The Sun.

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The Interstate Commerce Commission and the Market Value of Railroad Bonds.

The paternalistic tendency of our legislation is clearly evidenced in the proposal to rest with the Interstate Commerce Commission authority to say what shall be the market value of bonds issued by a railroad company in case they must be sold for less than par.

When the chairman of the commission appeared before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce of the House of Representatives on February 18 the chairman of the committee said to him: "I drew this provision of this bill, and what I do not know about the subject of issuing stocks and bonds would fill many libraries and what I do know could be put in the space of a very small book." The chairman of the commission replied: "I would not be vain enough to claim superiority over the chairman of this committee in any respect, but if there is any it is in my greater ignorance of this subject." [Laughter.]

In the early nineteenth century there was a railway mania in the United States, as in every other country of Christendom. Promoters resorted to all sorts of devices to obtain money and many an honest investor was cheated out of his all. Subsequent reorganizations likewise often bore heavily upon the honest investor. The result has been that the redundant capitalization has been pretty thoroughly ground out of the American railway system, while in many other countries it has been retained, notably in England, where the capitalization is about $314,000 a mile, and in France, where as crisis followed crisis the Government came to the rescue and assumed the burden, relieving the unfortunate and the gullible alike.

For many years the excessive capital issues of the Erie in the early seventies were the oft quoted horrible example, but of late the manipulation of the Chicago and Alton in 1902 has been the more frequently cited instance of evil doing in this respect. One of these events occurred forty years and the other eight years ago.

The American people dearly love a bargain; the chance to buy a certificate with one hundred dollars printed on its face for a much smaller outlay has always been attractive. The market value of a certificate is what can be obtained for it. If that is fifty dollars its value is fifty dollars and not the one hundred in printed or engraved figures. But hope springs eternal. To spend fifty dollars to-day in the hope of obtaining one hundred dollars at some future time is of the motive which has led to that display of enterprise and energy which has covered the earth with the appliances of civilization. A man keen to make money will not invest in railroad stocks at par without expectation other than of a limited dividend return. A man with surplus funds may invest in such stock at par or even at a premium, but it will be in an established stock of a railroad that has proved its earning power, not in a new issue of stock of a proposed line whose earning power cannot be estimated.

Is it to be supposed that the price which the Interstate Commerce Commission says is satisfactory for a railroad bond issue will induce great banking firms to take an issue of bonds at that price without further investigation of their security? The value of a railroad bond depends in part upon the physical value of the security, but in far greater measure upon the earning power. Its market value at any particular time depends also upon the amount of money seeking investment, and that value may change from time to time. Is the dictum of the Interstate Commerce Commission to supersede any of these factors in determining bond values? Is it, when a bond issue of a railroad is contemplated, to receive the bids from the bankers instead of the railroad company and then certify to the railroad company the price at which these bonds can be sold? Is the Interstate Commerce Commission to be provided with a staff of economic and financial experts whose judgment will outweigh that of trained investors?

If the Interstate Commerce Commission is to determine the price at which a railroad may issue bonds to-day is it also to say what their price shall be in the market a year from to-day?

Is it to prohibit their increasing in price? Is it to guarantee against their decreasing in price? If it cannot guarantee against a decrease in price of what value is its certificate to the investor?

Stocks and bonds are issued by all sorts of companies for all sorts of purposes. Why should not the Government certify to the value of these as well as to the value of railway issues? In this country a man is supposed to be allowed to spend his money as he pleases unless he is adjudged an incompetent. If he does not get value it is his own fault. There is an old blue law exempting sailors from the consequences of their contracts because of their simple minds and their seafaring life. Other men are supposed to gain wisdom through experience. It is through the accumulation of experience that the industrial, commercial and financial structure of the present time has been developed, and the leaders in its development, the constructive minds that have given it form, have not as a rule been trained in the Government service.

In recent years there have been few rogueries in connection with railway issues. The stocks and bonds of the standard companies have attained a stability second only to that of the bonds of the various Governmental organizations. This stability is largely due to the foresight of the great banking firms, to the restrictions upon which they have insisted before new issues have been placed upon the market. Why does not Congress take in hand mining promoters, the boomers of this and that foolish or fraudulent project of one kind or another and the exploiters of various fakes who seem to have no trouble in obtaining funds from a credulous public? For every dollar that is lost in railroad investment to-day thousands of dollars are sunk in fly by night schemes. By count it has been found that of one hundred and fifty companies formed to exploit one thing or another whose shares and bonds were widely advertised and actively sold on the curb and in irresponsible markets five years ago not one is in existence to-day.

