

The Commoner.

a member of the President's cabinet; he ought to sit next to the president in the council chamber. Receiving his nomination from a national convention and his commission from the people, he is able to furnish the highest possible proof that he enjoys public respect and confidence, and the President should avail himself of the wisdom and discretion of such an advisor. While the responsibility for action rests upon the occupant of the White House he is entitled to, and of course desires, all the light possible before deciding on any question.

Congress can by law impose upon the Vice-President the duty of giving such assistance to his chief, or the President can of his own volition establish the precedent and it would in all probability be observed by his successors.

Many public men have avoided the second place on the ticket for fear it would relegate them to obscurity; some of Colonel Roosevelt's friends objected to his nomination on that ground. A cabinet position has generally been considered more desirable than the Vice-Presidency, but the latter in dignity and importance is, in fact, only second to the presidency, and the occupant deserves the prominence and prestige which would come from more intimate official association with the Executive.



The Value of Truth.

One of the most interesting and instructive essays on "The Value of Truth" was written by Albert B. Dod, who, years ago, filled the chair of mathematics at Princeton, and died in 1845. Mr. Dod pointed out that the happiness of man was intended to be derived chiefly from his own internal disposition. External circumstances are but secondary and inferior sources of enjoyment or suffering, and in the heart itself is hid the secret fountain which refreshes or saddens us with its sweet or bitter water.

Mr. Dod cited the fact that there were hearts "so filled with knowledge, so strengthened by love, so thoroughly fortified by acquiescence that although the darts of anguish struck upon those hearts, they could not fix or rankle there." So, too, it may be said there are many beings upon whom misfortune has made its worst visitation, beings who have never known what it is to spend one moment free from physical pain, and yet who carry their cross without a murmur.

On the other hand, as Mr. Dod pointed out, "we can conceive of a heart so weak that it can withstand the presence of no external evil—so ignorant that in the blank and solitude of things it is robbed of all enjoyment—so depraved that in the midst of all external advantages it is preyed upon by hatred, malice, envy and all disturbing passions."

Mr. Dod's conclusions are worthy of careful study. He said:

"The obvious tendency of virtue, in whatever degree it be cultivated, is to produce happiness; and vice, by an equally obvious and indissoluble connection, is the parent of misery. The man who disobeys his reason, or violates his conscience, in his search after happiness, grasps at a good at the expense of the very appetite which is to relish it. To injure his moral nature is to waste and wear away his only capability of happiness. If we take the constitution of man to pieces, as we would a watch or other piece of mechanism, to ascertain the object for which it was constructed, we see evident marks in every part

that virtue was the end for which its Maker designed it. And if we then inquire further how this end is to be gained, that is, how men are to become virtuous, we find equally strong reasons for concluding that it can only be through a belief of the truth. The essence of virtue consists in its principle; and every moral principle has its root in truth. Error may be productive of some partial and transient good, as when a crying child is stilled, or a refractory one frightened into obedience, by a belief in some nursery fiction; but no one doubts that this trivial good is purchased at a lamentable sacrifice. Every honest man knows that whenever he uses deception and falsehood to promote even a good end, he is sacrificing the law of reason to the dictates of a low and short-sighted policy, and that he gains his end only as he would gain the sword which he should purchase with the loss of the arm that is to wield it. Truth is the only agency by which a principle of good can be implanted and nourished in our own hearts, or in others. It is as inseparable from virtue as virtue itself is from happiness. In all our modes of education and our attempts to improve the character of individuals or communities, we proceed upon this principle. We never think of working a permanent good in any other way than by instilling the truth; nor do we ever dream that error would answer our purpose equally well, if we could only succeed in making it pass for truth. Any man would spurn the shameless effrontery of the scorner who should tell him that the good of society and of its individual members would be equally well promoted by teaching them to lie and steal and murder, provided we could only persuade them that these things were right. That men can be elevated in their moral character, or in any way benefited by being taught to receive error as truth, is as monstrous an absurdity and as palpable a contradiction to all the lessons of experience as can be conceived. Man is so made as to be swayed to good only by the truth. His moral nature cannot respond to any other influence."



