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FRANK A. MUNSEY

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SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1905.

A Fight for the Law.

The new Commissioner of Pensions has begun right. He has put his finger on one of the most distinctly illegal and dangerous practices of the bureau at the outset. Hereafter, he says, the superior officers of the bureau are to grant no pensions "by special order" which could not be granted without their intervention.

To the lay mind this decision will seem entirely superfluous. Yet the practice of granting pensions not authorized by law on the mere indorsement by initials of certain officers of the bureau has continued without question for many years. The grounds given have been various. But the real reason has always been the same—the case has been made "of special order" in behalf of certain persons of influence.

The pressure behind these initialed cases has come from several sources. Briefly those sources are the same and the reward is the same, without the element of theft, as in the cases of August Machen and George W. Beavers. The theory has been that in little matters like pensions of $8 a month and rural free delivery routes it did nobody any harm and certain officers of the Government much good to construe the law liberally. Thus, certain members of Congress—and others—have been able to prove themselves indispensable to their constituents, and certain officers of the Government have made themselves independent—for a time—of their immediate superiors.

No reference is made to what are known in the Pension Bureau as "special cases." They consist merely of applications for pensions lifted out of their regular places in line and rushed to immediate consideration. This is done, sometimes, because the claims are really urgent—the applicant is sick unto death, or in sore need, or otherwise under the stress of want. It is done oftener because some member of Congress wants to report to a constituent that he has had the case given special attention. But the practice is not illegal and not dangerous.

It is its corollary which demands instant action. The Commissioner of Pensions is not a legislative officer. He has no business to revise the laws. He has no right to plan either "an economical administration of the bureau," as the office describes a policy of overseverity toward the claimant, or "an administration favorable to the soldier." He does his duty when he enforces the laws which Congress has passed and the President has signed. Whenever he overrides, or amends, or supersedes, or otherwise suspends the operation of these laws, he violates his oath and commits fraud. And if the office of commissioner is ministerial, under these fixed restrictions, how much less are his subordinates warranted in reading the law to suit their own interests!

How often the law has been read in this light is not known now. Men well informed as to the proceedings of the bureau do not think the number of cases great enough to cast suspicion on the whole system. The number must be large, nevertheless. The practice has continued through too many years. If there were only one such case, however, the old attitude of the bureau would still be utterly indefensible.

The Commissioner has determined to put an end to the whole business. He will find it no easy matter. He has already involved half a dozen capable and trusted clerks. If in this instance he proves himself master of his office force—and he must do that or acknowledge himself a greater failure than the weakest of his predecessors—he will have still to cope with the Congressional machine these subordinates have been building for the past ten years.

The new Commissioner of Pensions has begun right, it is true. But he has a big fight on his hands.

Starting Right.

Not so very long ago a well-known author wrote a little dissertation which he entitled "The Advantage of Being Earnest." Even to the most hopelessly trivial nature the title must have commended itself, regardless of the subject-matter of the story, as a complete argument in itself. To the reasoning mind it probably suggested a great many more things.

Recent events to the south of us suggest a companion-title, with a much more serious story to develop out of it. "The Advantage of Starting Right" might be made a readable treatise for President Castro, of Venezuela, if accompanied by a few maps of the region between that country and New Orleans, and some census statistics of any time in the last third of a century or so. With such data at hand he would not have fallen into the mistaken impression that the way they have been accustomed to do things in that country would apply equally well to an expedition northward along the continental backbone to this free land of ours.

Of course, Castro probably never said anything of the kind—that he would invade the United States after an overland march with his grand aggregation of 1,999 or more fighters and capture New Orleans as the best groundwork on which to dictate terms of peace. But supposing that some of his strong military advisers did say the words which have been put into their President's mouth, their solemnity from the standpoint of the tropical patriot is not to be comprehended here except by Americans acquainted with the circumstances surrounding Castro's own rise to power.

The Venezuelan dictator owes his present position to just such an overland march. It impressed his country that it was a good way to do things. He started from the mountains with a handful of men to march on Caracas. He sent ahead the tidings of his all-conquering journey. He played into the hands of all the local factions which were dissatisfied with conditions then existing and gained numbers as he proceeded. Rallying thus all the enemies of the government he overthrew it and made himself the chief of state.

