

at every opportunity, in act as well as in word, the principles upon which it was founded and to the cultivation of which it owes its high fame and great progress.

Here's to the lovers of liberty throughout the world. May they never learn to compromise on liberty's definition. May they not lose courage because of temporary defeats. May they stand for truth "unawed by influence and unbribed by gain."

Here's to the American citizen who thinks for himself, whatever his present-day politics may be. May he continue to resent the notion that those who have been "divinely appointed" to control the property of the country have been ordained of God to do the thinking for the people.

It is not easy to emulate the example of that fine old Kentucky negro, who, kneeling at the throne of grace, cast to the winds all thoughts of self and in the generosity of his soul prayed: "Remember de rich and remember de po', remember de bond and de free; and when you git fru remembering all 'round, den, good Lord, remember me." But in the spirit of this day we may, at least, join with "Tiny Tim" in the reverent appeal: "God bless, us, everyone."

WRECKERS

Although the Chicago Chronicle, owned by John R. Walsh, posed as a democratic newspaper it stood for plutocracy and vigorously opposed every effort toward reform. The Chronicle opposed the democratic ticket in 1896 because, as it claimed, the democratic party then stood for "dishonesty." Not long ago the Chronicle formally left the democratic party and became a republican paper. In its editorial announcing the change, the Chronicle said that it left the party because it had become "a menace to the peace, the prosperity and the integrity of the United States and their people," and had "taken up with the radicalism of populists and socialists and the obstructionism and cowardice of wreckers and demagogues." The Chronicle advanced the opinion that the republican party offers "the only prospect of efficient, intelligent and honest government."

Recent disclosures indicate that the Chronicle was not so strenuously opposed to "wreckers" as it pretended to be, and that it was not so thoroughly devoted to honesty as it would have its readers believe.

A GRACEFUL REPRIMAND

The judgment in the court martial proceedings wherein Midshipman Minor Meriwether was charged with having caused the death of Midshipman Branch in a prize fight between the two, was that Meriwether be required to remain within the confines of the Annapolis academy for a period of one year and be publicly reprimanded by the secretary of the navy.

Secretary Bonaparte discharged his part of this duty December 13 when he addressed to Midshipman Meriwether the following letter:

You have been duly convicted of violating clause 3 of article 8 of the articles for the government of the navy, insulting and subsequently assaulting one of your fellow midshipmen; and of conduct to the prejudice of good order and discipline by engaging in a fist fight with the same midshipman. These offenses on your part have led to a calamity so clearly unforeseen by you and so distressing that no words of reproof can be needed to make you feel their gravity. Your disobedience to the laws of your country; your forgetfulness of the full import of your oath; your yielding to fierce and angry passions when tempted by a sense of wrong, have borne fruits so bitter that your worst punishment has been already suffered. The merciful sentence of the court which tried you leaves you a member of the honorable profession you have chosen. In that great school of self sacrifice and obedience, a life useful to your country will, it is hoped, atone for grave faults which have clouded the early years of your service. You will acknowledge receipt of this letter, and it will be entered on your official record.

It will be generally admitted that this is a most graceful reprimand.

Many people will incline to the opinion that young Meriwether escaped with a very light punishment so far as the exact terms of the judgment rendered against him are concerned; but in discharging his portion of the duty Secretary Bonaparte did well. There is no scolding in his reprimand; no harsh language and none of the stiff and bitter terms which are presumed to characterize the thing called "reprimand." But

by the very absence of these terms Secretary Bonaparte's reprimand of young Meriwether takes conspicuous and enviable position among the records of official documents of this kind. While not failing to point out the guilt of the young midshipman and emphasizing, also, the terrible evils following his wrongdoing there is yet a tone about the secretary's letter that will encourage him to strive to "atone for the grave faults which have clouded the early years of his service."

Young Meriwether might well have the reprimand administered to him by Secretary Bonaparte framed and preserved not only for his own guidance but for the guidance of those who come after him. That reprimand is, indeed, a state paper worthy of preservation by all men.

It developed during the court martial proceedings that these prize fights have become quite common in the navy and that they have been encouraged by officers high in authority. Many Americans would like very much to read from the same pen that wrote this graceful reprimand to Midshipman Meriwether a fitting rebuke to the officers who have disgraced their high profession by giving encouragement to prize fighting. Many Americans would be glad to learn that Secretary Bonaparte has made it plain to the men under his authority that so long as he is at the head of the navy the abominable pastime of pugilism will not be tolerated in naval circles.