Notwithstanding this, that men should be allowed to use their judgment in taking chances is essential to material progress. What value would the Interstate Commerce Commission place on a bond of the Wright Aviation Company of to-day? Or of the American Cotton Picker Company? Yet should men who believe that flying machines and cotton pickers will become commercially profitable be prohibited from buying their bonds?

Is the judgment of the Interstate Commerce Commission that a new railroad projected, for example, through the wilds of Oregon will be profitable to be final? If so and it fails will not the Government have to reimburse the investors?

"A Friendly Understanding."

That President TAFT and his advisers are greatly relieved over the successful outcome of the negotiations to avert a tariff war between this country and Canada is not difficult to believe. The imminence of a struggle not only harmful to the commercial interests of to-day but heavily loaded with possibilities of economical and political consequences the result of which no person could forsee has been the cause of the gravest uneasiness throughout the nation. It is highly significant that while it has been under discussion there has been practically no bombastic talk of reprisals and no vain and loose appeals to passion.

Had Mr. TAFT been blind to the partisan effects of the contest that at one time appeared inevitable, the election of Mr. Foss to the House of Representatives after a campaign in which our dealings with Canada played a conspicuous part would have carried home to him the menace of the situation. There is no evidence that this reminder was needed by the President. He was at work for peace before the voters of the Fourteenth Massachusetts Congress district had gone to the polls.

The disclosure of the nature of the concessions made by each side will be awaited with keen interest, but the principal object to be attained was the maintenance of friendly relations, and that this will be accomplished is the welcome message of Mr. KNOX to thousands who do not care a penny for the political fate of either the Democratic or the Republican party.

The Passing of Tchad.

There was a time when Africa held and deserved the affection of every child of school age in America. Looking back over years not to be numbered with delight, who can forget the admirable, the excellent, the noble simplicity with which the Dark Continent confronted the reluctant reader from the dog's eared pages of the district school geography? Simplicity there was and mystery, and since Australia was sternly set down among the islands, what other continent could rival Africa?

Even for "bounding," Africa was delightfully without difficulty. After Europe, with its endless capes, its unforgivable peninsulas; after Asia, with its cuttlefish tentacles projecting into oceans and seas innumerable, each projection designated by a name beyond the agility of tongue or the power of memory, how could one too highly praise the glorious simplicity of Africa, built without capes, smoothly rounded with the finish that excluded all suggestion of peninsula and on the map equally divided between the generous yellow of the Desert and the stimulating black of the Unexplored!

Here were the Desert and the Unknown, and beside, perhaps, Egypt and Barbary, the Nile and the Senegal; and, if one would be letter perfect, there was Lake Tchad. More than this no teacher might demand, however exacting. More than this few "bright boys," however luminous, might seek. All that remained were the animals, and who would count as work the study of the fauna? A paradise for children, such was Africa in the pleasant years before the explorers changed it from a fortunate blank to a formidable puzzle in the geography.

Last of all, having reduced the Desert, eliminated the Unexplored and decorated an unbroken coastline with impossible capes, the relentless explorers have banished Lake Tchad. For generations, who shall say how many, Lake Tchad was the one knowable, recognizable, indisputable fact of internal Africa. It was enormous, a rival of Superior and the Caspian, or it was merely considerable like Titicaca or the Great Salt Lake, as the maker of geographies might choose, but it was there between the Desert and the Unexplored, one tangible fact in a chaos that did not have to be committed to memory.

A French expedition it is that has lately brought back the news of the passing of Tchad. Other French expeditions have travelled from the Congo, from the Niger, from Tripoli and Temassin, and reported Tchad, but the declaration of the last expedition is positive. A little pond, smaller than the city of Paris in area, remains; all the rest is gone. Pictures of camel herds encumbering the plain where once the waters of the lake rolled, descriptions of occasional marshes, where the drying up has been delayed, they also bring, but Tchad itself, the great lake, has gone, leaving half a dozen boundary lines that hung on it poised in midair.

It is natural, of course, that French colonial enthusiasts should be excited; a seismic disturbance in the whole region of geographical societies royal and national may follow. But was it worth while? For ourselves we prefer that Africa that rolled untrammelled from Cape Town to Cairo, and held no other town save only Timbuktu that could burden the memory or evoke the tears of a generation that learned its geography under the solemn shadow of the teacher's strap.

Four Years of Law in the White House.

To Senator CULLOM of Illinois is attributed an opinion that Mr. TAFT "within a month of his nomination for the Presidency" would have gladly availed himself of an opportunity to succeed Chief Justice FULLER on the bench of the Supreme Court. "I personally know," Senator CULLOM is quoted as saying, "that in the height of the excitement of the campaign leading up to the convention Mr. TAFT'S aspirations were not affected."

