

COMMENT AND OPINION

By PHIL FRANCIS

THE announced design of Hiram Johnson and Lissner to elect delegates, ostensibly republicans, but pledged to vote for the candidate of another party, is the most amazing and the most shameless piece of political rascality the country has ever seen attempted.

"Thou shalt not steal"—eh? Lots of us were inclined to grin at that as a political platform. It seemed so futile, besides being a trifle trite. But it begins to look as if we would have to adopt that very platform.

When the governor of California and his handy men actually meet to plan the burglary of the republican electoral ticket, common honesty really becomes, for the first time, a political issue. There have been thieves always in politics. But up to this time they have made it a practice not to do their rascality in the dark and by stealth.

The Burglars' Bully Band never met before in daylight and in the capitol.

ELECTIONS are not won, as Mr. Garfield once remarked in a nominating speech, in June, but in November. It's too early to bet. Remember that free silver campaign in '96? Republicans and democrats were all as enthusiastic for sixteen to one as some of them are for insurgency now. Everybody was doing it. Some folks even carried the hardihood of enthusiasm so far as to read John P. Young's editorial clear through. There was no limit to the sacrifices the excited ones were willing to make.

Well, they all went to St. Louis, and the sovereign delegates of the sovereign state of California, as well as several other sovereign commonwealths, were all neatly flattened out by Mr. Hanna's steam roller. Mankind was again crucified on a cross of gold. The remains of the sovereign delegates were shipped back home and when they revived they were a mad lot.

You couldn't find one man in a hundred who was going to vote for McKinley. Thereupon yours truly, meaning to get down while any foolish persons were willing to wager on such a cinch, bet all he had on general results, borrowed all he could to bet on results in California and wore out his feet running around to rib up his friends to bet on Santa Cruz county.

That was in June. November came later. It took the whole shop to pay for that lesson in politics. But it was worth it.

Mr. Taft isn't strong in California right now. But he is much stronger than McKinley was in July, 1896. The insurgents are not a bit more formidable and but a little more bitter than were the free silver republicans then. Yet Mr. McKinley carried the state in November. If the advice of a singed Office Cat is worth anything to you, don't be in too big a hurry to give odds that Mr. Taft won't carry the state next November. You may get a better price two or three months from now.

ON Sunday it is a pleasure to think about other things than the chink of the dollar and the winning of the day's bread. An' it please you to listen, we will talk about something else than the necessary, recurrent doings of the workaday week—not sermonizing, but just chatting, as we stroll through the fields and forget the town.

And, in the first place, you will forgive me if I speak in the first person, because there is no other way to talk among friends. This problem of the pronoun, if you must know a secret of the trade, is a hard nut to crack at times. The editorial "we" does not belong under a signature, and the more intimate "I," while inoffensive in speech, suggests egotism if it stares out too frequently through the printed page. It was in a fit of desperation born of this vexing problem that John Swinton abolished the use of the editorial "we" in his paper, though he justified himself to his readers by declaring that no man had a right to speak of himself in the plural number unless he was inhabited by a tapeworm, and that a diagnosis had pronounced him disqualified.

That was not the only good thing John Swinton ever said, by any means. He was a great editorial writer who could never find the right appreciation—so he printed a paper of his own, with the result that when he attended to business there wasn't much in the paper to read, and when he attended to filling the paper with excellent stuff to read he didn't do any business. So his light went out. What John really needed was a detachable tapeworm with reasonably good business training.

John Swinton loved books, and an author favorite with him was old Sir Thomas Browne. And in that one respect, at least, your companion who is doing all the talking resembles John. I wish there were many others. One would like to resemble closely a chap so manly and so brave, so widely informed, so unpretentious, wearing all that weight of knowledge lightly as a flower. We can't all be that, but we can all do the day's work as well as we can, with a stout heart; and we can all love books, and old Sir Thomas Browne's books, too.

