

## ABOLISH THE IMMUNITY

The fifth amendment to the federal constitution provides that no person shall be compelled in any criminal case to be witness against himself. It was in the spirit of this amendment that the attorneys for the packers successfully pleaded before Judge Humphrey at Chicago. Thomas L. Anderson, city attorney for St. Louis, speaking recently before the Southern Society of East St. Louis vigorously attacked the provision referred to. Mr. Anderson said:

"The only privilege that an innocent man wants is the opportunity to tell the truth, whereby, under our careful system of justice, he must be liberated. The only privilege that a criminal should be entitled to is a privilege to be tried by the truth. By what occult or metaphysical force is an innocent man going to have a ball and chain attached to him by giving him the privilege, or compelling him, if you please, to tell the truth? Can you imagine in what way an innocent man would have suffered if during the past there had been no constitutional exemptions for defendants testifying in criminal causes? The exemption is termed a cherished right of citizenship. I deny that to remain silent is the cherished right of an American citizen. It is the cherished right of the American criminal. It has protected more bribery, grafting and felony than any mistake in our national history. It gives the rich criminal a feeling of security; it encourages the poor to do his bidding. It saps all encouragement from the heart of the prosecuting official. It tends to make a mockery of law."

The reform proposed by Mr. Anderson may appear to be radical, and lawyers will, perhaps, be slow to indorse it. But Mr. Anderson has presented the case in a forceful and convincing way. The Commoner believes he is right.

It is difficult to imagine in what way an innocent man would suffer in the event the constitutional exemption for defendants testifying in criminal cases were removed. This provision grew, we believe, out of an abuse in England of the rights of prisoners. In days when there were no safeguards whatever thrown around the accused he was often subjected to catechism under such circumstances and embarrassments as to preclude the possibility of a fair hearing. And out of this grew the determination to give a defendant on trial for life or liberty every possible opportunity of avoiding an unjust conviction.

But now there are sufficient safeguards thrown around a man accused of crime. He is entitled to counsel, and if he is too poor to pay for it, the state foots the bill. The pendulum has swung in the other direction, and the plan which was adopted to rectify an evil with respect to an individual has produced another and equally as great an evil with respect to society. It is not likely the constitution will be amended in this particular at an early day, but it would be well for men to think seriously upon the reform as proposed by Mr. Anderson. The "immunity bath" ought to go, and the constitutional exemption for defendants testifying in criminal causes ought to be abolished.

## CANNONISM

As a slight warning to the White House to keep hands off of legislation, Speaker Cannon recently said: "The floor of the house is the place for debate, consideration and action regarding a matter which is pending legislation." Certainly it is the place but will "Uncle Joe" allow it? Will he permit the house to "debate," "consider" and "act" on "pending legislation?"

Mr. Cannon is also reported to have said: "I am satisfied that it (meaning the legislation touching meat inspection) will receive safe and sound consideration." Of course Mr. Cannon is "satisfied" for he is the poo-bah and it is necessary that he be satisfied before a bill gets through the house. But what does he mean by "safe and sound?" "Safe" for the packers? "Sound" for the muck fund that the interests will supply for this year's congressional campaign?

## WHY ABANDON THE PRACTICE?

The Wall Street Journal says: "George W. Perkins is to be congratulated for his victory in the appellate court. He was not guilty of a crime in connection with the contribution of insurance money to the national republican committee. The case is to be taken to the court of appeals. It may or may not sustain the decision of the ap-

pellate court, but one thing is certain, that the practice of insurance contributions to political committees has been killed, and there are no mourners at its funeral."

But why has this practice been "killed?" It is not a crime for the insurance official to give away the policy holders' money, and in every instance, thus far revealed, such contributions have been made not for selfish or partisan purposes, but solely with the view of protecting "national honor."

Is the national honor to remain subject to the whims and caprices of the people?

Is it to be deprived of the protecting arm of the McCurdy's, the Hydes', the Perkins', the Depews and the Tom Platts?

If such contributions were good in 1896 why will they not be good in other years, when the people, not knowing what they need, depend upon the superior wisdom and the extraordinary patriotism of Wall street gamblers to point out to them the way and the truth?

If the contributions were good in 1896 we should have more of them. If they were not good then the republican party ought to "put it back."

Why abandon the practice of defending the national honor?

## FORTUNATE WEST POINTERS

At the West Point commencement exercises General Corbin complained of the small pay the graduates would receive for their services in the United States army. When Secretary Taft addressed the graduates he took "official notice" of General Corbin's complaint and bluntly told the graduates that small salaries provided "a method of developing character which one ought not to lose." Mr. Taft further said:

"I am pretty sure that your salaries for the next five years, low as they are, are pay that the average professional man would be delighted to be sure of in the first five years of his work. The truth is that your pay is not munificent, but you can live on it, and it has the great merit of relieving you from that intense anxiety that troubles so many members of the learned professions—that of keeping the wolf from the door. We are apt, in this age of wealth, to attach too much importance to money. We ought to have more people who, when they have amassed a competence, would stop and devote themselves to public affairs."

