.

We sincerely regret to find reason for criticism of so useful an institution. It is difficult to understand how any intelligent body of representative lawyers could be brought to sanction such a production as the report of the special committee on the commitment and discharge of the insane, which was laid before the New York State Bar Association at Rochester last week. This document is devoted chiefly to an intemperate denunciation of the proceedings in the case of HARRY K. THAW, who is not named, but is characterized as "a youthful debauchee of great wealth."

If this paper were not the composition of lawyers its authors might well be excused for declaring that the acquittal of THAW was a miscarriage of justice, and that on principles of concrete right he ought to be kept in prison as long as possible, not because he is insane but because he is a criminal. This position, however, will hardly do for lawyers. They know that the jury is the tribunal to which the law commits the determination of the question of guilt or innocence in a criminal case, and that if a criminal trial has been fairly conducted there is no propriety in condemning the result from a legal point of view. For the verdict under such circumstances the jury and the jury alone is responsible. Yet merely because the members of the State Bar Association committee are dissatisfied with the verdict in the Thaw case they want to abolish insanity as a defence in criminal prosecutions and change the law of habeas corpus as it has existed for centuries.

Under the presidency of ELIHU ROOT they will be apt to discover that the Constitution forms an insuperable barrier in the way of their more radical projects, and we believe there is too much intelligence in the Legislature to entertain those proposed changes for a moment. It is a noteworthy fact that the committee was so afraid of disapproval by the press that it prefaced the report with a request to treat it as a personal communication until after the Rochester meeting lest its contents should be discussed by the newspapers in the first instance.

The special committee tells the association that the first trial of THAW, by reason of the manner in which it was conducted, degenerated into "a disgraceful farce," while the second trial was conducted properly and with dignity. The second trial took place before Mr. Justice VICTOR J. DOWLING; the "disgraceful farce" was enacted before Mr. Justice JAMES FITZGERALD. Judge FITZGERALD is an honorary member of the State Bar Association, whose special committee under the chairmanship of Mr. JOHN BROOKS LEAVITT thus holds a reputable Supreme Court Judge up to public ridicule and contempt. This is a queer way to cherish the spirit of brotherhood which the charter of the association talks about. It seems more like cherishing the spirit of cats and dogs.

The committee wants to restrict the right of alleged insane persons to sue out writs of habeas corpus because Mr. LEAVITT and his associates are afraid that THAW will eventually find a Supreme Court Justice whose head is not able to control his heart. "He will at last be found," they say, "and then upon a petition to him presented by counsel *persona grata* and backed up by the testimony of medical experts whose favorable opinions can be bought for cash the path to freedom will be cleared of all obstacles." As to this prediction, we may observe that no such soft hearted Judge has been found thus far. Furthermore the action of those who have refused to release THAW tends strongly to confirm the correctness of the verdict of the jury to the effect that he was insane when he shot STANFORD WHITE.

The reference to the supposed influence of "counsel *persona grata*" in the passage we have quoted from the report is a slur upon the judiciary of the State which we are sorry to see in the official proceedings of an organization which has enjoyed so high a standing as the New York State Bar Association. A committee of this character ought to weigh its words more carefully.

Discipline at West Point.

Secretary DICKINSON is a very able and accomplished gentleman. He has won laurels in the law and has made a mark in cognate occupations and employments; but is he not making haste too swiftly when he undertakes to promote or at least to patronize a movement intended to relax the discipline established at West Point in respect of hazing?

Whatever Mr. DICKINSON may have heard in the premises, the existing laws on that subject are the result of long experience and dispassionate study by men both observant and responsible. He is hardly warm in his seat as Secretary of War, and yet we are told that he is in sympathy with an effort to introduce elasticity into existing legislation, either by modifying the laws or by liberalizing the functions of those who administer them. The active, working officers of the army are almost to a man advocates of the present regulations and their strict enforcement, for they know what hazing really means and are in a position to appraise its evil influences. That the politicians are of another way of thinking is intelligible enough, but just why a man of Secretary DICKINSON's parts should incline to their view is a conundrum we shall not undertake to solve.