Whether WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT should hold himself in line for the Supreme Court or consent to become a candidate for the Presidential nomination of his party was a question discussed but not settled between Mr. ROOSEVELT and himself in the spring and summer of 1906. Everybody knew that Mr. TAFT aspired to the Supreme Court. President McKINLEY always had him in mind for that great tribunal, and Mr. ROOSEVELT offered to appoint him to the vacancy caused by the retirement of Mr. Justice BROWN, but desiring to complete the constructive work in the Philippines, for which he regarded himself as responsible, Mr. TAFT, at the time Secretary of War, put his judicial ambition by with keen regret.

"I am not a lawyer," wrote Mr. ROOSEVELT from the White House on March 15, 1906, "and would under no circumstances, even if I had been trained for a lawyer, have any leaning toward the bench," and he added that in Mr. TAFT'S place he would continue to be Secretary of War to deal with the Panama and Philippine questions, "and then abide the event" as to whether he should become President "or went back to the practice of the law." Mr. TAFT'S letter in reply was not written until July 30, and then from his summer home on the St. Lawrence. He again went over his reasons for not desiring to succeed Mr. Justice BROWN, and in the following paragraph spoke for himself with regard to the comparative attractions of the bench and the Presidency:

"I know that few, if any, even among my friends, will credit me with anything but a desire to run for the Presidency, and that I must face and bear this misconstruction of what I do. But I am confident you credit my reasons as I give them to you and will believe me when I say that I would much prefer to go on the Supreme Bench for life than to run for the Presidency, and that in twenty years of judicial service I could make myself more useful to the country than as President, even if my election should come about."

Mr. TAFT'S sincerity was manifest, and it may be assumed that he sighed for the bench even when his campaign for the Presidential nomination was well advanced. Perhaps Senator CULLOM is right when he says that a month before the nomination was made Mr. TAFT would gladly have put the new ambition by for the old one, the die not being cast. He was destined for the Presidency after all, and to succeed a President who was "not a lawyer," and, as he admitted, would have had no leaning toward the bench if he had been trained for the law. Never in the history of the country was the accession of a man of judicial mind and training more necessary.

After the President who would not acknowledge the limitations of the Constitution and who disregarded the law the President who knew and respected the Constitution and who administered his office according to the law. The example is worth more to the country than twenty years of any one man's service on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The Sunday Cane.

Unfortunately the name of the middle aged gentleman carrying a cane who was annoyed by rowdies in a subway train on Sunday is not preserved. He deserves the thanks of the community, for when his patience had been exhausted he "arose in his wrath and temporarily quieted them by whacking several of them over the shoulders." From this time until the snow flies again citizens of his kind will rank as public benefactors. A stout stick applied to the most convenient part of the anatomy of a street car rough is the most effective remedy for this annoyance of which we have knowledge.

For women who object to having foul mouthed, unclean strangers sit in their laps or embrace them we recommend the vigorous use of that always present weapon the hatpin. It is open to objection that it may inflict serious, even dangerous, wounds. This objection applies, of course, only to the user of the hatpin, not to its victim. By grasping the pin well down toward the point, however, fatalities may be averted and the sensibilities of women who find it necessary thus to protect themselves will be saved.

The Magistrates' courts apparently offer little hope of effective cooperation in the efforts to suppress this summer Sunday nuisance. The cost of "shoving" passengers about and prodding them with baseball bats remains low, only $1 for each offender. For hustling and jostling a man and forcing him through a window, breaking the glass, the cost is $3, the difference being due, apparently, to the destruction of property. It is obvious that such penalties will have practically no deterrent effect, and the task of protecting passengers will fall on themselves. Perhaps some day an assaulted and injured patron of a transportation company will sue it and recover heavy damages for the indignities and hurts he sustains on its premises. When this happens the street car rowdy will cease suddenly and for all time to be a feature of warm weather life in New York.

There is no discernible impropriety in the journey of the Hon. OSCAR S. STRAUS from Constantinople to Cairo to meet his personal friend and former official chieftain Colonel ROOSEVELT. On the contrary, it is natural that Mr. STRAUS should go. For the statements that the American Ambassador was "summoned" from his post by a private citizen travelling on private business, that the Ambassador is neglecting his duties for the sake of Colonel ROOSEVELT'S convenience or pleasure, and that the Ambassador's journey to the Nile is at the expense of the American taxpayers there is no responsible authority whatever. No sensible person will believe a word of all this.

All that Dr. COOK seems to want is to be let alone. All that the people want is for Dr. COOK to be quiet.—*Mobile Register.*

Quite so. And can't his friends induce Governor JOE BROWN of Georgia to subside?

