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Little by little, but steadily as man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but, now, from that beginning we have run down to the other declaration that for some men to enslave others is a "sacred right of self-government." These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and Mammon; and whoever holds to the one must despise the other.—From Abraham Lincoln's Speech, Peoria, Ill., October 16, 1854.

In those days our Declaration of Independence was held sacred by all, and thought to include all; but now to aid in making the bondage of the negro universal and eternal it is assailed and sneered at and construed and hawked at and torn, till, if its framers could rise from their graves, they could not at all recognize it.—Abraham Lincoln's Speech at Springfield, Ill., June 26, 1857.

ARE YOU DOING YOUR PART TO PRESERVE THE REPUBLIC?

ANOTHER GOOD THING

The Secretary of the Interior Sends a Document to Congress Favoring Irrigation.

The Independent is not of the narrow-minded chump sort of newspapers. Whenever it sees a good thing it is not afraid to commend it, even though it is done by the opposite party. It has given the highest commendation to President McKinley for the coinage of immense amounts of silver, whereby he was enabled to reverse the soup house era inaugurated by Cleveland and supported by the leading men of the republican party in the house and senate when they stopped the coinage of silver in 1893. Because The Independent is a vigorous opponent of the president's party, it did not therefore hesitate to accord him and his administration a due meed of praise for this wise and just policy.

The Independent now finds another thing which it most heartily commends as an act of this administration, for of course the secretary of the interior would not introduce a note of discord by advocating the irrigation of arid lands unless he had the approval of the president and cabinet in so doing.

At the request of the house committee on public lands Secretary Hitchcock has prepared a statement of his views on this question, and his paper was submitted to the committee on Friday. It is a broad and comprehensive document. One-third of the whole area of the United States, he says, exclusive of Alaska and the new insular possessions, consists of public lands open to settlement under the homestead act. This one-third, he continues, "includes some of the richest agricultural lands in the world, capable of producing enormous crops," and the only obstacle which prevents its utilization is a scarcity of water at certain times and seasons. Noting the necessity of the conserving of the water and the floods in this region, and of their artificial distribution, he asserts that "when this is done there will be opportunities for thousands, or even millions, of homes within the portion of the United States now almost uninhabitable. The creation of these homes would add enormously to the material wealth of the nation, and the utilization of this vast area of farming land will in no way reduce the value of the lands now cultivated." He denies that these crops will come in competition with those of the east, but asserts that they will find and reach other markets. "More than this," he adds, "the possible population west of the Mississippi will vastly enhance the volume of trade and manufacture throughout the rest of the country, and will make more valuable the productive area to the great manufacturing centers in the east."

The secretary estimates that at least 74,000,000 acres of land can be reclaimed by a wise policy on the part of the general government, and that homes can be made for 50,000,000 of people. The remarkable results accomplished in the valley of the Nile, he continues, "in practically redeeming Egypt from a state of bankruptcy should encourage a most liberal consideration of the question of irrigation. It is desirable that such reasonable expenditures be made by the federal government, as well as by the states, as will gradually, but as rapidly as possible, insure the blessings consequent upon a well-defined and executed system of irrigation."

THE LEGISLATURE

Senators conclude to Try Their Hands at Unseating a Member Who Had a Good Round Majority.

The exigencies of the senatorial contest had a very restraining effect upon the republican majority in regard to heaving fusion members over the transom. Whenever the man to be seated was looked over the first question that arose was: "Who will he vote for senator if he is seated?" and then there was trouble on hand. If he was for Rosewater, the supporters of other candidates would not help pitch him over. If he was for Thompson, then the Rosewater men would not assist. So it was all the way round. That saved at least half a dozen seats to the fusionists.

Last week, however, the senate supporters of different candidates came to some sort of agreement among themselves and the committee on contested elections agreed, that is the republican part of it, to heave over Senator Henry Reuting of Clay county. It was not denied that he had a good round majority, but they said that he had violated the corrupt practices act—the one with which Dietrich made such havoc during the campaign. The Independent says now what it said in the beginning that any man who violated the law should be prosecuted in the courts and if found guilty suffer the penalties prescribed. It opposed the taking up that law in the case of Dietrich, the most notorious violator of it, and making it a ground to contest his election. It said: swear out a warant, bring him before a court, try him and if convicted impose the penalties. It says the same in every other case. If the republicans propose to make simple charges unsupported by evidence of the violation of this act an excuse for pitching fusionists over the transom, then The Independent is in favor of letting the conspirators find out that there are two ways of playing that game.

