THE ARGUS,

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By THE J. W. POTTER CO.

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Tuesday, January 14, 1908.

The most generally satisfying thing that the present legislature could do in all its career, would be to adjourn sine die.

Senator Beveridge has introduced a bill for a tariff commission. Fancy Beveridge acknowledging that he needs the aid of a commission to tell him how to vote.

As Senator Aldrich is the father of the currency bill pending in congress, it will be nothing but prudent to try and discover the "nigger in the wood pile," perhaps carefully hidden there by the Standard Oil trust attorneys.

The administration, after months of labor, has arranged a reciprocity treaty with France. It will be of immense advantage to the "common people" of the United States, for it reduces the tariff tax on champagne.

Secretary Taft had to answer some embarrassing questions at the meeting in New York addressed by him Saturday night. He was unable to satisfactorily explain why he had changed his views on the necessity of tariff revision.

There is a growling in the republican camp in Ohio over the spoils of office that may produce democratic fruit in the future, if the democrats take warning and get together, so that like the republicans, they have something to fight for.

The sensational news comes from Iowa that Senator Allison has expressed himself as doubtful of the advisability of revising the tariff on the eve of an election. The Hawkeye statesman must be getting garrulous in his old age. He is not wont to be radical and incendiary in his remarks. He has been accused of having opinions, but never of expressing them.

Fix in your mind that commerce is not a swindling transaction, but a purely beneficial operation; that every act of honest trade increases the happiness and prosperity of all who are concerned in it; that when we two exchange products, each is the more comfortable and the better off for the exchange—for each has given that which he wanted less for that which he wanted more.—Charles Nordhoff.

The Public Enemy.

Springfield Register: The decision of the appellate court of California, which declares void the indictment of Mayor Schmitz, coupled with the declaration of Superior Judge Dunne, before whom Schmitz was convicted, creates the suspicion that justice in California strikes snags in some pretty high places.

The assertion of Judge Dunne is a bold one, that it is to be regretted the hearing of this appeal came up before a court whose members have relatives and intimate friends against whom many indictments were returned by the grand jury that returned those true bills. * * * I will further say, the jury which rendered the verdict (against Schmitz) will be remembered with respect and honor long after the court which set aside the verdict has been forgotten."

Possibly the decision of the appellate court, that the collection by Mayor Schmitz of graft from French restaurant keepers does not constitute a public offense, is supported by some legal technicality with which the doors of penitentiaries are often pried open for prisoners with money; but Justice, blindfolded though she is, can see the crime against common honesty and official decency that has been perpetrated.

Whether Schmitz and Ruef are in or out of prison; whether they have the friendship or not of court judges who are experts at digging up technicalities to protect law-breakers, and whether they have the friendship or not of some business men who think more of dollars than of decency, law and justice, those two men, one a confessed grafter and the other a convicted grafter, belong in prison where they were sent by a trial court which evidently considered the astounding violation of law and the crime against common honor of more importance than some trifling technicality which relatives and friends of the convicted men have found after a long exhaustive search.

Public officials who "graft" become public enemies. They are the worst class of law-violators. They are more to be despised than the professional criminal. The laws can be made none too drastic in dealing with officials who make a private snap of a public trust. Unfortunately this class of law-breakers is harder to detect and convict than the common thief, yet their thievery places them upon a lower plane of moral cowardice than that where stand the ordinary crooks who fill the jails and penitentiaries.

Two Extremes for the Same End.

The paradox was presented before the Rock Island city council last evening of the two extremes in influences relative to the liquor traffic in the city, working to the same end—the defeat of the proposition to submit to the people the proposition to raise the saloon license from $500 to $1,000. While both interests sought to accomplish the same disposition of the matter and succeeded, they were actuated by directly opposite motives. The anti-saloon people, as represented by the church petitions desired the council to defer action at the present moment believing that without immediate proceedings looking to the regulation of the liquor traffic, their position would be stronger in the development of a sentiment looking to the submission of the local option proposition to the people in connection with the spring election. On the other hand the liquor interests considered only the present, and fought the submission of the vote to the people fearing that it would carry, and maintaining that the increase would be oppressive to the saloon interests, discriminating in its effect, as driving out of business a certain percentage of the saloons now existing.

In the relative attitude of the two influences, the anti-saloon people presented the farsighted side of the issue, and the representation of the liquor traffic the shortsighted position. The anti-saloon influences submitted their protests in the form of numerous petitions addressed to and read before the council, while the liquor interests exerted their influence by personal solicitation among the aldermen in advance of the meeting.

In view of the pressure brought to bear from both sources, the majority of the aldermen were in a state of pitiful bewilderment. They seemed to have on opinions of their own and would have taken the side-switching of the entire question in the same light that a man awakens from a horrible nightmare. And now that all is over—for the present—some of the councilmen who voted against submitting the proposition to the people, attribute their action to the effect of the anti-saloon communications, others to the crushing blow the $1,000 license would have been to the struggling saloon, and still others to the fact that a special election on the subject would involve an unnecessary expense. And altogether they—the aldermen who voted against putting the question up to the people—are heaving sighs of relief that they were not called upon to act in their official capacity in the exercise of their proper prerogative on the square-toed issue as to whether the license should be increased or not.