Barrett Wendell, in his textbook on English composition—the only work of the kind I ever saw which is worth reading—declares that the most musical sentence, to his ear, ever written is that one with which Sir Thomas begins the fifth chapter of his "Urn Burial":

Now, since these dead bones have already outlasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard underground, and their walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and spacious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and trappings of three conquests; what prince can promise such durability unto his relics, or might not gladly say:

"And quietly rested under the drums and trappings of three conquests"—that is the clause upon which Professor Wendell lays the heavy weight of his most favorable criticism. And, indeed, it is a subtly musical and charming use of speech—of our English speech—the most copious and the noblest speech that ever tanged on the tongues of men—barring not that sonorous and beautiful and melodious speech to which the Athenian porticoes echoed when still the language of Homer lived on the lips within the walls of the lovely City of the Violet Crown. One never forgets the measured, marching music of that sentence, once it has charmed his ear.

Two little books I keep always by me, and like to have one or the other in a pocket when going on an hour's journey. One is "Religio Medici" and the other is a collection of passages from the works of Robert Louis Stevenson, called "The Pocket R. L. S." I like them to read better than the bible—and, though not holding in much honor the creeds of the theologians, I would not willingly let many days pass without reading or recalling some passages from the bible. The man who would know the capabilities of our English tongue must make the King James translation his constant study—and surely, within the covers of no other volume are there held such exquisite tales, such curious narrative, such dramatic poetry, such eloquence—so much of the pathos, the gladness, the goodness and the evil that go to make complete this curious thing we call human life. But I like my two little books better for workaday companions.

Maybe you think a newspaper writer likes his job. Well, so he does. But not all the time. There are hours when a great weariness and disgust with the grind—with politics and its futile noise and pother, with murders, accidents, marriages, divorces and the condition of Theodore's teeth and the latest utterance of the youngest Wilson and the whole scrambled mess scraped together with a thousand newsgatherers' fine combs—there are hours, I repeat, when one curses the grind in the names of all his gods and heartily devotes it to the infernal pit. And when the little blue devils come to sit on the window sill in such fashion, one has only to glue his

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eyes to the little book's pages, drink at those eternal fountains of deathless humor and immortal philosophy and be refreshed again against the chafing of the bit and the pulling of the harness. And the little blue devils? They skip away.

It is a very great mistake to suppose that all truth is mummified in the bible and that all religion is in sermons, prayers and genuflections. God speaks with many voices, nor did he become suddenly dumb when John wrote the amen of the Apocalypse. And there is many a prayer that climbs to our Father which is said by some humble and, it may be, rough and profane fellow who thinks he is only earning bread—the deed coined into speech, not of men, but of angels, and whispered by them in the benignant ear of the Almighty Listener. In the most thumbed and best beloved of my little books there is a noble poem which I like to repeat to myself when I want heart of grace for any task. This is it:

For still the Lord is Lord of might; In deeds, in deeds, he takes delight; The plow, the spear, the laboring barks, The field, the founded city, marks; He marks the smiler in the streets, The singer upon garden seats; He sees the climber in the rocks, To him the shepherd folds his flocks. For those he loves who underprop With daily virtues heaven's top, And bear the falling skies with ease— Unfrowning caryatides! Those he approves that ply the trade, That rock the child, that wed the maid, That with weak virtues, weaker hands, Sow gladness on the peopled lands, And still, with laughter, song and shout, Spin the great wheel of earth about.

I like to go down to the old square where the wonderful man who wrote that gallant, glorious prayer in verse used to sit in the shinnings of the sun, longing for the furze and heather of the Scottish hills he was to see never again; fronting the death that racked his feeble body with the steadfast valor of a good knight—the high souled, the ingenious, the heroic Stevenson. These streets have been trod by many men of renown, by some of genius. But the genius and the renown of that sickly and pain racked consumptive who used to sit with the queer loungers in Portsmouth square will be freshly remembered in the flowing cups drained to the memory of the mighty ones long, long after all who have here come have vanished into forgetfulness, and, it may be, long after the great city itself is a tumbled and forgotten heap of ruins. For he was one of the great ones of the earth, one of the few who are immortal, whose fame is invincible, who live and die not.