No doubt thousands of worthy people will differ with us, but from our "point of view," as JOHN ALLEN of Mississippi used to say, the most astounding and significant circumstance in connection with TARTARIN'S African tour is found in the fact that he bristled up to the Sphinx, looked it straight in the face for two full minutes and the Sphinx never so much as blinked.

The late General HAMILTON S. HAWKINS in his brief report describing the capture of Fort San Juan by the infantry in the battle of Santiago compressed the movement into this paragraph:

"We had promised to take the position, and it was essential to do so. The advance was therefore sounded and repeated from time to time to insure its being heard above the din of musketry. It was gallantly made across the wide grass field. Then began the ascent of the very steep hill, without pausing except to take breath. The very audacity of the assault seemed to demoralize the enemy, who did not wait for the bayonet to be used."

Nothing about the man who led the assault. That man was HAMILTON S. HAWKINS. Nothing about the man who proposed it to Colonel JOHN D. MILEY, the aide of General SHAFTER, and insisted upon it as the only way to save the day. That man was HAMILTON S. HAWKINS, and the army never had a more gallant and a more modest soldier.

PHILIPPINE CHURCH WORK.

Money and Priests Needed by the Catholics in the Islands.

From the Tablet.

With regard to the Philippines it is to be noted that while the United States will continue to supply a portion of the new Bishops it will not be asked to furnish them all. Mgr. Petrelli, an Italian, secretary to Mgr. Agius, has already been appointed Bishop of the newly created diocese of Lipa, Mgr. Singzon, a Filipino, to be Bishop of the new diocese of Samar and Leyte, and Mgr. Gorardo, also a Filipino, has been chosen to succeed the late Mgr. Hendrick as Bishop of Cebu, while Mgr. MacGinley of the archdiocese of Philadelphia will rule the old diocese of Nueva Caceres. It is believed that at least one other American priest will be elected to fill one of the remaining two new dioceses.

There are at present four American Bishops of Philippine sees—Mgr. Harty, Archbishop of Manila, Mgr. Dougherty, Bishop of Jaro, Mgr. MacGinley, Bishop of Nueva Caceres, and Mgr. Carroll, Bishop of Nueva Segovia. Religiously speaking, the archipelago is still in a painful plight for lack of priests. Altogether, secular and regular, there are only about 1,100 to minister to the wants of 7,000,000 Catholics, and hundreds of parishes have been vacant for many years.

The schism started by Aglipao toward the close of the Spanish domination is not making any progress. At first some of the American officials were disposed to look upon it with a favorable eye, but when they recognized that Aglipao and his followers had no more love for the Americans than they had for the Spaniards the sympathy ceased.

On the other hand, however, American agents of the Methodists and other Protestant sects are pouring men and money into the country and working hard, and not altogether without success, to make perverts. An impression used to prevail—perhaps to some extent it does still—that the Church in the Philippines was enormously rich. The exact contrary is the case. The archipelago is poor in priests, in churches, in Catholic schools, and the life of a Bishop or priest there is one of continual trials and anxieties.

Disfranchisement in Maryland.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Following the now well nigh traditional policy of the Democratic party of "always doing the wrong thing at the right time," the Democrats in the Maryland Legislature propose to pass an act expressly excluding all negroes from voting in State elections.

The rebuke received at the last election, when the people of the State rejected a proposed amendment to the Constitution along similar lines, has apparently no deterrent effect upon their legislative agents. Nor does the imperilling of Democratic success now so nearly assured this fall in the Northern and Western States constitute for them a valid reason why they should desist, at this time particularly, from a policy abhorrent to these half converted sections.

The civic peril of thus closing the door of hope to a large proportion of the residents of the State and the injustice of taxing men while depriving them of representation fails to appeal, even if it has ever occurred, to these Maryland Democrats.

Any one who knows and has been taught to love and honor the history of the old State must view with pain and foreboding the record of dishonor is in making under the influence of the Democratic party.

WILLIAM WOODWARD BALDWIN.

NEW YORK, March 26.

The Drysalter and Others.

From the London Chronicle.

The drysalter—that mysterious tradesman—was at the time of the great fire a dealer in salted or dry meats, pickles, sauces, &c., but he no longer drysalts, but sells instead drugs, dyestuffs, colors and chemicals, and even buttons. His changed business is due to the fact that the "grocer" and the "Italian warehouseman" have captured his original trade, although they have mercifully left him the name. There are many other businesses that are equally puzzling. Probably most of us know what a cordwainer is, but what is an upholder and what does he uphold? One remembers the imposing "Société Anonyme des Rameoneurs de Paris," which so impressed and mystified the inhabitants of Clare Market until they saw the familiar brushes and sticks which proclaim the chimneysweep's business.