Secretary Taft deserves the thanks of the American people who are just now suffering because of extravagant notions. Men who serve the public in the army, as well as in civil life, are fairly well paid. General Corbin made a mistake in seeking to make the young soldiers dissatisfied with their remuneration. These young men had, free of all cost, received good education, and they immediately step into well paying and permanent positions.

The average American boy finds it difficult, in the first place, to make both ends meet while struggling for an education, and then after he receives his diploma, he often finds it difficult to obtain employment. It will occur to a great many old-fashioned people, that the young man in whose cause General Corbin registered his complaint, ought to count himself very fortunate, indeed.

## PREPOSTEROUS, YES!

The Kansas City Star expresses the opinion: "It seems preposterous on the face that the packers would thus expose themselves to attack." Yes, but it seems "preposterous on the face" that the helpless Burton or the broken hearted Depew would expose themselves to attack. It seems preposterous that anyone with the history of centuries before him would make the mistake of seeking to profit through dishonesty. But men have done these things in the past, as doubtless men will do them in the future—"preposterous on the face" though they may seem.

## OKLAHOMA

When President Roosevelt signed his name to the bill admitting Oklahoma and Indian Territory to joint statehood the last of the Louisiana Purchase was incorporated into the union of states. Thirteen other states, the number of the original union, had already been carved wholly or partially out of the Louisiana Purchase before

Oklahoma was admitted. The New York World calls attention to some remarkable statistics about the new state. It already has more inhabitants than any one of the thirteen original states had. Scarcely a dozen states exceed it in area, and less than half the states equal it in population. From the date of its organization as a territory Oklahoma began making handsome provision for education. Two sections of land in every township were set aside for public school purposes. A great university was founded, then an agricultural college, then a normal school. In 1900 only 5.5 per cent of the population over ten years of age were illiterates.

The future of Oklahoma is rosy with promise. Its star will add new lustre to the flag. It combines in its citizenship the best blood and brain of all the states.

## THE MYSTERIOUS CROMWELL

William Nelson Cromwell persists in his refusal to answer the questions put to him by Senator Morgan of Alabama. It will be remembered that John F. Wallace, formerly chief engineer for the Panama canal commission, testified that Cromwell is attorney for the old French canal company, for the revolutionary government of Panama, for the Panama Ice and Electric company, for the Panama Railroad company, and that he is, in fact, the presiding genius in the canal work. Mr. Cromwell appears to stand very highly with the administration. He seems to have a great influence with the secretary of war. Mr. Roosevelt ought, under the circumstances, to have sufficient influence with Mr. Cromwell to persuade that gentleman to conform to the president's publicity program, by taking the senate committee into his confidence. There has been altogether too much mystery about Cromwell's connection with the canal.

## PRISON AND NO FINE

The newspapers poke a good deal of fun at former Chief of Police Devery of New York, but he said something recently which should set even New York editors to thinking. Asked what he suggested as a penalty for one who sold bad meat, Mr. Devery said: "Not less than two years and not more than ten years at hard labor in a state prison, and no fine clause should be attached to such a bill. They would not mind paying a fine because they'd make the dear, kind, tolerating, unsuspecting and ever-willing-to-be-film-flamed public pay the fine with good interest."

In this instance, at least, Mr. Devery is right. No one has been able to make a satisfactory defense of jail penalty with a fine as alternative. Men who violate the anti-trust laws and men who deal in impure food products, should, upon conviction, be required to do service in prison.

## HOW "PROTECTION" WORKS

President Roosevelt, in his special message to congress concerning the matter of inspection laws, said that the evils brought to light in the packing houses operate "very much less as regards products sent abroad than as regards those used at home."

This is the quintessence of protection. The packers are "protected" against foreign competition, and in return for the favors granted them give the foreigner the best meat at prices lower than those charged home consumers for the inferior article. These "infant industries" really ought to be made to hustle for themselves a while. It might serve to create a little filial affection in their corporate breasts as well as to give relief to the people.

## A "LEAKY ROOF" FLAVOR

If Secretary Shaw were older we would be justified in believing him to be the original of the famous "Arkansas Traveler" joke. Secretary Shaw opposes tariff revision by the republican party before election because it might operate to the hurt of the republican party. And he opposes tariff revision after election because it would be in opposition to the expressed will of the people who showed by their votes for the g. o. p. that they did not favor tariff revision.

It was the optimist settler in the "Arkansas Traveler" story who couldn't repair the leaky roof when it rained, and when it was not raining there was no need to mend it. Secretary Shaw's logic has a "leaky roof" flavor.