Politics and political influences are already powerful enough in army and navy affairs. Members of Congress appoint young men to the academies on the strength of their standing before local examining boards, and that should satisfy them. They offer to everybody an opportunity on perfectly equal terms. After that they should leave details to the military authorities, who have had military training and know what is best for the youths destined to command. To follow the average boy through college, protect him in his indiscretions and release him from the consequences of his more serious offences is beyond the power of the ordinary Senator or Representative.

The restoration of hazing as it is now projected, under a more alluring name perhaps, can lead to only one of two results: either the youngsters will become victims again of the browbeating and barbaric processes of the big boys or the example given by one BEAUMONT B. BUCK of Texas many years ago will be followed by other robust cadets. BUCK declared openly that he would not be humiliated, and when the hazers broke into his room prepared to "put him through" he shot the leader of the party, shot him through and through. He was never hazed again, and has served ever since as an officer of high character and enviable achievement.

Secretary DICKINSON should leave military discipline to military men.

"The Green Duck."

The pleasure of the millions of mankind in the spectacle of genius in undress and of greatness at ease is too well established to require any apology on our part for presenting, through autobiographical medium, an intimate view of the Hon. THOMAS MOTT OSBORNE, who as a Public Service Commissioner in fact and a Democrat in theory enjoys Statewide fame. The autobiography whence we derive our information bears the inspiring title of "The Tale of the Green Duck." This bird is not, as might be thought by the careless, the subject of the autobiography, but the craft which is bearing the eminent public servant down the Susquehanna in a region hitherto known for the exploits of the "Deer Slayer."

Most interesting to us is the evidence in this literary effort of how admirably adapted to all phases of life is the scientific mind, which makes Public Service Commissioners great. Thus at the outset the distinguished author and his fortunate companion, who is described as "Tramp," we assume to give a railroad touch, are disclosed as hungry and hunting for breakfast in a grocery:

"A couple of fine specimens of the *Cucumis Melo* soon rewarded our search; the *Prunus Ordinarius* and the *Persicum Americanum* were not unwelcome additions; while it will be generally admitted that no larder would be complete without those homely and useful standbys the *Biscuita Angleterra* and the *Caseus Bovenis*."

Who but a Public Service Commissioner inspired by that genius which drives railroad magnates to madness in its demand for statistics could thus offhand, in the happy hour of leisure, instantly fix upon a classification of the prune, the cheese, the cracker, which would endure the acid test of time? The "Tramp," a common sort of person, we judge, objected to the happy turn of language we have quoted. He is thus properly rebuked:

"I also point out to him that every respectable traveller in relating his adventures drops occasionally into the language of the country in order to impress his readers. * * * 'My young friend,' I remark in conclusion, 'if you should say that in going across a field your foot struck against a *Symplocarpus Fœtidus* people would sit up and take notice, but they would simply laugh at you if you said it was skunk cabbage.'"

A little thing, a simple incident ineffably trivial, yet it is so wonderfully symbolical of the character of the great man who thus speaks. More than that, to us, we protest, it is the ultimate revelation in authentic words of the source of the grandeur of all Public Service Commissioners. Who but a member of this honorable body, tripping over a plant in a meadow, falling in the damp and boisome marsh, could rise triumphantly exclaiming, "*Symplocarpus Fœtidus*"? For ourselves, we confess it would have been skunk cabbage or nothing.

It is these little things that teach us the value of great men and institutions. Henceforth we shall understand both Public Service Commissions better, knowing that genius which can impart dignity and something of majesty to the humble meadow plant can soar and sweep when traffic and transit problems claim its august mind.

A Vision of Government.