The Spartan Son.

The Spartan mother sent her son into battle. "Come home with the moving picture or in it," she commanded him.

Hereuth he rushed to the fray.

RECIPROCITY WITH CANADA.

WASHINGTON, March 28.—The negotiations for an adjustment of our commercial relations with Canada under the Payne law have served to bring into public notice the old question of reciprocal trade under a broad and liberal treaty. While the establishment of the closest possible relations with our neighbor and the indefinite expansion of both export and import trade are unquestionably most desirable, the attainment of those ends by means of a treaty can only be regarded as exceedingly doubtful.

The negotiation of commercial treaties is a process of bargaining. The parties to it demand and insist on the concession of commercial equivalents for each dollar's worth of benefit yielded. The usual process is a diplomatic chaffering for advantages regarded as immediately profitable. In the case of Canada and the United States the desire of our neighbors would be a more ready entrance to the markets of this country for the products of their fields, their farms, mines, forests and fisheries. Their proposals would at once excite a chorus of shrieks, groans and roars declaring the inevitable and speedy destruction of all similar industries on this side of the line. On the part of the United States there would be desire and effort to obtain in Canada a larger market for the manufactured products of this country. The Canadians who have built up, under a protective tariff system, manufacturing interests with an output valued at not far from $1,000,000,000 a year, interests upon which 25 per cent. or more of the Canadian people now depend for a livelihood, would rise in a stormy assertion of immediate ruin if the tariff on textiles, leather goods, manufactures of iron and steel, agricultural implements, railway supplies and similar products were removed or reduced.

In the tariff schedules of both countries there are many articles now subject to duty which might well be covered by a treaty providing for their free exchange between the two countries, and which might be exchanged without injury to or interference with the interests of either. There is already a considerable free list in the tariffs of both, and both lists might be extended as far as trade across the border is concerned. While such an arrangement would be beneficial the benefits would be limited. The larger issue would not be met, the most desirable results would not be attained. An effort to accomplish the results most important and desirable for both would be a battle of bargainers striving to buy cheap and to sell dear, to get much while giving little, with large probability that the proceedings would only result in a deadlock and failure. If the matter is to be determined by treaty relations, the first step should be an agreement for the free entrance of articles concerning which no dispute or contest would arise. A second step might be taken by an exchange of lists on which the schedules could be reduced with advantage to or without injury to the grantor of the reduction. That is, by these proceedings each might give to the other what could be given without loss and perhaps with benefits to the giver. This would avoid that clash of interests which must inevitably attend the larger proposal of an exchange of advantage to American manufactured products in Canadian markets for advantage to Canada's natural products in the markets of the United States. Meanwhile, careful consideration might be given to a scheme by which the end could be attained and the clash of interests and the bargaining would be avoided.

The alternative of a reciprocity treaty with Canada is reciprocity by legislation. It is reduction or removal for our own benefit of duties now imposed on the merchandise that Canada desires to sell in our markets. The old prophecy of ruin to American farmers would of course meet such a proposal, but if the matter were fully threshed out the weakness and even the folly of that assertion would be clearly shown, as would the weakness of the arguments against free fish and free lumber. Doubtless there would be injury in isolated and individual cases, but there would be no destruction of and no disaster to American industries. The benefit to the country as a whole is susceptible of clear demonstration. At present there is evident failure to appreciate the absurdity of a fear that the surplus products of Canada's 7,500,000 people would demoralize or wreck the industrial interests of the 90,000,000 people of the United States. Canada's surplus for export, all commodities included, has a value of approximately $250,000,000. About one-third of it already comes to this country. A part of the remainder would go elsewhere in any case. The doubling or even a greater increase of our purchases would be profitable to Canada through expansion of its markets and profitable to this country because Canadian development has been and would be steadily attended by increase of purchases from the United States.

There has never been a better time than the present for a consideration of our trade relations with Canada in the light of broad statesmanship and sound commercial policy. In the establishment of closer relations, by treaty or by reciprocity as a result of legislation or a combination of both, there is work for the present Administration, an enterprise that would excite a wider interest than revision of the law of injunctions and command a wider approval than railway regulation, the corporation tax or the postal savings bank bill.

Snuff and Sainthip.

From the London Globe.