Now to the average Venezuelan mind it is highly probable that the present circumstances seem to offer an opportunity for making another demonstration on that splendid model. To all tropical or Oriental natures the withholding of force is interpreted as a confession of weakness. The only nation which is immediately respected is the one that is ready to bully, and does bully, without delay. Germany and France and Italy made their show of force in blockading the Venezuelan ports over a year ago and got themselves much more highly regarded in consequence by the natives there.

It will be much to the advantage of Venezuela if its President arrives at a full understanding that this country, while following its customary plan of avoiding bluster, must not be pictured as shrinking from meeting the issue when it once has all the facts in hand.

That time has not yet come. There is not yet a unanimous opinion on the legality and propriety of all the American claims in dispute. This calm and deliberate method of procedure may well commend itself to the restless Castro as a straight tip on the advantage of starting right, and of being right, before planning an opera bouffe invasion of a neighboring and assuredly well-disposed nation.

A Revival.

From time to time we have been reading of the great revival which is now sweeping over the British Isles, and there are whisperings in the air of its extension to these shores. Let it come. It cannot come too quickly if it comes in substance and divorced from the tinkling of cymbals and the too blatant sound of brass.

We have been waiting for the dawn, our eyes are weary with watching for the daysprring in the East, all the night long our heart has yearned for the sun—the sun of public and personal righteousness, the broad noon of civic and individual truth and honesty.

The darkest hour is just before the daybreak, and, thank God, that hour has passed. Already there is more than one streak of ethereal gold in our orient and the banners of righteousness are afloat in our sky.

Today there is a demand for righteousness such as has never been heard before; today the people individually and collectively, from one end of the country to the other, through personal effort, and through their servants, the newspapers, the legislatures, and the general government, are calling aloud for the truth and honesty to which they are entitled; and today comes the answer: "Wait a little, you shall have the truth, for it is your due, and you shall have honesty also if you, the people, will make it possible."

We Americans are not built upon the lines of the melancholy Dane who lamented: "The times are out of joint. Oh, cursed spite that ever I was born to set them right!" We have amended Hamlet, and while we admit the times are out of joint, we add: "Oh, glorious gift that we are here to set them straight!"

It is a great and noble profession, that of making straight the crooked joints and binding up the bruised limbs. But the first requisite to its successful practice is a wise and careful diagnosis. We must know first of all what the trouble is and what the real cause of the injury.

Widespread throughout the land it is written so large that he who runs may read, that corruption in politics, dishonest, sharp practice in business, and defalcation of fiduciaries are rampant among us. The call of the people comes like the rising of the wind and with the insistence of the swell of the ocean for a change and for a better order of things, and woe to him who heeds it not!

It is not the dark lantern of Diogenes, however, that guides our steps; it is not from any cynical doubt of our own powers or distrust of our fellow-men that we are probing for the truth and insisting upon integrity and honor alike in plans high and low. It is from our abiding faith in the ultimate honesty of humanity and the eternal triumph of truth that we are impelled to turn our searchlights into the darkened highways and hidden byways of our national and industrial life in order to prepare for something better.

We are not of those who say: "What is the cause that the former days were better than these?" for we know wisdom dwells not with the lips that so inquire; but we ask—and the very asking is a sign of better things—"Why are not these times as good as the best, and why are we not better than our fathers?" And the answer comes, as it has always come, for it is nothing new: "You are living in an age of great change and of great stir and bustle among the people. Your ideals are mostly false and you have deserted the God of truth, justice and honesty to fall down and worship the golden calf of Mammon and the brazen Belial of material prosperity."

Is It Retribution?

Universal peace and happiness, according to the record of the ages, is an iridescent dream and will continue so until the millennium winds up the affairs of all men, good and bad. So it must be agreed that neither today, nor tomorrow, nor yet the next day will see the rule of law without its blot of crime or the reign of peace without its shadow of discord.