Statesmen in Washington who are smitten with the idea that the country cannot be saved from decay unless Mr. ROOSEVELT is elected Speaker of the House of Representatives seem to have forgotten that the Speaker doesn't speak, or speaks only to recognize members and put and pass upon motions. It is true that he can take the floor, and occasionally does, to make a personal statement, but his real business is to regulate the speaking and not to speak himself. Even his gavel is silent most of the time, a mere symbol of office, however large and flexible his biceps is. To discharge his functions well he must be not only letter perfect in parliamentary law but a model of reticence, patience and self-control. Have the promoters of the Speakership boom considered how Mr. ROOSEVELT would like to adjust himself to the conditions the office imposes? But there is another view of the case: that of Representative JAMES KENNEDY of Ohio, who has been long enough in Congress to know what he wants. Says he:

"Bring ROOSEVELT back from Africa, elect him to Congress and make him Speaker. That's the programme for me. With TAFT, the biggest and strongest constructive statesman, in the White House to direct legislation, and with ROOSEVELT, the miracle of energy, at the other end of Pennsylvania avenue, we would have the greatest and best Government the country has known."

Apparently Mr. TAFT and Mr. ROOSEVELT would have the game between them under this scheme of government. Mr. ROOSEVELT would legislate, and Mr. TAFT would sign the bills and send his messages to Mr. ROOSEVELT. There would be no more vetoes. Congress would sit at the Speaker's pleasure and rise to gallop across country to Virginia or scale the precipitous sides of Rock Creek when the weather was most unpropitious. Mr. ROOSEVELT would be the majority, and the minority wouldn't matter. The Senate would automatically cooperate with him, and it would not be necessary to appoint conferees to reconcile differences between the House and Senate. The speeches would be made by the Speaker, and he would appropriate. The gavel would be used only to enforce silence.

Mr. KENNEDY's proposal is not susceptible of any other realization. He desires a joint Government administered by Mr. ROOSEVELT as Speaker and by the President of the United States. It would be "the greatest and best Government" not so much because Mr. TAFT is constructive as because Mr. ROOSEVELT is mighty destructive. Mr. TAFT having to deal with a "miracle of energy" would necessarily be in a subordinate and responsive capacity, and the greatest and best Government would of course partake of the supernatural.

An incautious highwayman held up Miss LULU VAN FLEET, teacher in Lincoln High School, late last night. Miss VAN FLEET after severely punishing him threw him in a snowbank and jumped on him. In her agitation she left her purse where it had fallen and the robber got it after all.—*Despatch from Cleveland.*

Just like a woman, the thoughtless will say, but compared with the achievement of overcoming a bold robber what was the loss of a purse?

Stabbed fifteen times; also shot, will not talk. —*Headline.*

Evidently not an insurgent.

It is reported from Los Angeles that the dirigible balloon lent by the War Department during the "aviation meet" in that city made no ascents, because it would not hold gas. It is said that "an investigation has been ordered." Our recollection is that Congress refused to make an adequate appropriation to provide the army with airships and it has had to get along with such contributions as could be squeezed out of general appropriations

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I do not wish to say what the charges are, neither do I wish to shirk them.—*The Hon.* BENN CONGER.

A master of paradox is the Hon. BENN.

Home Rule.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Why should the Irish hope of home rule depend upon Liberal success? The Tory strength in the new House of Commons is likely to be equal to that of the Liberals and Radicals combined.

A bargain between Balfour and the Nationalists for a moderate Irish bill would be perhaps the best move for Ireland at present, for the Tories can control the House of Lords and thus carry out their bargain speedily and effectively; besides which the Tories would not expect the Irish members in return to help them in their various doubtful experiments.

ALFRED B. CRUIKSHANK.

NEW YORK, January 24.

Happy Lands.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Which is to be more envied, Africa with T. R. or South America with W. J. B.?

For the relief, even though temporary, the United States should be profoundly grateful. E. T. W.

NEW YORK, January 24.

An Anti-Suffragist.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Every now and then some opponent of equal rights annoyed by one of my communications to the press relieves his feelings by sending me an anonymous letter.