The "Bulletin de la Société contre l'abus du tabac" informs us that the amiable Saint Vincent de Paul was an inveterate snuff taker. Nature provided him with an ample capacity for indulgence in his apparent weakness. The habit almost cost him his sainthip. When the question of his beatification was under consideration "l'avocat du diable" brought forward the snuff taking as a sensuality. Fortunately among the papers of Vincent de Paul was found a physician's order in which he was recommended to take snuff freely, among other reasons, to clear his brain. Without this document there would have been no beatification, and without beatification there would have been no canonization.

Snail Eating Prisoners.

From the London Globe.

When James O'Connor, M. P., whose death has just occurred, could be moved to a reminiscent mood he had many stories to tell of the days of his penal servitude. When the Fenians were in Parkhurst it was during the time of a very spare, not to say starvation, prison diet, and O'Connor, who himself was a man of small appetite, did not suffer such pangs of hunger as some of his associates. According to his own account of things he constantly gathered snails in order to appease the hunger of his fellow prisoners.

Late Trains in Georgia.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

According to reports received by the railroad commission up to date passenger trains were reported late 1,417 times on twelve railroads during the week ended Saturday, March 19.

Followed Directions.

Knicker—Don't you find the subway tiring?

Uncle Rube—Yep; them "Use All Doors" signs keep me busy haggin' in and out.

MARYLAND TO THE RESCUE.

WASHINGTON, March 28.—Mr. W. Mitchell Digges of Charles county finds himself famous and roundly abused as the author of a plan to disfranchise negro citizens in State and municipal elections in Maryland on the ground that the Fifteenth Amendment to the Federal Constitution is invalid. There seems, however, to be no foundation for the report that Mr. Digges and his legal advisers maintain that they can take the ballot away from the negro in local elections because Maryland declined to ratify the Fifteenth Amendment.

Mr. William L. Marbury, a leader of the Baltimore bar, who was consulted about the proposed Digges amendment to the State Constitution, declares that the idea of the invalidity of the Fifteenth Amendment so far as Maryland was concerned because the State declined to ratify it never entered the minds of himself and other lawyers who framed the Digges amendment. Mr. Marbury contends that the Fifteenth Amendment is "in excess of the amending power," because "it interferes with the right of a State to determine for itself who shall constitute its electorate, a right which every State must retain, else it ceases to be a State within the meaning of the Constitution and becomes a mere dependency." This opinion is shared by lawyers in the North as well as in the South, and Mr. Arthur W. Machen, Jr., who is perhaps better known in connection with it than any other lawyer, has lectured on the subject at Harvard University. It remained for the Maryland Democrats, desperately clutching at expedients to disfranchise the negro, to take up the Machen brief and turn it to their purpose.

It has already been said that Mr. W. Mitchell Digges is roundly abused for his disfranchisement plan. Criticism was naturally to be expected from Republicans in Congress, who regard it as an attack upon the Fifteenth Amendment, but the sharpest condemnation comes from Democratic members of Congress. They fear that the Digges amendment if adopted by Maryland would bring the "grandfather clause" in the constitutions of Southern States before the Supreme Court, and they know that if the Digges amendment were upheld the Southern States that have partially disfranchised the negroes would inevitably lose a part of their representation in Congress. If the Democrats in the Senate and House could decide the fate of the Maryland amendment it would have short shrift.

Probably when the Republican statesmen here get their bearings they will no longer rally nobly to protect the Fifteenth Amendment, but will incite the foolish Democrats in Annapolis to submit the Digges amendment to the people of Maryland. The waving of the "bloody shirt" would then begin anew and the attempt to distract voters from the issues and dissensions that are now causing havoc in the Republican party would very likely prove successful. Thus the fall elections could be faced without sinking hearts and the House might be saved.

PREMATURE BURIAL.

Statistics That Prove It to Be Practically Unknown.

From the Lancet.

It is possible that an examination of the probability of premature burial in the light of certain facts may be of consolation to the less prejudiced of those who dread its occurrence. In all the thousands of postmortem examinations which have been performed throughout the civilized world during the last fifty years has there been a single instance of the supposed corpse under examination showing signs of life such as would infallibly appear at the dissection of a living subject? We venture to say that if this had occurred the world would have heard of it. We would point out, moreover, that the bodies upon which postmortem examinations are performed are in no sense selected, but include those of persons of both sexes and of all ages who have died from all sorts of natural and violent deaths and at widely varying intervals of time before the *sectio cadaveris*.

In our minds this consideration at once disposes of the assumption that premature burial is of any frequent occurrence and limits discussion to those unusual cases in which, either because of a trance condition having existed before the supposed time of death or from the delay of rigor mortis, or from the temporary persistence of the body temperature of life, there are reasonable doubts of the fact of death. But surely these are just the cases in which expert opinion will always be sought and in which burial will naturally be delayed until the onset of the incontrovertible sign of putrefaction.