Questionable Appointments.

The recent appointment of Justice Harlan's son to the Attorney-Generalship of Porto Rico and the appointment of Justice McKenna's son to the office of Inspector-General of Volunteers are, to say the least, very unfortunate. It is not necessary to discuss the general fitness of the appointees for the positions which they expect to fill. It is sufficient to say that there were others equally qualified against whom no objections could be urged. The fact that the Supreme Court is now considering the most important question submitted to it in recent years—if not in a century; the fact that the Administration is relying upon a favorable decision to support its imperialistic plans; and the fact that the appointees are sons of Judges whose opinions may determine the position of the court—these facts should have been sufficient to prevent the consideration of their names for appointment at this time.

Suppose the case was being tried before a jury instead of a Supreme Court, and suppose one of the parties in the suit had given lucrative positions to the sons of two of the jurors after the jury was impanelled and before the verdict was rendered, could he have escaped prosecution for contempt of court? A juror whose son had already received such an appointment would be challenged for cause and the giving of such an appointment during the trial could not but impress an impartial court and the public at large as an attempt to influence the jury. Is there any vital difference between the mind of a judge and the mind of a juror? Can human nature and family ties be disregarded in the one case more than in the other?

To view the subject from another standpoint,

would the republican national committee have been willing to have these appointments made during the campaign? If not, why not? It is certain that such appointments would have excited widespread criticism. It is surprising that the appointing power would be guilty of such a flagrant violation of official propriety, and scarcely less surprising that the sons of such honored sires would ask for, or even accept, appointments under existing circumstances.

In 1896 the republicans expressed great indignation because the democratic platform suggested, in language much more polite than that employed by Lincoln in 1860, a possibility of the reversal of the income tax decision. And yet no criticism of the Court employed by any individual or party could do a tithe of the injury that has already been done by these appointments. They are direct blows at the dignity and independence of the Court, and the silence observed by members of the dominant party shows how imperialism and commercialism are paralyzing the conscience of the republican leaders.



Militarism Against Pensions.

The following press dispatch from Berlin will be read with interest by pensioners:

Today's debate in the reichstag upon a resolution submitted by Herr Nissler, conservative, to amend the pension laws, so that every veteran of the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870-71 who is an invalid and unable to support himself would receive 120 marks annually developed into a terrible arraignment of the government. Speakers of all parties, conservatives, national, liberals, centrists and even socialists, declared their willingness to vote for adequate pensions and censured the government for constantly ignoring this debt of honor, unworthy, as one speaker said, of a country which had embarked on a world policy.

Other speakers declared that the attitude of the bundesrath in steadily refusing to provide pensions was inexplicable.

As the burdens of militarism increase a government which rests upon force finds it necessary to choose between the army of the present and the soldiers of the past. It can better afford to do injustice to those whose fighting days are over than to alienate those upon whom it must rely for future assistance.

Liberal pensions are possible with a small military establishment, but hardly probable when the resources of a country are drained to support a large body of professional soldiers.



McCall Taken to Task.

The Boston Journal serves notice upon Congressman McCall, of Massachusetts, that he must leave the republican party if he desires to uphold principles which gave immortal fame to Faneuil Hall. It suggests to him that he embarrasses the party by claiming to be a republican while he votes against the administration. The republican party is so crowded that there is no longer room in it for a man who is encumbered with a conscience. To keep in good standing, he must be prepared to change his opinions at a moment's notice and must hold his principles subject to alteration whenever the command comes from headquarters. Victory has made the republican leaders so arrogant that their intolerance is likely to swell the ranks of the opposition.



Would the International Navigation company be willing to split the desired subsidy in half and recognize the farm wagon and the city dray?