I will quote a bit of his prose, which seems to me the pinnacle of style. If you are familiar with it, all the more will you like to hear it again:

All around the isle of Afo's the surf, with an incessant, hammering thunder, beat upon the reefs and beaches. Now louder in one place, now lower in another, like the combinations of orchestral music, the constant mass of sound was hardly varied for a moment. And loud above all this hurly-burly I could hear the changeful voices of the Roost and the intermittent roaring of the Merry Men. At that hour there flashed into my mind the reason of the name that they were called. For the noise of them seemed almost mirthful, as it outtopped the other noises of the night, or, if not mirthful, yet instinct with a portentous joviality. Nay, and it seemed even human. As when savage men have drunk away their reason and, discarding speech, bawl together in their madness by the hour; so, to my ears, those deadly breakers shouted by Aros in the night.

Oh, to be able to write like that! Said I not that he was king among men? Ave, imperator! Nos morituri te salutamus!

And now, to make an end of this rambling Sunday talk, let us who will soon die in a sense that death shall not prevail against him—since he lives in his works immortally young and beloved—repeat that manly evening prayer of him who the little theologians will have in hell because he cared naught for their creeds:

Farewell, fair day. If any God At all consider this poor clod, He who the fair occasion set Prepared and placed the impediment.

Let him divine vengeance take— Give me to sleep, give me to wake Girded and shod, and bid me play The hero in the coming day!

Letters From the People

The Call Works for Schools Editor The Call: I wish to extend thanks to you, not only on my own behalf, but also on behalf of the Italian-American citizens of San Francisco and the students of Italian in the public schools, for the valuable assistance you have given to the establishment of the Italian language in the cosmopolitan schools of San Francisco.

Upon the enactment of the cosmopolitan school law of 1909, making the study of Italian, French, German and Spanish compulsory in at least one school of this city, the board of education of San Francisco very promptly and properly and generously established not only one school, but six schools, namely: The Hancock grammar school, Miss Nellie G. Gallagher, principal; Washington grammar school, Mr. McCarthy, principal; Garfield grammar school, Miss Sherer, principal; Garfield grammar school (after school session), Mrs. Ghibaldi, principal; Sherman primary school, Miss M. Hurley, principal, and the Sherman evening school, Frank L. Fenton, principal.

These classes, I am happy to say, are in prosperous and flourishing condition, and with the opening of the Panama canal, and a resulting large increase in the Italian-American population, the efficiency of these classes will be greatly increased.

In closing I wish to say that I have always found the present board of education, the superintendent of schools and the principals and teachers of the above mentioned schools most willing and anxious to advance the Italian language in the public schools and to do everything to promote the study of a language spoken by such a large and industrious part of our citizens. Yours very truly,

THEODORE BACIGALUPI, San Francisco, July 6, 1912.

A Kindly Parent "Dad," said a Bartlesville, Okla., kid to his father the other night, "I want to go to the show tonight." "A show at night is no place for a kid like you. You should be at home in bed." "But I peddled bills and have two tickets," said the kid, as he began to sniffle. "All right then," answered dad. "I will go with you to see that you don't get into trouble."—Kansas City Star.

Johnny's History Lesson By Nixon Waterman. I think of all the things at school That study's history, as a rule. 'Is writ of all, don't you? Oh, dates there are an awful sight. An' 'I study day an' night. There's only one I've got just right— That's fourteen ninety-two. Columbus crossed the Delaware In fourteen ninety-two; We whipped the British, fair an' square, In fourteen ninety-two. At Concord an' at Lexington We beat the redskins on the run While the band played "Johnny, Get Your Gun." In fourteen ninety-two. Pat Henry, with his dyin' breath— Said, "Give me liberty or death!" An' Barbara Fritchie, so 'tis said, Cried, "Shoot, if you must, this old gray head, But I'd rather be your own instead!" In fourteen ninety-two.