Evidence more conclusive than that of opinion is forthcoming, for our Vienna correspondent describes the elaborate system of death certification which has been enforced in Austria during the last fifty years, which provides that every body before burial must be seen at least twice within forty-eight hours after death by two independent medical men and by one of them again immediately before the closing of the coffin. In no single instance has the fact of death been controverted during these repeated examinations, and to make assurance doubly sure in Vienna those persons who desire it can have the uncoffined bodies of their dead friends kept under observation in special mortuary halls for as long as eight days before burial, but of the many thousands of bodies which have been laid out in this manner not one has ever risen from his or her probationary bier.

The Stars at Eastertide.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* Easter is past, but the evening's glorious galaxy is still with us. Like a sidereal fleet this galaxy is sailing with every night further into the West, and like such a fleet will almost disappear from our view. At present Sirius, Capella, Rigel, Aldebaran, Betelgeuz and Procyon sparkle amid their five constellations, but with the advent of summer only Queen Capella will mark where they sank, although the twin suns, Castor and Pollux, will yet twinkle side by side.

High in the heavens we have the conspicuous constellation of Leo, with its brilliant sun Regulus and its remarkable, symmetrical "sickle." Eastward of Leo, pointed out by the curving handle of the dipper, we admire the gigantic, fiery sun Arcturus, in the constellation of Bootes, rising energetically out of the east.

Vega, the beautiful, the blue queen of summer, is lurking somewhere near the northeastern horizon; while between Arcturus and Vega there glitter and glimmer the constellations of little Corona, winding Serpens and mighty, inconspicuous Hercules. CHARLES NEVERS HOLMES.

BOSTON, March 27.

When Mooney Stings the Ball.

From the Somerville Journal.

When Murphy bunts, and gets to first,
We cheer his feat with pride;
The ball twists slowly down the line,
And never rolls outside.
When Casey makes a sacrifice,
His deftness moves us all,
But oh, the real hi-hi-ing comes
When Mooney stings the ball!

For Mooney has a nervous way
Of handling his bat.
The pitchers hate to watch his eyes,
They don't know where they're at.
He stands there ready with the stick
Upon the sphere to fall,
And, oh, the crowd lets out a yell
When Mooney stings the ball.

Yes, Mooney was designed by fate
To make the pitchers mourn.
The foxy inshoots and the wides
He lets pass by with scorn.
He stands regardless of the crowd,
The strikes, the umpire's call,
Until the sphere floats o'er the plate—
Then Mooney stings the ball!

It moves us when the centrefield
Pulls down the fly he's cursed,
It thrills us when the shortstop's throw
Cuts off a man at first.
But, oh, the fierce excitement when,
The bases filled, we all
Leap up, and howl, and dance, and yell,
When Mooney stings the ball!

THE MEASURING OF MAYOR GAYNOR.

How Many Months of Trial Are Needed to Prove the Best That Ever Was?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* I observe from an editorial article in THE SUN of Sunday that you are still among the doubters with respect to the success of Mayor Gaynor's administration.

We who know him do not share your misgivings. As he has begun so will he continue, and the last day of his service will find him as faithful, as painstaking as the first. No consideration except the public good will influence him. Mistakes will no doubt be made. Judge Gaynor is human like the rest of us. Nevertheless I am confident enough to prophesy that when his administration is ended you too will join like the rest of the community in proclaiming him what we his friends now assert him to be: the best Mayor New York has had in our remembrance.

WILLIAM H. WOOD.

NEW YORK, March 27.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* The editorial article in to-day's SUN entitled "Too Early Praise of a Mayor Who Is Now on Trial" is timely, sensible and pertinent. Thus far Mr. Gaynor's administration has not been signalized by any executive acts that justify the laudation heaped upon him by a certain part of the community. His is a strictly spectacular administration up to the present. Many of his appointments are of an unfit character.

M. F. BERNARD.

NEW YORK, March 27.

THE WONDERS OF RADIUM.

Theoretically It Has Power Enough to Drive an Aeroplane to Venus.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* To the casual reader the statement attributed to Harvard's boy prodigy William Sidis that there is enough power in radium to drive an airship to the planet Venus in twenty minutes seems preposterous, but actually it is not so. According to Professor Frederick Soddy of the University of Glasgow the beta radiations of radium travel with the speed of light, that is, at 186,000 miles a second. Some idea of the titanic force of radium can be gained when it is remembered that the kinetic energy of a moving body increases as the square of the velocity in feet. The mind of man is staggered by such revelations.