One of these gentlemen cut out my last letter to THE SUN and enclosed it to me in an epistle in which he informed me that I did not "care a wrap" (sic) if woman suffrage disrupted the home; that "all over the world women's labor is cheaper as men's," and that laws such as prevail in New York and Massachusetts making fathers and mothers equal guardians of their children "are an insult to the father."

He also said that we have "too many voters." I am not an advocate of restricted suffrage, but if any of our present voters were to be eliminated it might be well to debar from the ballot some of the men who have not been here long enough either to master the English language or to enter into the spirit of our institutions.

ALICE STONE BLACKWELL.

DORCHESTER, Mass., January 24.

Another Good Old Tar Heel Word.

From the Charlotte Observer.

Besides Sampson county, Onslow comes forward as a shipper of Jerusalem oak seed. The seed, in molasses, as an old time domestic remedy, we are told, "can be swallowed more easily under the name of 'dumbseed.'"

FRUITS OF THE LAST SESSION OF PARLIAMENT.

Public interest has been so much concentrated on the great budget fight with its weighty constitutional sequelæ that hardly any attention has been paid to the other activities of the session of the British Parliament which recently came to an end. This is true not only in America but even in England; yet the session was fruitful in momentous legislation, and the general wisdom of the laws enacted does not seem to be questioned, despite the bitter feelings stirred up by the general elections. Even so partisan a critic as the London *Times* treats the chief measures, severally and collectively, as beneficial to the empire.

Of course all the annual bills making appropriation for the maintenance of the army and navy and for carrying on the Government were passed, and in connection with them several reforms were effected. The annual army act contains provisions which though not effective until ratified by the colonial legislatures, some of which have acted favorably, pave the way for a large scheme of imperial organization. In the United Kingdom it transfers to the Army Council, which consists of the Secretary for War, Chief of General Staff, Adjutant-General, Quartermaster-General, Master General of Ordnance, Under Secretary of War and Financial Secretary, the greater portion of the former powers of the Secretary for War and all those of the Commander in Chief and the Adjutant-General. It is the first step toward the reorganization of the British land forces.

Three significant navy acts were passed. One provides for turning over imperial naval property in any colony to the Governor thereof. It is in furtherance of the conclusions of the Imperial Defence Conference held last summer in London. Another measure musters colonial naval defence volunteers into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve. The third substitutes "detention" in ships or buildings to be called Naval Detention Quarters for imprisonment as a penalty for offences not involving dismissal from the service. The object is to remove the stigma of imprisonment from minor offenders against discipline.

One of the most important acts of the session was the Irish land act, which after much modification by the Lords seems to suit both of the English parties. It is a complex measure under which a large additional sum is provided on imperial credit to aid land purchase by the Irish tenant farmers, in extension of the operations under the act of 1903. The act reconstitutes the Congested Districts Board, increasing its powers. The Estates Commissioners also get additional power to compel the sale of land. Finally, a committee is established to start promotion of the valuable Irish fishery interests. Incidentally it may be remarked that added protection is given to these by the trawling in prohibited areas prevention act, which makes it impossible for foreign poachers to sell their catch in the British Islands. An Irish act was also passed to encourage Irish textile industry by the protection of its peculiar marks.

Not second in importance to the Irish legislation was the passage of the Indian councils act, by which it is hoped discontent in Hindustan may be alleviated through giving the natives a greater share in the government of their country. The Federation of South Africa act was truly an epoch making statute. So far it seems to be producing all the good effects that were expected from it.

There is nothing so characteristic of the late Parliament as its enactments in the line of "social reform." Two notable acts apply directly to the interests of labor. One of these is the act establishing labor exchanges, and the Board of Trade has already made considerable headway in realizing its provisions. The board is empowered to maintain these exchanges or to cooperate with local authorities or voluntary bodies by collecting and furnishing information as to the requirements of employers. The board is to establish a system for lending money to workers for travelling expenses incurred in taking up jobs found for them by the exchanges.