The Argus has urged, and still maintains, the high license measure to be proper. It believes in the increased license reposes the best solution of the liquor question from the standpoint of sufficient regulation and in consideration of the much needed increase in municipal revenues. With high license in force and in position for a trial would have developed an argument for a conservative consideration of the saloon question in all its bearings with promised beneficial results as against the generally harmful effects of a possible radical course of action.

The peculiar phase of the peculiar situation as it developed in the light of the pressure from the two extremes that influenced last night's action is that one side or the other may feel the peculiar effect of the rebound later on.

Nobody wanted the half loaf.

1776-1908.

The Filipino people, according to the most authentic reports, are as much opposed to being governed by a power thousands of miles away, as were the colonists of the 13 provinces in 1776. King George the Third considered this sentiment among the colonists treason, but those who held it rebels; but the sentiment was approved by the Declaration of Independence, written by the founder of American democracy, Thomas Jefferson; and ever since then it has been one of the tenets of the democratic party that governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed, and that people who are governed without their consent have the right to protest, and to demand their release from bondage.

And the exercise of this right appears to be what a large majority of the people of the Philippine islands are insisting on.

RIFLES FOR SCHOOLBOYS.

President's Plan Put Into Operation by the National Association.

President Roosevelt's wish that the American schoolboy be instructed in rifle shooting is in a fair way to realization, says a New York special dispatch to the Washington Post. The National Rifle Association of America, in cooperation with the national board for promotion of rifle practice, as the first step toward complying with the wishes of the president and of the national board has amended its bylaws so that rifle clubs can be organized in schools and become affiliated with it under the same rules and regulations as govern civilian rifle clubs.

This schoolboy movement will be inaugurated by a tournament which the National Rifle association has arranged to hold from Dec. 23, 1907, to January, 1908, at the Grand Central Palace in New York. The most important feature of the tournament will be the presence of teams from high schools of other cities, notably Washington and Baltimore.

The Romans and the Sea.

Virgil is understood to have lived long on the bay of Naples, and he dwells repeatedly with unsurpassed effect on the littoral phases of the sea, but on the element at large he expresses little but a sense of vastness, power, malevolence. It is a toilsome and perilous expanse, to be hurried across and escaped.

Across the land the Romans went with indomitable confidence, marking their way with those works of peculiar permanence, so that today the Briton traverses the original roads they built, and the Gaul walks beneath their arches. But even in imperial times the voyage from Brundisium to Greece was something of a hardship. The ocean was a thing "bestrew'd with wreck and disaster." In its depths or on its shores lay the bones of those who never received burial and hence could not pass over the Styx.

When Tiberius built a yacht he floated it on the quiet lake Nemi and very likely kept it anchored like a palatial houseboat. The sea lacked that essential stability which the Romans so much valued. It was estranging. Roman adaptability made it a medium of empire, but never with the viking spirit.—Sewanee Review.

The Argus Daily Short Story

"Alicia's Platonics."—By Beatrice Bennett.

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Deep down in her own heart every woman has a pet theory. It may have been exploded a number of times to her apparent satisfaction, but secretly and with feminine inconsistency she clings to it.

Alicia had such a theory, but she did not keep it buried in so inaccessible a dungeon as the bottom of her heart. Indeed, she wore it on her sleeve. It was her favorite theme of discourse, and the more it was disproved the more persistently did she revive it and champion it.

And it must be admitted that Alicia's men friends at least took particular delight in discussing her theories with her and promptly proceeding to disprove them, to that young woman's outward disgust and secret satisfaction. Her hobby was platonics—specifically, platonic love.

"It has been proved to me conclusively," argued Alicia, with delightful confidence, as flanked on one side by the ample person of Richard Corrigan and on the other by her squatty little dachshund Pretzel she strolled toward the great stone garden seat near the sundial.

"Yes," her companion replied in doubtful acquiescence, "to you. But how about the other fellow? Was he convinced?"

"Dick, how silly! Who ever heard of platonic love that wasn't platonic on both sides? How little you know of the subject!" scoffed Alicia with a mirthful little laugh.

"And yet I have known you—how long is it?"

"Seven months," promptly.

"And you ride your hobbyhorse at least every other time I see you," he said, not without marked intent.

Alicia assumed a wholly unsuccessful air of hauteur. "Oh, I beg your pardon. I'm very sorry I've bored you. I shall avoid the topic in future," she said distantly.

"Not at all, my dear Alicia. I assure you it rather amuses me," argued Corrigan, observing her aggrieved attitude with little discomfort to himself. "In fact, I don't know when any one subject has kept me interested for so long a time."