As was announced to the populist state committee by The Independent when it was in session here, the republicans are making arrangements to introduce a ballot law to prevent fusion in this state. That is one thing that they will do whether they do anything else or not. It might as well be taken as an accomplished fact and preparations made to meet it. The thing should be taken up by all the reform weeklies and discussed. A ballot law will be passed to prevent fusion and it will be so arranged as to give the republican party every advantage possible.

The legislature so far has done nothing except to cast useless votes for United States senator, pass bills to pay their own salaries and expenses and make arrangements to get up a ballot law that will give the republican party all the advantages that is possible to confer upon it and make it stand the test of the courts. Some scores of bills have been introduced and referred to committees and a tremendous long list of employes have been provided with snug jobs during the winter. That is the sum total of the work of the republican legislature for the state of Nebraska so far.

Current Comment

The hazing business at West Point was settled by the captains of each class appearing before congressional committees and agreeing upon honor to abolish it in the institution. The most contemptible man in the whole membership of the academy was the fellow who was introduced as the president of the Young Men's Christian association. One of the members of the committee denounced his testimony as "blasphemous." That testimony as reported by the Associated press is another evidence of the utter unreliability of the reports which are given constantly to the public. This "Christian" when pressed with questions as how he could defend the brutality and cowardice practiced upon lower classmen replied that the lower classmen could be better trained by keeping a distance between them and the upper classes just as the officers did with the cadets and men in the ranks. When asked if it would not have been more in accordance with the teaching of Christ who associated with publicans and sinners and by his personal influence tried to aid them to have lent the lower classmen a helping hand, he replied: "Yes, but Jesus Christ was not running a military academy." The Associated press in reporting that answer stopped at the word "yes," which completely changed the answer. The Independent does not blame the young man for such an outrageous reply, but the teaching in the plutocratic churches from which he drew his inspiration as president of the Young Men's Christian association. It is in character with much of the preaching in these days since the general apostacy from the teaching of Christ has become so popular.

Queen Victoria passed away at 6:30 Tuesday evening. The particulars of the closing hours were not given to the public. Shortly afterward, the Prince of Wales was proclaimed under the title of Edward VII. After the queen was stricken and before she lost consciousness she received a telegram from President Kruger, which for state reasons was not given to the public. A correspondent in Holland from whence the message was sent, says that it was an expression of Kruger's deep religious nature, expressing the highest and noblest Christian sentiments. It was also his full and complete absolution to the dying queen. The world will perhaps never know its exact words.

A good deal continues to be printed in the English papers concerning the sudden collapse of the queen after her interview with Lord Roberts. She had been led to believe by her ministers that the bloodshed in Africa was practically ended. When Lord Roberts came into her presence her eyes shone expectantly and she asked if it were really true that the devastating Boer struggle promised shortly to claim its final victim. The London Guardian declares that the commander-in-chief was so grieved at not being able to give her majesty the assurance she so eagerly sought that he quit the royal presence, unable to restrain his emotion. He put the queen off with evasive replies, hoping to escape the necessity of telling her frankly what appeared to be in store for the British army. The result was that later her majesty, in her intense anxiety to learn more from the man who knows most, commanded Lord Roberts to wait upon her again. It is said that the interview was of a most painful character.

The Arkansas house of representatives passed a resolution of sympathy with the Filipinos by a vote of 53 to 32. It is said that an official copy, with the great seal of state attached, will be forwarded to Aguinaldo in the care of General MacArthur at Manila. Whether General MacArthur will forward it under a flag of truce with his compliments to its designation is considered to be rather doubtful. The general made a speech to some of the troops the other day which contained some rather startling ethical and phisolophical principles. He said: "The chief advantage is the engendering of a warlike spirit, without which no nation can continue to live, and by which alone a nation is created and made perpetual." If that is true all the teaching in our public schools and churches up to the last three years, when the great apostacy set in, has been false and pernicious. If "engendering the war spirit," is "alone" the foundation and perpetuity of nations, then Christ was the greatest false prophet who ever lived. Let us all stop shouting, "Peace on earth, good will to men," get a gun and go to shooting.