There is a balance-wheel, however, to adjust our temporal affairs, a "governor" to keep humanity's great machine from running wild. There must be such a check and it appears in the humdrum affairs of life as well as in the affairs of state, in personal relations as well as government doings. It is the sign of a present more direct and evident punishment than the voice of theology promises in another world. It comes with a directness which makes the sinner quail, and which has for the man of clean living a certain strange note of comfort, albeit tinged with pity for an unfortunate fellow-man. It is retribution.

Whatever argument may be offered more in detail, no other explanation so general can be suggested of the pitiable circumstances to which has come ex-Mayor Magowan, of Trenton, N. J. Fifteen years ago he was the official head of one of the great municipalities of the East, and was pointed to as a type of citizenship, of financiering, of budding statesmanship. In fact he was looked upon, in the following years, as the probable nominee of his party for governor. That was ten years ago, and he built a magnificent home which should signify his prominence in the community and be the sign of the future greatness which everyone believed in store for him.

Then came the moment when he felt that he could defy all human ideas of propriety, as well as divine law, and still continue on his prospering way. He tried it and today finds himself a charity patient in a public hospital—physically incapacitated by an accident; mentally harassed by business failures, morally an outcast through public condemnation of the acts of his private life. His fortune of a million and a half dollars, made in business, has been swept away, his friends refuse to condone his open contempt of common and divine law, he finds a precarious living with wife No. 2, while his lawful wife, whom he scorned and deserted through the subterfuge of an Oklahoma divorce which was afterward judicially termed invalid, lives with her children in sorrow and obscurity.

For a man who had reached such a high place in the estimation of his fellows, his downfall is all the more noteworthy. The degenerate child of the criminal may rise sufficiently above his place in life to mourn the curse under which he was born and gladly accept the helping hand of more fortunate fellow-beings in his effort to struggle upward. But the man of standing who sacrifices all through wanton defiance of law, goes on his way with wide open eyes and can claim no immunity from the just deserts which are surely in store for him. One may recall a scriptural fragment: "I myself have seen the ungodly in great prosperity and flourishing like a green bay tree," but immediately there reverts to the mind the other parable of the chaff, "which the wind scattereth away from the face of the earth."

Perjury.

The present attitude of the judges of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia toward perjury is deserving of the support and commendation of all good citizens. Of course the law upon the subject remains just what it was. Of course the judges have not received any new light either upon the interpretation of that law or upon their moral obligation to enforce it when brought to their attention. The change in attitude is marked mainly by concerted action between the office of the District Attorney and the judges in taking immediate and official notice when the testimony in pending trials develops that perjury is being or has been committed.

Heretofore, there has been some laxity in this matter, the judges were slow to take the initiative, the prosecuting attorneys were not on the alert officially to recognize what they could not fail to see, and even parties in interest and their attorneys were reluctant to invoke the criminal law when their opponents had sworn them out of court with obvious untruths and willful perjury.

There were reasons for this, foremost among which may be placed the technical difficulties in proving perjury, the natural disinclination of a defeated litigant or an unsuccessful prosecutor to incur the opprobrium of seeming to attempt to blacken the character of the successful party, and the dilatory indolence of human nature.

But the change has taken place, the atmosphere of the courts is clearing, full and plain notice has been served upon the weak and the criminal, and hereafter we may hope that the course of justice will be less obstructed by the suborner and his slave.

The courts of our country should stand upon as high a plane as those of any country, and a little bit higher. It is within the province and the power of our judges to attain this result, and the present step to purify the testimony produced before them is in the right direction.

If the bill now pending in Wisconsin ever passes, bachelors resident in that State will have to move elsewhere, forsake their blessed condition, or pay $10 per annum for the privilege of still remaining in the market. Perhaps it may be in order to suggest that a rider be added taxing the married bachelors under the race suicide clause of our new and unwritten constitution.

Secretary Shaw, who is in the procession for the Presidential nomination four years hence, has employed a gravedigger as his coachman. Drive on, driver.

If it is a duty to be beautiful, as Mme. Yale told the Baltimore women Friday, a lot we know ought to be put in a reform school and started out fresh.

Illinois has tackled the divorce problem, which looks like proof of Colonel Bryan's assertion that the West is "wedded to reform."

Although the Beef trust is getting a little hot under the collar, the Ice combine is calmly handing out the same cool deal it started with.