"Indeed!" The comment was pregnant with feeling.

It was the first time Alicia's self styled philosophy had been so derided, and it nettled her.

"I should be apt to accept that as a compliment," ventured Corrigan. He had been watching her pull a crimson rambler to pieces and scatter it over her tiny white shoes.

Apparently she had not heard.

"I say, Alicia," he persisted.

"When you are ready to open a subject that may be of more interest than any I am able to suggest I shall be glad to talk to you," she said icily.

Corrigan smiled broadly, but surreptitiously. Had Alicia seen him thus amused he would have been left with only the crimson ramblers for companions.

"But, upon my word, Alicia, I am interested," he said earnestly. "I've never been so absorbed in a study in my life. Why, my dear girl, if it weren't for my—my belief in platonic love I might never have known you so well."

Alicia confronted him with a half smile that, even in its semicompletion, was most attractive.

"That's the Irish in you, Dick! You always manage to say something that will make the worst case of 'mad' turn to joy," she said, removing her big droopy hat and dangling it by the strings. "That's one reason why I love to be friends with you."

"Then it is true that God is good to the Irish," he laughed, and, subtle as it was, Alicia extracted the compliment and beamed good nature on him again.

"You see, Dick," she began as if she were commencing a fairy story to an incredulous child, "it is so—well, it is such a tremendous comfort to be just friends with a man."

"Yes," said Dick readily, "I'm friends with several."

"Silly! I mean for a girl. She can go about with him, ask him to do this and that for her and feel that she is not putting herself under obligation—if she's only friends with him, whereas, if he's in love with her, he expects her to marry him and—and it just spoils everything!"

"I'm jolly glad I'm not sentimental," said Corrigan with a purpose if without veracity. "You'd have banished me long ago."

"You can have sentiment without being sentimental," she hastened to explain." And for some reason or other a flush stained her cheeks, and her eyes drooped.

"It's just as clear as—as mud." Corrigan laughed in spite of his efforts to be serious.

Alicia's eyes flashed.

"See here, Dick Corrigan, I believe you are making fun of me. Deep down in my own heart I know from your own actions and your whole attitude toward me that you agree with me, but just to amuse yourself you make fun of me. I'm sure you like me," she went on, "just as I like you, or you wouldn't seek me out and want to be with me day after day, as you do, and that—that very fact proves to me that you are in sympathy with my own attitude. We are friends, and you know it," she declared challengingly. Then she rose abruptly from the stone seat and walked over to the balustrade with her back toward him. "Come, Pretzel," she said imperatively, as if calling her dog from a contaminating influence.

Corrigan began to whistle very softly to himself while the small Dutch dog eyed him accusingly.

"Alicia," said Corrigan's deep voice fondly from the depths of the great stone seat. He had not moved. And right here it might be observed that Alicia always selected picturesque settings for her discourses. The old garden, shady and secluded, breathing romance and the fragrance of roses, was ideal—for platonics.

"Alicia," repeated Dick when his first effort gained no response.

With studied reluctance she turned her head.

"I'd like to ask a few questions," he said, still somewhat indifferently.

"I'll be glad to answer them."

The frigidity of her tone moved Corrigan almost to the point of turning up his coat collar, but his better judgment prevailed.

"This old guy, Plato"— he was beginning as he walked toward her.

"Dick!"

Her glance and tone froze the words.

"I'm sorry," he said contritely. "But, Alicia, I wonder if he ever knew the most beautiful woman in the world? I wonder if he could have been with her almost daily for seven months? And yet, no, how could he? He lived B. C."

In spite of herself Alicia dimpled. "It was beauty of mind, mental excellencies, that he admired," she remarked wisely.

"Perhaps that's what I admire in you, but somehow I doubt it."

"My mental powers are not wholly to be despised," pouted Alicia.

"No. But an ordinary mortal cannot penetrate so dazzling an exterior," observed Corrigan.

Alicia looked impatiently across the green. Somehow she was out of harmony with the afternoon—disappointed in—in herself perhaps.

Corrigan turned to her quite suddenly. "See here, Alicia, do you like platonic friends better than anything else?"

"Yes," she said, but the syllable did not carry conviction.

"Better than—husbands, for instance?"

Alicia's color deepened. Things were more interesting after all.

"I never had one," she laughed, and her voice was a little tremulous.

"Then it's only theory?" Corrigan stepped closer.

"Of course," she replied, looking up into his now earnest eyes.

"Listen," he said softly. "Couldn't you be platonic friends with every one else but me, Alicia?"

She did not reply, but one by one the petals of her rose tumbled down her frock.

"Couldn't you?" His big voice was vibrant with emotion.

"I—I might," she admitted, "but first let me tell you I like you better than all the rest. I like you better than I could a mere friend. I—I just hoped and hoped you wouldn't agree with me, Dick."

"It's with Plato I disagree."