The atom is seen to be the germ of the universe containing all the secrets of nature. The laws which govern the heavens and the earth are the laws of the atom, and the power compelling obedience to these laws is the power of the atom. Light, electricity and gravitation are merely manifestations of atomic power.

The alpha radiations of radium make up the majority of the discharged corpuscles and travel according to some authorities at 40,000 miles a second. The gamma rays are faster than the beta rays, but are fewer. The great discovery in connection with the investigation of radium is transmutation of the elements. Having discovered from the rate of radiation of uranium and radium that the former disintegrates in 7,500,000,000 years and the latter in 2,500 years, the scientific world was astonished to discover that in any given quantity of pitchblende the amount of uranium to radium bore the same ratio as the period of life of uranium to that of radium. This was conclusive evidence that uranium was the parent of radium.

Following up this line of investigation uranium X was discovered, whose life is thirty-two days. Then came an unknown element, the immediate parent of radium, of which little is known. Radium was found to give birth to radium A, whose life is 4.3 minutes. Radium A then gives birth to radium B, whose life is thirty-eight minutes. Radium B was found to be the parent of radium C, which lasts for 30.5 minutes. Away down the line lead is seen to be a legitimate descendant of radium, but the connecting links have not yet been discovered. It is believed that gold and silver are related one to another.

The science of radioactivity is so young that only certain elements have been discovered to be radioactive. Enough has been learned, however, to indicate that all matter is radioactive, that each element has a definite period of life, that the relative duration of each is the same as the relative quantity of each, and that as each element is slowly transformed into another vast stores of energy are released, together with mysterious activities which constitute all the principles and phenomena of the universe. This is the grand "theory of disintegration," the greatest theory ever advanced by man.

To return to the opinion that in twenty minutes an air or ether ship could be driven to Venus, in the first place it would be necessary to exhaust all the power of the radium at once. We hope to do something like this some day. Taking the alpha radiations, which travel at 40,000 miles a second, and discharging one pound of them at once an equal and opposite recoil would occur sufficient to project a pound weight through space at a velocity of 40,000 miles a second. In twenty minutes the pound weight would go 36,000,000 miles, which is a little more than the distance between the earth and Venus at the nearest approach of the two planets. The same quantity of radium could carry a hundred or a thousand pounds over the same distance if the power was exhausted slowly and the rate of speed reduced from twenty minutes to twenty hours or 200 hours. Such velocities would have to be slowly developed or the life of the traveller would be crushed out.

As yet no way has been discovered to exhaust the energy of radium or uranium at will. Uranium is more powerful than radium and quite a common element. If its energies could be quickly tapped the fond dream of the scientist would be realized and man would become the master of nature.

R. J. McLAUGHLIN.

NEW YORK, March 26.

THE NEW COURT HOUSE.

Advocacy of a Downtown Site Not Now Used for Public Purposes.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* There is a possible site for the new county court house just north of the Municipal Building and immediately south of the first site recommended by the court house board in 1905, the southern boundary of which was Pearl street. The site I suggest would be practically triangular in shape, bounded on the north by Pearl street, on the east by Park row and on the west by Duane and Centre streets. The westerly side is already owned by the city.

It would be necessary to close Park street from Centre to Pearl and to do away with City Hall place. These streets might be discontinued without serious public inconvenience.

This plot could be made symmetrical by widening Park row from Chambers street to Pearl street, which would also improve the approach to the Municipal Building from the east side.

DEWITT FOX.

NEW YORK, March 28.

Revenue and Business of Canada in 1909.

Official statistics of Canada compiled for 1909 show the following totals:

Imports, calendar year	$381,962,012
Exports, calendar year	290,965,445
Total foreign commerce, calendar year	642,904,457
Bank deposits	771,043,000
Government revenue, fiscal year, March 31	85,549,380
Government expenditure, same (142,309,167 of it on capital account)	133,441,554
Net public debt, March 31	323,000,797
Mineral production, 1908	66,162,723
Postal revenue	9,927,914
Postal expenditure	9,118,676
Steam railway earnings, gross	145,056,356
Operating expenses of same	104,600,084
Net earnings (subject to fixed charges, not stated)	40,456,271
Passengers carried	32,663,309
Freight carried, tons	66,842,258
Ocean vessels, arrivals	13,140
Tonnage of same	16,264,187
Vessel arrivals, inland waters trade	21,771
Tonnage of same	10,626,876
Vessel arrivals, coasting trade	81,799
Tonnage of same	27,645,022
Total vessel arrivals	118,819
Tonnage of same	48,536,085
Imports from the United States	$150,028,580
Imports from Great Britain	170,682,944
Exports to the United States	202,604,337
Exports to Great Britain	120,705,875