The second labor measure is the trade boards act. It is based on Australian labor legislation, and so far applies only to tailoring, lace making and the manufacture of boxes and chains. It may be extended by "provisional order" to other trades. Employers and workpeople are to be represented equally on the boards, and the Board of Trade may add half as many members to the quota. It appoints in addition the chairman and secretary, who are paid by the Treasury. Where women are concerned each board must have at least one woman. Ordinary members are to have their expenses, including loss of time, defrayed by the Government.

The functions of the trade boards are thus defined: They are to consider any matter regarding industrial conditions in their trade upon reference from a Government department and report thereon. They are to fix minimum rates of wages for time and piece work in their several trades. It is contemplated that this duty may be impossible; therefore the Board of Trade is authorized to relieve them of it upon a report to that effect. When they determine a wage rate it is to be enforced gradually.

Employers may be fined $100 for each offence in paying below the rate fixed by the board and $25 a day for each day on which the offence is continued after conviction. The court may order the deficiency of pay made good to the worker. The Board of Trade may grant permits for lower pay in the case of workers incapable of doing a standard day's work. The burden of proof in all cases is placed on the employer, and the Board of Trade may take the initiative in proceedings in the workers' interests. To carry out the provisions of the act inspectors are to be appointed and $75,000 is appropriated for expenses.

One of two international measures is also in the interests of labor. It confirms a convention with France by which British workmen have the same rights in France as Frenchmen, and vice versa. One other international measure was made law. It aims to promote the international circulation of motor vehicles owned by travellers.

Next after the labor acts, the principal social reform measure is Mr. Burns's housing and town planning act, which regulates the construction of better dwellings for the poor and aims to wipe out overcrowded and unhealthy quarters in cities by compulsory process. The development and road improvement funds act is also important, but by some oversight it fails to provide money to carry out its own purposes. Its title hardly gives a just idea of its scope, since it enables the Treasury to make grants for the purpose of aiding and developing agriculture and rural industries, forestry, the reclamation and drainage of land, the improvement of rural transport, the improvement and development of harbors, canals and fisheries and in any way to improve the economic development of the United Kingdom. Agriculture and rural industries are defined to include agriculture, horticulture, dairying; breeding of horses, cattle, poultry or other live stock; cultivation of bees, flax and tobacco; cottage industries, and all activities connected with or subservient to these.

Five commissioners and a road board are to be appointed to enforce the act and they are to have the power to advance money to local authorities to improve existing roads or open new roads, or they may themselves construct or maintain highways. They are to exercise compulsory power of condemnation over 220 feet of land on either side of the centre line of a proposed new road in order that the public may acquire all the increment in value accruing through its construction.

In other bills that became law genuine reform is likewise effected. One of these abolishes the outrageous practice of taking out insurance policies on ships and their cargoes and even on the lives of persons at sea by those who had no interest whatever in them. The policies were never enforceable at law, but no underwriter ever welched on them, and gambling on risks at sea was just as uncommon practice. The new law makes it a criminal offence to contract for marine insurance without possessing an insurable interest.

A somewhat similar practice of taking out small funeral policies on the lives of strangers is forbidden in a comprehensive act, which consolidates and amends the acts of 1870, 1872 and 1907, regulating industrial life assurance and employers' liability insurance. It also regulates the practice of issuing bonds or endowment certificates in return for instalments paid at short intervals, the party of issue contracting to pay a sum at a future date. It places domestic and foreign industrial insurance companies on the same plane, but requires all to furnish bonds of $100,000 and provides for rigid inspection.

Besides these measures several of minor importance were passed, regulating the powers of local educational authorities, providing for greater safety at cinematograph exhibitions and regulating electric light companies, with the creation of a commission to see that public buildings, parks or gardens shall not be injured by the smoke nuisance, the use of smoke consumers being made obligatory.

These statutes constitute a pretty good record even for an abnormally long session. The entire number of laws placed on the statute book was forty-nine. The total number passed during the Liberal Ministry's tenure of office was 242.