The Pilgrims came to Plymouth rock In fourteen ninety-two. An' the Indians standin' on the dock Asked, "What are you goin' to do?" An' they said, "We seek your harbor dear For our children's children's children dear May boast that their forefathers landed here." In fourteen ninety-two. Miss Pocahontas saved the life In fourteen ninety-two. Of John Smith, and became his wife In fourteen ninety-two. An' the Smith tribe starved thin an' there, An' now there are John Smiths everywhere, But they didn't have any Smiths to spare In fourteen ninety-two. Kentucky was settled by Daniel Boone In fourteen ninety-two. An' 'I think the cow jumped over the moon In fourteen ninety-two. Ben Franklin flew his kite so high He drew the lightning from the sky, An' Washington couldn't tell a lie In fourteen ninety-two.

The Insider

Somewhat on the inside of the biennial federation, tells of the woman who did not know of Henry Clay and the other woman who did know where Longfellow was buried.

"Henry Clay, Dear Me, Who Ever Was He?" KENTUCKY has sent some of its cleverest and most blue grass blooded daughters west to represent the clubs of that state at the biennial convention which has filled the city with femininity during the last few weeks.

Prominent among these was Mrs. Thomas Jefferson Smith, who is a great-granddaughter of Henry Clay, as witty as she is handsome, and having had a dozen college degrees in America and Europe.

Mrs. Smith was visiting last year in Boston and mention was made in the serene social circles to which she had been introduced by right of birth and acquaintance, that she was descended from Henry Clay. A pretty matron looked puzzled for a moment. Evidently she had not even read the tobacco signs, for she asked finally, "But who was Henry Clay?"

There was not a very vivid response to the question, and although shocked at the state of affairs, Mrs. Smith made no comments. But she waited.

A little later the name of Longfellow was brought into the conversation. "Longfellow?" she said, "oh, yes; his grave is on my grandfather's farm down in Kentucky."

There were polite eyebrows raised and feeble but courteous murmurs of impossibilities, and it was conveyed to Mrs. Smith that she had made a historical blunder, which amounted almost to a social crime.

"Oh," she said, with an artless air of astonishment, "you are speaking of Longfellow, the racehorse, are you not?"

Should Suffragist In New York, it is said, only two subjects are ever discussed nowadays in polite circles—aviation and woman's suffrage. Apropos of the latter, Mrs. Frederick Nathan of that city, prominent in club circles and as president of the National Consumers' league, is telling that at a recent dinner in New York the hostess was discussing the matter of the feminine right to the ballot with a Wall street power, who was willing to grant her something of her argument. "Certainly," he said, "it would be all right for you to vote. You are educated, intelligent and well informed. Your ballot would be cast in the right way. But you must consider the other side. How would you like your cook, for instance, to vote?" "Sir," was the quick response, "he does."

When Admiral Dewey's Blood Once Boiled Guncotton is kept wet on board battleships to guard against its exploding. Before charging a mine the explosive is dried out. This is done on the galley range. Occasionally when drying guncotton a small piece will catch fire. The burning of a thimbleful of guncotton will produce as much and as dense smoke as a burning bale of cotton. It may be stated that to say on board ship a "fire is in the galley" is to say something "clever," as there always is fire there.

It was on the flagship Olympia in Manila bay, Rear Admiral George Dewey in command. Lieutenant Commander William A. Moffett, until last Monday local inspector of the United States Lighthouse service, and now executive officer of the dreadnought Arkansas, was officer of the deck.

The fire alarm awakened Admiral Dewey, who was dozing in a deck chair. A bit of guncotton was burning in the galley. Seeing the cloud of black smoke the admiral started down the deck. Lieutenant Commander Moffett was met coming from the galley.

"Where is the fire, officer?" asked Admiral Dewey, excitedly. "In the galley, sir," answered the officer of the deck.