Representative Bede says Havana is the cleanest city in the world. Wait until those American customs collectors have cleaned out Santo Domingo.

Superintendent Zinkhan caught an escaping prisoner yesterday. Practice makes perfect, even if you have to practice daily.

The correspondents who announce that the Japanese sing well fail to note the far-reaching swan song the Russians are putting up.

A Pennsylvania woman has sued a shop girl for $20,000 for alienating her husband's affections, proving the ironclad rule that a husband always loses out when his wife goes to the shops.

The discharge of the Bathing Beach Committee, following so closely the Panama Canal Commission's fiasco, demonstrates that some men can't stand on water.

An astronomer says the principal sea on Mars has changed from blue green to chocolate brown. When a man can see that far, he generally has a brownish taste.

No wonder so many yarns come to us from the Far East when the Russians spend their time chewing the rag.

No, Congressman; you don't know what the Japanese fleet will do, even if you are the Hull of the military committee at the Capitol.

Up in New England they have invented a $19 corset, which may be brought down to a $1.98 figure.

Although Cincinnati dealers are making a great howl against counterfeit bills of lading, their wives have no trouble telling when they're loaded all right.

The people who are bothering about the whereabouts of the Russian fleet might do well to send out some deep sea divers and give 'em plenty of rope.

While the Democrats are figuring on what platform Mayor Dunne will stand for the Presidency, the mayor knows he has his hands full in riding on the municipal street car platform.

The Farmers' National Congress will meet in Richmond, Va., next September. Among the addresses will be one by Representative Heflin, on "How to Campaign Like a Farmer."

The school children of Pueblo presented Mr. Roosevelt with a Big Stick—the kind that used to hang behind the teacher's chair?

A girl has been arrested charged with making bogus checks—and lots of them make bogus checks that pass for good every day.

If they don't stop hanging up fig-leaf pictures in the French salons, modest Americans won't be able to eat the fruit without blushing.

The New York legislators still assert that Justice Hooker is unfit to wear the ermine. They should read the United States Senate's fashion hints: "If the judge doesn't fit the ermine, make the ermine fit the judge."

District Attorney Jerome calls Thomas Jefferson a faker. After all, Thomas never had the chance to show what he would do if invited to drop into a theater for the purpose of being kicked out of its twenty-two doors.

Cassie Chadwick always liked expensive clothes, didn't she? When she goes to the penitentiary, she will be expected to make shirts at the rate of four shirts per day, or 24 per week, or 1,248 per year, which means 12,480 for the ten years she will serve—and all this because she contracted debts amounting to $750,000. According to the figures, those shirts will cost $60.19 each. It's as good as holding up a bank.

GENERAL LEGG PLEADS FOR ARMY VETERANS

Thinks Great Injustice Is Done Them by Pension Commissioner in Giving Publicity to Certain Stories Affecting Their Service Records.

In the opinion of Gen. A. M. Legg, commander-in-chief of the Union Veterans' Union, great injustice has been done to the old soldiers of the country by newspapers who are supporting Commissioner of Pensions Warner in his attitude toward the veterans of "McLane's Pennsylvania Regiment." To The Times yesterday General Legg made the following statement in regard to the subject of pensions in general, and the ninety day pensioners in particular:

"The whole matter that has been appearing in the newspapers relative to some alleged mistake in allowing the pension claims for some soldiers in Pennsylvania is a great ado about nothing, and I am surprised that Commissioner Warner allowed the matter to go into the newspapers. He has a magnificent record as a soldier, from the opening until long after the close of the war, and knows, as does every old soldier, that when these matters are carried into the newspapers, they are carried for the purpose of censure to the old soldier, and those things are not pleasant to any of us.

Should Show Other Side.

"If the newspapers would take up this question on the other side and show the injustice that is done when a mistake has been made through which the old soldier is made to suffer, it would result in a division of sympathies, and the willingness on the part of the veteran to have the whole matter ventilated in the newspapers, because there is not one of them but what is opposed to the granting of a single illegal pension, and all are anxious that equal justice should be meted out to the disabled defenders of the nation.