Why Do Not the States Punish "Monopolies" Which They Created?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Why did not the recent conference in Washington of Governors of States take up and consider recent declarations by President Taft in respect to the monopolistic conduct of State corporations doing an interstate business? And why does not the legislative, judicial or executive power of each State chartering the corporations thus charged with guilt bring those corporations to punishment and possibly take away their franchises?

It is not to be rashly assumed that either the voters or the officials in the States approve restraint of interstate trade, stifling of competition and consequent monopoly.

Each corporation doing the alleged forbidden things has been chartered by a State. The State may be a Republican State. Only the chartering State can visit the corporation, inquire into its conduct, punish it and revoke its charter. The Federal Government cannot do it, even although it can discipline the corporation for offences against the Federal Constitution committed in interstate commerce; but the chartering State is, unless the State Constitution forbids, supreme over its creatures. Illinois can for good cause cut off the head of the beef trust. And so can Utah annihilate the Union Pacific, Kentucky put an end to the Southern Pacific, and New Jersey give the *coup de grâce* to a multitude of so-called "trusts." Each State in which the "trust" does business can expel the guilty one from its jurisdiction.

If the things denounced by the Chicago and Denver platforms and generally by office holders and office seekers in regard to restraints of trade by "trusts" are so hateful to the voters in the chartering States, why does not each State in which monopoly exists "bust" it straightway?

Congress cannot lawfully visit and destroy State corporations, even if they restrain interstate trade, but the creating State can put an end to the life of its creatures and to the rights, privileges and immunities derived therefrom. If Republican voters in Republican States creating the corporations denounced at Washington by their President, their Congress and their party really wish monopoly stopped, they can insist that the Legislature, courts and prosecuting officers do a little "trust busting."

The contracts, agreements, conspiracies and contrivances in violation of the common law and State statutes in Republican States to increase prices are a serious and cruel menace to the public welfare.

I hope I am not to be driven to think that the current written and spoken speech in Washington condemning restraint of trade and monopolies is all uttered solely for use in nominating conventions.

A MAN IN THE STREET.

NEW YORK, January 24.

Scourge of the Swiss.

From the Alpine Path.

The prevalence in Switzerland of goitre, that distressing disease which is caused by drinking snow water, is graphically shown by the striking figures recently issued by the Federal Military Department, setting forth the number of men who are lost to the country, from the military service point of view, owing to this affliction alone.

It has been statistically proved that an average number of from 2,200 to 2,300 men are each year rejected for service in the army owing to the presence of goitre in some degree; and the compilers of the report demonstrate how quickly, at this rate of rejection, the services of an entire division and even of an army corps are lost.

The cantons of Valais and the Grisons, being the most mountainous parts of Switzerland, are the districts of the country in which the complaint is most common; but people in other parts are also affected to a distressing extent.

So serious has the scourge become during recent years, with a tendency to increase rather than to decrease, that a commission is to be appointed by the Federal Government to study and report upon the disease in order that preventive measures may be adopted and that a serious campaign against the malady may be initiated.

Cruelty to Animals in the Central Park Zoo.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* When is cruelty to animals not cruelty? Is cruelty to wild animals in captivity not cruelty? Who is responsible for the housing of the animals in Central Park?

There animals used to roaming at large are confined in dirty cages hardly large enough to permit them to turn round. We call ourselves civilized and have societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals and view these miserable creatures for our enjoyment!

The bear pit in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, with its trees and bushes, cave and rivulet of water is a humane example of housing wild animals.

Instead of a box to pace back and forth, back and forth, why not give these creatures space to move about and have some sense of fredom so that they may be healthy and beautiful? By seeing them to some extent as they would be in their habitat the pleasure of the spectator would be intensified a hundredfold. A. M. B.

NEW YORK, January 24.

An Oklahoma Dog.

From the Kenton Herald.

When Joseph Brown of Mineral left Oklahoma City for his home the only thing he left behind that he wanted was his dog and his pipe. Imagine his surprise when one day last week the dog appeared at the Mineral post office and scratched on the door to be let in. The dog, so we are informed, had the pipe in his mouth and a note in it from the home folks. He had travelled the entire distance, more than four hundred miles, carrying the pipe in his mouth, making the trip in four days.