"How dare you answer me in that manner! I'll have no flippancy from any officer of this fleet. Where is the fire?" thundered the commander. "In the galley, sir," was again spoken in truth.

That was too much. Before Commander Moffett had time to explain he had been ordered into custody for insubordination. The admiral continued down the deck.

In a few minutes Admiral Dewey ordered Commander Moffett released and extended him an apology.

How One Lieutenant Sobered His Captain In company with two brother officers and a battalion of infantry, Captain Blank was sent to one of the southern islands of the Philippine archipelago to maintain order among the little brown brethren. Duty did very well for a day or two—then it began to pall. Captain Blank sought mental refreshment in alcohol, of which they had brought a goodly supply. He kept on seeking it for some weeks.

Then word arrived that the colonel of the regiment was coming on a tour of inspection. The time for his visit grew perilously near, but neither the alcohol's influence nor the captain's desire for it had abated.

Finally the two lieutenants rose to the occasion. They brought in all the drink they could find and proposed a last spree. Captain Blank protested against it being the last, but agreed to do his share.

Drink went hard with his brother officers. He was surprised to see them go under so soon.

Toward nightfall Lieutenant Onebar grew restless. Continually he brushed the air about him and flicked imaginary nothings from his knee. Little by little the captain's knee came in for a share of his attention, to the captain's unconcealed discomfort.

At length the lieutenant spoke: "Whether it's me or the drink I can not tell, but I seem to see little pink things—"

"Shake hands on it, my boy," said the captain unsteadily. "I've been seeing the same for the last three days, but I wasn't man enough to say so." When the colonel came on his visit of inspection, Captain Blank conducted it with credit. The cure had worked.

PERSONS IN THE NEWS

- VICOMTE AND VICOMTESSE DE TRISTAN, Miss Agnes de Tristan and Master Pierre de Tristan were among the passengers sailing yesterday on the steamship Olympia from New York for Europe. Others sailing were Miss M. de Brun de Surelle, Mr. and Mrs. H. L. Green, Mr. and Mrs. Harold Nelson, Miss Jessica Jackson, Mme. Olanovsky, E. C. Golla, G. A. V. Fitzgerald, Percy Mould, Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Lucas.
- HENRY MADLEY, director of the San Francisco symphony orchestra, returned yesterday from a trip east and is stopping at the Palace. He is deeply immersed in plans for next season's series of concerts to be given by his organization, which, he says, will exceed both in originality and execution the successful programs presented last year.
- E. J. BOWES, a well known theatrical manager and formerly a real estate man of this city and Seattle, is a guest at the Palace. Bowes is the husband of Margaret Hiltgen, recently seen here in Charles Kenney's play, "Kindling."
- JOHN LLEWELLYN of Los Angeles returned here from the south yesterday and is among the guests at the Palace. He is associated with his brother, Reese Llewellyn, in the iron works of that name in the southern city.
- DAVID VAN SCHAECK of Hartford, Conn., and Mrs. Van Schack were among the arrivals yesterday at the Fairmont.
- J. TARN MCGREW of Paris was among yesterday's arrivals at the St. Francis. He is making a tour of the world.
- C. J. MOORE, a director in the Lakeport Transportation company at Lakeport, was a recent arrival at the Argonaut.
- W. M. YOUNG and A. J. Newberry, two of the leading fruit growers of Porterville, are stopping at the Stewart.
- MISS MAY F. TRIMBLE and Miss Louisa McCormick of Portland are among the recent arrivals at the Court.
- C. E. FREED, an automobile man of Orland, is stopping at the Von Don.
- P. C. GREEN and family of Marysville are registered at the Dale.
- B. WILLIAMS and wife of Gridley are registered at the Sutter.
- C. V. JACKSON, a Eureka lumberman, is a guest at the Sutter.
- J. E. JOHNSON of Dayton, Nev., is at the Starford.
- GEORGE ABLETT of Gilroy is staying at the Von Don.
- A. C. MARSH of Los Angeles is at the Columbia.