"I am not personally acquainted with the cases under discussion, but I judge of their character from the articles I have read regarding them, and simply state it is a question for the decision of the Secretary whether these soldiers are entitled to the benefits of the act of June 27, 1890. That act simply requires a service of ninety days in the military or naval service of the United States during the war of the rebellion, and an honorable discharge therefrom. It does not require muster-in or muster-out, nor a written discharge. It simply requires ninety days' service and an honorable discharge, which discharge may be a verbal discharge as proved by satisfactory evidence if the Secretary should so decide.

No Effort to Loot Treasury.

"There does not appear to me to be any remarkable effort to loot the Treasury in this case. These men seem to have enlisted and gone into camp and performed their ninety days' military service, and for the Government to deny that their service was military, after recognizing ninety days of it without denying them muster-in, is equal to the farmer who refuses to pay his hired hand after his having performed three months of service.

"Conditions were such at the time that the Government was in doubt whether more men would be needed, and these men were held in camp believing that at any moment (and undoubtedly encouraged in that belief by Government officials) they would be called into active service, and they continued in camp fitting themselves that they might do better duty when called upon to go to the front. As we, who are posted as to the conditions in those days, know, the Government did some very peculiar things and that the Pension Bureau has taken advantage of these peculiar things in the adjudicating of some claims under the act of June 27, 1890.

Example in the District.

"For instance, here in the District of Columbia, men were called upon to volunteer their services for the immediate defense of the Capitol, and they volunteered and went into camp, and were held in camp for days, and in some cases weeks, doing duty before they were finally mustered into the service, and were held in service until the volunteers from the States arrived here to relieve them, and then they were mustered out of service.

"All of them actually performed more than ninety days' service, but the period between the dates of muster-in and muster-out did not equal ninety days, and although they had performed the full ninety days' service, yet, under the rulings of the Pension Office, many of these men have been denied pension because the period between the date of muster-in and muster-out did not equal ninety days, though there is plenty of evidence in existence showing that their services actually exceeded ninety days. I have never seen this matter ventilated in the newspapers.

"I have never known or heard of anybody being in danger of being discharged from the service because of the action of denying to these men the benefits of the law, which they were actually and legally entitled to, and yet it seems to me that if these cases recently referred to had gone through to allowance and a pension had been paid these men, this Government would not suffer as much because of it as has each and every one of these soldiers who have been denied the pension that actually belonged to them under the law.

Suspicious and Fanatical.

"It is a fact that Government employes who have the paying out, or the direction of paying out, moneys for the Government eventually get the idea into their heads that when they save money to the Government, it matters not how honestly or dishonestly, they are saving money for themselves, and Pension Office clerks sometimes get so fanatical on the subject that they will refuse to give consideration to evidence that would be accepted favorably in any court of the land, and their fanaticism is allowed to continue to the bitter end, with the result of the rejection of good and honest claims.

"I recollect that at the close of the war men who had the direction of mustering the Union army out, manipulated the mustering out in such a manner as to save to the Government bounty and pay that was actually and honestly due to the soldier, by mustering men out in the field a day or two before the termination of the service required to give title to this additional pay or bounty, and which under the rule adopted terminated their service so far that they could have no claim against the Government.

"And yet, many regiments were held in camp for days and sometimes weeks in getting to their homes after being mustered out and per se they got no pay for this time, but the Government, they thought, was poor then and they made no kick. Most of them were glad to get home alive. I have never seen this matter ventilated by the newspapers, and I never heard of anybody having been threatened with discharge after making this intentional or unintentional mistake.

Favorable to Pensions.

"The officials of the Pension Bureau and other adjudicating officials of the Government who have the direction of paying out the funds that go broadcast over the land do not seem to understand the situation. The people of this country are favorable to pensions. The people understand and know that the magnificent financial condition of the Government and of the country today is due almost entirely to the liberal distribution of money in pensions every month, which goes into every hamlet and is immediately put into circulation for the benefit of all the people except the man who has money to sell. The man who has money to sell—and by him I mean the man who has money, on the interest of which he lives, and is therefore desirous of getting the largest possible interest for it—is opposed to pensions simply because a liberal distribution of pension money makes money a cheap article. The man who has money to sell is the enemy of the country, and is more dangerous than he who manipulates a trust.