John Burns and Carlyle.

From the London Evening Standard.

Mr. Burns, speaking at Chelsea, said that one of the earliest incidents of his life was when as a small boy, having walked over Battersea Bridge, he picked up Carlyle's hat, which had blown off where Dilke street now is. He remembered as the greatest honor of his life Carlyle putting his hand on him and saying "Thank you, my little mannie."

Boycotts.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* People will boycott meat; will they boycott whiskey?

NEW YORK, January 24. EDMUND R. DODGE.

The Moor's Motive.

Othello had just smothered Desdemona.

"She wouldn't give me the Chautauqua salute," he complained.

Thus we see the tragic effects of slighted heroism.

LABOR UNIONS.

The Sympathetic Observations of an Employer.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* There seems to be a good deal of indignation expressed because the labor unions deny workingmen the right to work "for whom and for what they please." Much as I value my own freedom, I had rather transfer it to a labor union which is attempting to get me as high a price for my labor as possible and helping me to dispose of it in other respects as favorably to myself as possible than turn it over to an employer who wants me to sell my labor as low as possible and upon other terms as favorable to himself as possible; and under present economic conditions I have but one of the two alternatives. I mean to say that I must transfer my freedom and individuality either to an employer or to a labor union. It is true that as a non-union worker—or as a union worker for that matter—if I don't like the terms one employer offers I can go to another, but as without the assistance of the union the next employer and still the next will have the power to fix the price I must sell the work of my hands and brain for, this freedom is worth nothing. The man or the woman who is obliged to sell labor or anything else he or she owns at the price the purchaser fixes, or in other words at a forced sale, cannot succeed or be independent.

Suppose the lawyer were obliged to ask his client: "What are you paying for retainers now?" or the doctor his patient: "What do you pay for prescriptions?" or the grocer his customer: "What are you paying for tea and sugar to-day?" Again, suppose the Standard Oil Company were obliged to sell refined oil not for what the company asks for it but what the public offers. Suppose THE SUN were obliged to sell advertising space for a price fixed by the advertiser. How long could any business be conducted in this way and be even fairly prosperous?

Yet without the assistance of the union the worker is obliged to sell the only thing he owns, the work of his hands, at a price fixed not by the owner but by the purchaser, although it is far more important that those who own hand labor or brain labor should be able to fix a price upon it and otherwise determine the terms of sale than in the case of any other owner of a commodity. From the condition wherein men or women as individuals have little or nothing to say as to how they shall dispose of their labor, to the condition wherein it is claimed that they have no property rights whatever in it, is but a single step, and this last named condition made a whole lot of trouble in this country a few years ago and cost millions of dollars and thousands of lives.

As I have been an employer a large part of my working life I cannot be accused of a partisan feeling when I say it looks a little singular to see so many employers wax indignant when the non-union worker is obliged to work for what the union says, and yet these same employers seem to welcome the condition wherein he must work for what they themselves say. Between the two dilemmas it is surprising that a workingman should hesitate for an instant which to choose, although I can easily see how keenly he often regrets that he must be dictated to by either the one or the other.

There is still another side to this subject. Under present conditions, even though a large majority of employers were willing to give a fair wage, without the assistance of the union they would not for a long period be able to do so. Their greedy and unscrupulous competitors, either anxious to get it all or incompetent in a business sense, would soon turn to a reduction of wages, thus compelling the fair and live and let live employer to do the same or go out of business.

I freely acknowledge that labor unions have a tendency to inferior service, or rather that they are a bar to the highest proficiency, and simply because the workers have learned that the minimum wage of the union is the ruling rate and that higher wages than the minimum are rare even when they are deserved. Moreover after long and somewhat close observation and experience I have found that the selfish, incompetent and dissatisfied employee always makes an inconsiderate and faultfinding employer, and vice versa. Is it any wonder when employers try to get as much and give as little in return to their employees as possible that their employees should try to get as much from them as possible and give as little as possible in return? A. A. HILL.