No news of any importance at all has come from China and in the absence of it some sensible writing by scholars and thinkers has taken its place. One writer points out that China has a civilization, while it is not like ours, is admirable in many respects. He says it has done some things that the Christian civilization has failed to do. It has contrived to eliminate from civilization the soldier, priest and capitalist and of 400,000,000 have made the most politically compact body on earth. He asks: "What are the interests of the European states in China? They certainly do not consist in having lands for colonization, because there is not an inch of ground there which is not already cultivated even to excess. Neither can an immediate increase in the exportation of goods be hoped for. The wants of the Chinese are of the most restricted description, and in the second place the women are almost slaves, and as that slavery forms the corner stone of Chinese society it cannot be altered. The Chinese have clothing, houses, and amusements which are not subject to fashion. During the whole of the year 1898 merchandise to the amount of 411,000,000 francs ($82,200,000) only could be imported into the country, the greater part consisting of cotton, opium, rice and petroleum (and opium is not a European product), with barely 11,000,000 francs' worth of machinery. And what need is there for augmenting the ports in order to sell these goods? Germany increased her imports from 2,000,000 francs to 28,000,000 francs in ten years without augmenting her ports, and England, with an augmentation of ports, is at a discount and worse still for export."

This writer also points out that the statistics showing an increase of importations into China are all a delusion. Those imports, instead of increasing, have actually decreased. They are all estimated in the silver tael, and while the figures show that the imports when paid for in taels has nearly doubled, it is on account of the depreciation of silver that the statistics show an increase while the amount of goods has really decreased. He says that while the population of China is dense, the people are so poor that they cannot buy foreign goods. He says that the building of railroads and factories, if the venture is successful, will be the greatest danger that Christian civilization has ever faced. These Chinamen are strong and quick to learn. Under the law of evolution they have developed a race that can live and work on half the sustenance that would barely keep the people of Christian nations alive. That with factories and railroads the Chinese would flood the world with cheap goods, and he believes that the result would be that the Chinese would become the dominant race of the world. He thinks the sooner the "Christian nations" get out of China and let the Chinese alone the better it will be for them.

Alaska with 40,000 people produced more than twice as much surplus wealth as the whole of the Philippines with its 10,000,000 population. There were more exports to Alaska than the the Philippines and ten times the imports, most of which were pure gold. What was not gold, was food products. Perhaps you think that we do not import food from Alaska. Look up the official statistics and count the millions of cans of salmon that are packed there.

The mullet head who shivers over on the corner of O and Eleventh streets while he shouts for the republican party, has now another thing to spur him on in his good work. The meat trust has raised the price of liver to seven cents a pound. He may not be able to stand it quite as many hours a day, now that he can't get even liver, but then he can shout the louder while he is there.

In every part of the world the tendency to place public utilities in the ownership of the people instead of that of private corporations is on the increase. Before this century is closed the people will look back into the years that are passed with astonishment at the stupidity of the republicanism of those times when the mullet heads fought to have private capitalists own and exploit the water, street car lines, gas and the electric lighting of the cities and towns. Many of the cities and towns in Canada are taking over these plants. In Toronto the people have just voted to take charge of all of them. The consequence will be that the people will get all the gas they want for 50 cents a thousand. The republicans of Lincoln prefer to pay $1.25. They think that if they got it for less that that would be anarchy, or socialism, or something of that sort.

The financiers of England and the continent still continue to take a doleful view of the economic prospects and predict the coming of a series of years of hard times and distress. Those are all gold standard countries and according to the doctrine that was preached to us by republicans they ought to all be enjoying unlimited prosperity. While they weep over the situation, the people of this country having been blessed with the greatest amount of coinage of silver during the last four years that ever was coined in the same length of time, continue to take their trade away. They have the gold standard over there, but very few of the inhabitants ever see a gold coin. The mass of the business is done with copper money. The next higher grade see a little subsidiary silver and only the rich ever handle any gold. Here, where we have $600,000,000 of silver, standard money, in circulation, gold is seen everywhere. It is very evident that the gold standard that was to shower blessings on all mankind has not had that effect in Europe. The rich over there are getting rich, but the poor are getting most almighty poor.

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LOOKING BACKWARD

Why Not Educate Men to Join the Forces of Progress Instead of Always Looking Backward to Precedent.

In reality Bellamy was looking forward, but, knowing the pernicious habit mankind has fallen into of always looking to the rear, he purposely "shoved up the date line" and pretended to be writing history.

"The evils of looking backward, or the curse of precedents" would make an excellent text from which to preach a sermon calculated to check the rapid decadence of reason. Slowly, but surely, the people are contracting the lawyers' disease—servility to precedent. Do we advocate a system of scientific money—ah! it would be a failure; look at the history of Russia's attempt to issue paper money; note what happened to the French assignats; see how our own "greenbacks" depreciated during the civil war; "precedent" is against your proposition; gold and silver have been used as money almost as far back as we have any authentic history—we must stick to them; no, no, it won't work, this idea of yours, because the precedents are adverse.