REBATES

In his message to congress President Roosevelt, referring to the fact that "It sometimes happens at present not that a rate is too high, but that a favored shipper is given too low a rate," says that under his plan "the commission would have the right to fix this already established minimum rate as the maximum." The president adds: "It would need only one or two such decisions by the commission to cure railroad companies of the practice of giving improper minimum rates." This is an interesting suggestion. Perhaps we will be pardoned for saying that in The Commoner of November 17 the railroad expert who has contributed so many instructive articles on railroad rate legislation made the following suggestion:

"If congress will embody in the law a provision that any voluntary reduction of rates, without permission from the interstate commerce commission, will result in the establishment of that rate as a public rate for one year, there would be very little, if any, rate-cutting done. This provision should cover any rate reduced below the public tariff rate either by rebates under classification, false billing, terminal charges or any other method declared unlawful, and also rates cut openly in rate wars. The lowest rate illegally made by the carrier to be taken as the maximum of what it may with propriety claim from the public. No railroad can object to having its own rate standard used in making rates. If it accepts rates that are lower than those quoted in the published tariffs, whether by direct violation of the law, or by devices that evade its provisions, it is estopped from invoking the aid of the courts to declare them destructive of property rights. If this kind of a penalty is prescribed for illegal rates, and making it a penal offense to collect more than the maximum legal rate, which would be the lowest illegal rate known, the secret rate would hardly be resorted to. A law conferring the rate-making power as indicated would solve the question, and the square deal would become a living reality. Under existing law railroads have a complete remedy against injustice. The people have no remedy. That is not a square deal."

WHY NOT UPHOLD HIM?

The New York World insists that the president recognize the fact that the \$2 duty on Canadian lumber has "worked a double injustice to the country." The World points out that it costs \$2.92 from Tonowanda to New York, the freight being 13 cents on each hundred pounds, and adds:

Why should the apostle of "a square deal" be so solicitous about regulating this \$2.92 freight charge and so indifferent about this \$2 tariff evil? Even if he reduced the freight rate by one-half he could save less to the consumer than by lopping off the superfluous tariff. Moreover, it is hardly consistent in an ardent advocate of forest culture and preservation to blind his eyes to a tariff schedule which is daily encouraging the slaughter of the remnants of the country's pine forests. Why not a little more ardor in favor of tariff revision, Mr. President, and a little less excitement about freight rates?

Mr. Roosevelt may be pardoned for being a bit solicitous about regulating freight rates, yet

The Commoner agrees with the World that he shows too much indifference concerning the tariff evil. But while the World is calling upon the president to direct some of his attention toward the tariff evil, why does it find fault with him because he has given consideration to the freight rate evil?

Mr. Roosevelt has not shown "excitement" concerning freight rates. He might well be more radical than he has so far shown himself disposed to be. But it will occur to a great many people that it is strange that a newspaper like the New York World can not give the president support insofar as the president moves along correct lines, even though it finds it necessary to criticize his shortcomings in other respects.

Long ago we were told that the tariff and the railway rate questions were to be played the one against the other, and that while the opponents of tariff revision were to point out the evils in railroad affairs, the railroad magnate was to insist upon tariff reform.

It is not difficult to understand why the partisan of either side should undertake to carry out this program, but does it not seem a bit strange that a great daily newspaper, pretending to favor reform should charge the president with "excitement" when he moves for an admittedly essential reform with respect to railroad rates? It would seem that newspapers of the New York World's class might encourage the president in his proposed freight rate reform, even while urging him to greater activity along the line of tariff reform.

ELECT HARRIMAN

A year ago the American Press Humorists' association, in convention assembled at Cleveland, O., with a solemnity that was about as laughable as anything its members have ever done—or written—admitted John D. Rockefeller to membership. The press humorists are a jolly lot of fellows who would not for worlds be guilty of an injustice, and The Commoner feels that it has but to call their attention to an oversight, really amounting to a grave injustice, to impel them to take action. Among the multi-millionaires of the country Mr. Rockefeller is by no means the only humorist. The merry quips and jests that roll from Mr. Rockefeller's lips as freely as money comes in from the consumers of oil, is fairly equalled, if not excelled by the jokes and jests that ooze from the sleek and complacent Mr. Harriman of railroad fame. Mr. Harriman's testimony as a witness in the insurance investigation had a Twainesque flavor of mild and gentle sarcasm, a Dean Swift essence of caustic comment, that mark the great railroad manager as one of those splendid wits entitled to a place among the immortals of humor. His mirth-provoking animadversions upon Mr. Ryan's philanthropy will doubtless be included in the next "Library of American Wit and Humor," thus sending the name of Harriman thundering down through the ages.

We therefore, in view of these incontrovertible facts, insist that the president of the American Press Humorists' association immediately call the association together in special annual convention and admit Mr. Harriman to membership, with all the rights, privileges and immunities that go therewith.

SENATOR AND MAGNATE

John F. Dryden is United States senator from New Jersey. He is also president of the Prudential Life Insurance company. Testifying before the insurance committee Senator Dryden said that he received from the Prudential a salary of \$65,000 a year as its president. His salary as United States senator amounts to \$5,000. The Kansas City Star, commenting upon these facts, indulges in a bit of speculation as to which interest would prove stronger if they were to conflict in some bill before the senate.

Can any one solve the problem? Dryden as senator is the father of a measure pretending to give the federal government control over insurance companies. Does any intelligent person really believe that Dryden as senator would give his support to any measure that would interfere with the interests of Dryden as an insurance company president?

PATRIOTIC

Some republican newspapers appear to think that Former Governor Odell has made "a terrible accusation" when he charges President Roosevelt and Governor Higgins with "a deliberate attempt to wreck the republican party." The republican party has very nearly wrecked itself, and Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Higgins would be discharging a patriotic duty if they completed the work.