NEW YORK, January 21.

IS THERE A HELL?

A Doctor of Divinity's Assertions Called Too Sweeping.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Is the "Doctor of Divinity" in to-day's SUN serious? He says that "there is scarcely a clergyman of any note who believes in a never ending punishment." This is a very sweeping assertion, and like most sweeping assertions it is very inaccurate. It is not too much to assume that there are many clergymen of note in the Catholic Church, yet all Catholics believe in such a punishment. They hold that any person who dies stained with the guilt of grievous sin incurs it; but as it is always possible that even the worst sinner may have repented at the last moment of life, when apparently unconscious, they never assert that any particular individual is in hell—with the possible exception of Judas.

Catholics believe, however, in the existence of a temporal punishment in the next life, in purgatory, for those who are not wicked enough to be condemned forever nor yet pure enough to go straight to heaven, a belief consoling to the members of the reformed churches, though it was one of their reasons for separating from Rome in the sixteenth century.

It does not settle the question to assert that we don't see why Almighty God should punish a creature with eternal punishment, just as there are many patent facts that we cannot account for, as the existence of human misery, which God, who is infinitely kind and powerful, could have eliminated and yet attained his end. We cannot say why He so elected, and yet we have to admit the fact of such misery.

Coming to the question of what the Bible teaches in connection with the subject, it would throw a little light on the problem perhaps if "Doctor of Divinity" would take up seriatim the proofs of the existence of everlasting punishment drawn from the Scriptures set out in a standard Catholic manual of theology and reply concisely to the arguments set forth therein. But the doctor must be careful to avoid sweeping and consequently inaccurate assertions in his solutions.

NEW YORK, January 23. A PATIENT.

Italian Africa.

From Daily Consular and Trade Reports.

The Italian colony of Eritrea is largely barren, and with the exception of a small portion near Suakin produces little of value. The population, which numbers about 300,000, including about 1,000 Italians, 300 Greeks and 10 or 15 English and Germans, is quite poor and would find it difficult to pay for imported goods. Consequently the chief importations are foodstuffs, cotton goods and oil. A great portion of the cotton goods imported are reexported to the Sudan. The chief exports are coffee (from Abyssinia), palm nuts, hides and mother of pearl.

Massowah, the chief port, a city of about 5,000 inhabitants, has a very good harbor capable of accommodating vessels drawing twenty-seven feet. Its only industry, besides being a port of call and entry, is the manufacture of salt. Its climate is good, although extremely hot from April to October, when the rains begin. The chief disease to be feared is malaria.

From Massowah a railway runs thirty-three miles to Ginda, a small station at an elevation of 3,117 feet, where it is necessary to have recourse to horses to reach Asmara, the capital of the province, situated about 7,210 feet above sea level. It is hoped that the railway will be constructed to Asmara in two years, although the engineering difficulties are great.

There are three gold mines at work in the colony, but it is impossible to get any data in regard to them. Traces of coal and copper have also been found, but not in workable quantities.

The University of Elmira.

From the Newburgh Journal.

Why should Elmira require foreign authorship to make its fame known to the foreign visitors when there is the Honorable Jacob Sloat himself who in person, in words and in deeds, advertises—no; we don't mean advertises—proclaims to the world that from the very fact that it is his place of residence it is a natural deduction that it must necessarily be great.

Elmira is the teacher of Newburgh and Fassett is the greatest of her statesmen. What more can be said? Why should Elmira sigh and pine for any further distinction and notice?

Boots and Shoes in Two Countries.

From Daily Consular and Trade Reports.

A "shoe" in England would be called a "low shoe" in the United States. A "boot" is footwear coming just above the ankle.

She Had Noticed It.

Mrs. Knicker—They say the purchasing power of a dollar has diminished.

Mrs. Bocker—Yes, it used to buy a bargain worth $1.98, and now it only gets something worth $1.49.