Let any proposition be made suggesting a change in the existing order of things, and the very first step taken by the average man will be to inquire if it has ever been tried before and how it worked; but little or no attempt will be made to compare the conditions under which the trial was made with those existing at the time the proposed change is suggested; but little effort will be made to see if the cases are "on all fours," as the lawyers say. If the trial in the past was a failure, that settles the matter for future generations. It can't be done, because in the days of Pharaoh something like it was attempted and resulted disastrously. This is as far as the average man reasons about economic and political questions—that is, the average man who hasn't been inoculated with the virus of populism.

The late John Clark Ridpath in the Arena of December, 1897, published a leaf from his Samoan note book (dated A. D. 2297) in which is given some fragments of a conversation he had with Sir Thomas Kho, a chimpanzee knight. Sir Thomas opened the discussion by remarking: "I have not been satisfied with the result of your education in America. It seems to me to work by contraries in this—that the system puts the face of a man on the wrong side of him, so that he always looks backward. I should prefer to have the face of an educated man set to the fore, as if he were going somewhere."

"I know you call this thing of yours education, and you have, as I have learned, many colleges to promote it. The system seems to have been invented in Europe at a time when the only light came from an ignis fatuus in the rear. There was not at that time one fore-torch of knowledge or hope in the world. The man of your so called middle ages was not, I confess, much to blame for thinking that the past is a big thing. How could he be censured for not knowing that the past is only the remaining dust and darkness of a dead world? It is only when living men, born in what they call an enlightened age, persists in educating their youth by twisting their faces around towards the dead world that I protest."

"If my information be authentic," he continued, "your education consists mostly in teaching men how to stop. Nothing in America, I hear, is thought so inimical to a high standard of scholarship as a belief in the revolution of the earth on its axis. It is a great part of the higher learning to prevent the motion of the earth by denying it. One of your poets declares that "The thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns," but he did not learn this at college; he learned it when he was alone on the chalky crags at Dover communing with the sea."

"Your college men are as a rule in mortal dread of the 'process of the suns. They consult their charts and find that according to Duns Scotus it is wrong for the sun to proceed; therefore, the sun does not proceed—else the sun would disturb the existing order."

"The average college man," continued his knightship, "huddles down close to the wall and waits for some ancient dog-cart to come along. As soon as the time-worn vehicle passes on its way back to the last camping ground, he hails it and mounts. And on that 'safe and sound' dog-cart of reaction and retrogression and cant he rides the journey through."

"I have learned that nearly all your university productions are leagued with those social and political forces which drive backwards. It is said that your leaders of progress, the greater part of them, spring directly from the people, while your graduates are gathered into the silken folds of an apathetic aristocracy. Nine out of ten of them take refuge under the cloak of organization, and the other one, if he venture into the open, is generally driven back." No doubt this is primarily a weakness, but in the language of your poet, 'to be weak is miserable.'"

Continuing, Sir Thomas remarked upon the evanescent character of American literature and asked what had become of the books produced during the nineteenth century—only Hugo, Buckle and Darwin had survived. "Why," he queried, "do your educated men join themselves to the enemies of progress? Why do they conclude, even before graduation, that the principal work in the world is to govern mankind by means of institutions and opinions, the design of which is to prevent the governed from growth and emancipation? Do your scholars really believe that civilization is a stationary product of the past? Do they believe that wealth and slavery are the only two things to be worshipped? Do they know so little of history as not to be well aware that every single progressive movement of the human race has been the outgrowth and destruction of existing conditions?"

"I do not presume," said Sir Thomas in conclusion, "to advise the people of Europe and America; for that would be presumptuous. But it seems to me perfectly clear . . . that it is not a good educational method to twist around the face of man and set it backwards."

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Japanese Red Cross

There is continued commendation of the Japanese soldiers. They seem to have been models for the highly civilized nations in every respect. Their Red Cross organization is said to be the best of any nation. That society cared for all alike in the recent war in China. From the letters written by patients who received treatment in the Japanese Red Cross hospitals it is easy to see how thoroughly they appreciated the care bestowed on them. One officer speaks of "feeling as though he had found a second native province in Japan," and a sergeant-major, after eulogizing the skill of the surgeons and nurses and the generosity of the Japanese people who loaded him and his comrades with presents, declares that he will never forget the treatment he received nor ever cease to talk with his family and friends of the happy hours spent by him in Hiroshima.

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