"The people demanded the enactment of a service pension law. Some favored an age clause therein, while others did not. The demand had become so great and had been forced upon members of Congress so strongly by the people that if such a bill should have been reported to the Pension Committee immediately preceding the issue of order 78 (of which we have all heard), and possibly even after that, it would have become a law so far as the acts of the two houses of Congress could have made it a law.

Order Was an Excuse.

"Order 78 was issued simply as an excuse for not permitting such a bill to be reported, and the bill was not reported. That order 78 has such a questionable right of origin that I do not believe that any examiner adjudicating a claim in which age is a factor, should be punished if he caused the commencement of the pension to date from a time preceding the date fixed in that order.

"I feel that newspapers of this country should realize the fact that this is a great and wealthy country. It is able to do grand and glorious things because of the immense wealth that has been acquired to it through the liberal dispensation of pension moneys, which have gone into the trade and kept the labor and other forces at work and developed a portion of the wealth that is with us for development and placed the nation where it is today, the foremost nation of the earth in all things, and realizing these things, that they should give all praise to the men who made it possible that the nation should live and in the care of whom by the Government's fulfilling its promises made to the soldier when in his youth (and childhood in many cases), he went forth to battle, has resulted the conditions which now exist, and of which, as American citizens, we are all so proud."

AMERICAN PEN WOMEN MEET AT HEADQUARTERS

The regular meeting of the League of American Pen Women took place Monday evening at headquarters, Mrs. Rhodes, acting president, in the chair.

A special feature of the meeting was the memorial resolutions for those members of the league who have passed away during the year just ended. In this connection an affecting tribute to the late Mrs. Ruth Shaffner-Etnier, prepared by her devoted friend, Mrs. Agnes Greene-Foster, of Chicago, was read by a resident member.

A beautiful poem, entitled "A Cruise," by Mrs. Katherine Haden, of East Nashville, Tenn., was read by another resident member who "lent to rhyme of the poet the music of her voice."

ORDER.

The chairlady rapped sharply.

"It ought not be necessary for the chair to remind members," she said severely, "that under our rules of order, to say nothing of common courtesy, only one member may be silent at a time. Any member who becomes silent at the same time that another member is silent is distinctly out of order."

The ladies of the club visibly cringed under the merited rebuke. Many of them flushed to the roots of their hair, and several there were who burst into tears.—Life.

"BACHELORS" GIVE ONE OF THEIR SELECT DANCES

"The Bachelors" gave one of their monthly select private dances at Saengerbund Hall, on April 13.

Music was rendered by Prof. Smith's orchestra, and there were about forty couples present.

The favors given at this dance consisted of Japanese silk fans for the ladies and Japanese souvenirs for the gentlemen.

"The Bachelors" Club is composed of young business men, and its dances are always looked forward to, and invitations to the same are at a premium.

THE GUNNER'S PRAYER.

"T. P." recalls a good story of British piety on the eve of battle. A lieutenant of H. M. S. Revenge, just before the battle of Trafalgar, discovered one of the gunners on his knees before his gun.

"What the —— —— are you doing?" shouted the amazed and angry lieutenant. "You're not afraid, are you?"

"Afraid!" cried the gunner, scornfully, rising from his knees; "no, I'm not afraid; I was praying."

"What were you praying for if you're not afraid?" retorted the lieutenant.

"I was praying, sir," was the response, "that the enemy's shot may be distributed in the same proportion as the prize money—almost all of it among the officers!"—Harper's Weekly.

OIL INVESTIGATION ON IN EARNEST

Garfield Sees Men Primed With Facts.

MAKES TRIP TO HUMBOLDT

Assistants Examine Chanute Producers. R. C. Rawlings, Signer of Memorial a Witness.

CHANUTE, Kan., April 15.—The real work of the Garfield investigation began here this morning.

Mr. Garfield and his stenographer left on an early train to spend a half day in Humboldt. There he is interviewing ex-State Senator Stewart, the Allen county member of the executive committee of the Kansas Oil Producers' Association; also C. D. Webster, of the Webster refinery, both of whom, it is said, are well loaded with testimony damaging to the Standard.

Earl, Caswell, and Conant, Garfield's three assistants, today examined the Chanute producers. R. C. Rawlings, who was one of the signers of the memorial that led to the investigation, was the first witness.

Mr. Garfield and his party will remain in this vicinity some days.

NOT ONE OF "EVERYBODY" APPROVING CIVIL SERVICE

To the Editor of The Washington Times:

Referring to your editorial, "Where Examinations Fail," in issue of April 14.

It is not true that "Everybody in Washington believes in the merit of civil service based upon competitive examinations," unless we admit that non-concurrence in your opinion fully proves the dissenter a nobody?

These nobodies constitute a multitude. They are as patriotic, as substantial, as law-abiding, as progressive, as useful, as intelligent, as your everybodies are—and, I think, more numerous.

Why, then, tell your readers such a bare-faced untruth? The people of Washington are not unanimously of the opinion you allege. You know that they are not. Hence, you do not merely make a mistake when you assert unanimity, wherefore, the word "untruth" is not too strong.

It may be that civil service is, in your opinion, "right in theory;" but there are many men who neither are nor ought to be in lunatic asylums; who are not imbeciles; who are not destitute of capacity for logical thought, who consider civil service wrong in theory and detrimental in practice.

You merely dogmatize. Civil service is dogmatism gone wrong.

Proof is lacking—does not exist—that "it has been proven right by about twenty years' trial," etc.

Poll those who have to visit public offices on business, and, I am confident, the verdict will be that the most supercilious and inefficient service is found in the protected places; the greatest courtesy, promptness, efficient, and attentive responses accorded the public in those places not yet blighted by the deteriorating, impracticable fad.

That "everybody would like to see the entire clerical force" subjugated by civil service is merely a repetition of the first "Everybody" assertion, and as false. It may be that everybody worth enumeration by the civil service hobby riders so agree.

But there are others; and these would be sorry, for their country's sake, to see the system at all extended. These regard civil service as very bad for the country, wholly at variance with democratic and republican governmental systems; sure, in time, to entail very great evils hard to eradicate; the elimination of which will induce disturbing conditions and impose heavy cost.

Few, indeed, are the present threats against the future tranquillity of the people, which are as serious as is this encroaching perversion of our governmental system. Perhaps it would be more exact to say: This parasite that has been planted upon our Government.

Whether a parasite planted upon our Government or a bacillus with which it has been innoculated, the effect will be equally disturbing.

H. B. JEFFRIES.

7 Fifth street S. E.
Washington, D. C., April 15, '05.

FRENCH PLAY PLANNED FOR "DIET KITCHEN"

Quite the most delightful past Easter event is the performance, planned to take place at the New Willard, when the actors will be prominent society people, and the audience, those who wish to benefit the Diet Kitchen, one of Washington's most beautiful charities. "A Lesson in Acting" is a short play with Miss Maud Wetmore and Henry May as the principals, and an invisible personage "with a voice," besides.

"Furnished Apartments" will be played in French, and Mr. Van Swinderen, the Netherlands Minister; Miss Berry, Miss Wetmore, Mlle. des Portes de la Fosse, Miss de Smirnoff, Henry May, and Count Zichy, of the Austrian embassy, will take the parts.

Between the two plays, there will be a musical promenade, the patronesses having both of the large ballrooms. After the performance, a supper, most elegantly arranged, will be served, and a large number of people will entertain parties. Baroness von Sternburg bought a number of the most expensive seats, as did Mrs. Wetmore, Mrs. Morton, and a number of others.

"Furnished Apartments" was once played in Rome for charity by society people, and so pleased the Queen Marguerita that she had two special performances arranged, that all of her friends might have the pleasure of attending.

WEARING OF "CZAR."

The general allusion to the ruler of Russia as the "Czar" is, strictly speaking, incorrect. His official title is "Emperor and autocrat." "Czar" is the old Russian word for "lord" or prince" and was abandoned by Peter the Great on his triumphal return from Poltava, his crowning victory over Charles XII of Sweden. Since then the Russian monarch has been officially entitled "emperor" and at the congress of Vienna, in 1815, his right to the imperial term was admitted by the powers, with the proviso that, though he was emperor, he had no precedence over the kings of western Europe.