

upon them by the combination of the most responsible bankers of New York who are now thus engaged in endeavoring to save the situation, but they asserted they did not wish to do this if I stated that it ought not to be done. I answered that while, of course, I could not advise them to take the action proposed, I felt it no public duty of mine to interpose an objection.

Sincerely yours,  
"THEODORE ROOSEVELT,

"Hon. Charles J. Bonaparte,  
"Attorney General."

The president is informed that "a certain business firm" (the name is withheld from the president) will fall within a week if help is not given. This business firm (unnamed) holds a majority of the securities of the Tennessee Coal and Iron company. Application has been "urgently made" to the steel trust to purchase this controlling interest in the rival company "as the only means of avoiding a failure."

The steel trust magnates assure the president that "as a mere business transaction" they did not care to purchase the stock, that under ordinary circumstances they would not consider the purchase (perish the thought!) and that little benefit would come to the steel trust from the purchase. They explain to him that the purchase would be made an excuse for attacking them on the ground that they were endeavoring to secure a monopoly and to prevent competition; of course this could not be honestly said, they affirm, but it might be "recklessly and untruthfully said." They tell the president that it has been their policy not to acquire more than sixty per cent of the steel properties (the reader will remember how shocked the republican leaders were at the democratic plan of limiting a corporation to fifty per cent). They were a little below sixty per cent just then, however, and were willing to raise their proportion a little because they felt it "immensely to their interest" to try and prevent a panic and a general industrial smashup. They had been advised by "those best fitted to express judgment in New York" (names not given) that the purchase of the rival would be an important factor in preventing a break, etc., and that the purchase had been urged upon them "by the combination of the most responsible bankers of New York." The president believed them and the president gave them assurance that they would not be disturbed. What precedent has the president for advising in advance in regard to combinations, and thus tying himself up? The president made no investigation, so far as his letter shows, he simply took the word of two trust magnates as to what would be the result of the combine; he took their word as to their own intentions and as to pressure brought to bear upon them by unnamed persons, and substantially agreed that they would not be disturbed. He has a bureau for the investigation of corporations, there is no letter from it; he has an attorney general whose business it is to report upon the law, but instead of asking advice from the attorney general, he told him what to do. The attorney general afterwards advised him orally that insufficient ground existed for legal proceedings. We have a few trusts so large that they can, if necessary, threaten a panic—they can even bring a panic—and if by threatening a panic they can prevent an enforcement of the law and coerce a president into acquiescence in their efforts to further control the business in which they are engaged, what remains to complete the subservience of the government to corporate influence?

Senator Culberson deserves credit for his part in producing this letter. It will stand upon the record as an evidence of the influence which the great monopolistic combines are able to exert. If they can scare a president, holding his commission from eighty millions of people, is it not time for legislation that will put a limit to the greed of monopolies?

The message which the president sent after this letter is important, because it sets forth his views of the executive office. He denies the right of the legislature to inquire why the law was not enforced. He asserts in substance that the responsibility for the enforcement of the law rests upon the executive, and that no inquiry can properly be made as to his reasons for not enforcing the law, if for any reason he decides to consider the law a dead letter. In his message to congress on the secret service he felt free to guess at the reasons which influenced congressmen to vote against an appropriation, and following that precedent, the senators may feel free to guess at the reasons which led the president and his attorney general to promise in advance that the law would not be enforced

against the steel trust, or to interpret the law in advance as it applied to the steel trust.

The executive is charged with the enforcement of the law, and congress has, under the constitution, the power of impeachment if the president fails to discharge his duties. Certainly a body which has the power to remove the president has the power to inquire into his inaction. The greater includes the less, and it would be a strange interpretation of constitutional law if a body which could depose the executive could not make inquiry into his acts.



#### HOW LANDIS BUILT A "FIRE"

Judge Kenesaw M. Landis, the man who imposed the twenty-nine million dollar fine against the Standard Oil company, recently gave an accused man the minimum sentence of sixty days in the house of correction. That, however, is not the interesting part of the story which is involved in subsequent proceedings. From the Chicago Record-Herald report the following is taken:

The prisoner turned away from the bench to the deputy marshal waiting to take him to jail. He turned his coat collar up around his throat.

"Aronson," exclaimed the court sharply, "where's your overcoat?"

"Your honor," said the "white slaver," "I ain't got none. That was one of the first things I soaked when I come to Chicago."

"Baillif," said the judge, "get mine and give it to him. Now, gentlemen," he added, turning to the lawyers, "we'll proceed with the next case."

An hour later Judge Landis' thin figure was breasting the breeze that tore down Dearborn street.

"Hi, there, judge," shouted a friend, "where's your overcoat?"

"I used it to light a fire."

"Used it to light a fire?"

"Yes," said Judge Landis, "I used it to light a fire to keep warm inside of me the spirit of charity that life in a great city like Chicago tends to freeze."

And his friend was still gazing at him in astonishment when he jumped on his car.

Would that in every section of our country—and in every corner of the world—there were more such fires as Judge Landis lighted when he gave his raiment to the poor. A simple act, indeed, on the part of this federal judge, but it is of the kind that makes the heart beat faster.



#### THE GNAT AND THE CAMEL

The president's attack on Senator Tillman forcibly recalls the graphic language employed by the Nazarene, recorded in Matthew 23:24: "Ye blind guides which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," and this little verse is wedged in between two verses, both of which begin "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." Of what is Senator Tillman guilty? The president charges that Mr. Tillman denied that he had "undertaken" to purchase any land connected with the tract which he was endeavoring to have restored to the public. The correspondence shows that Mr. Tillman had expressed a desire to have some land reserved for himself and members of his family. Mr. Tillman declares, and there is nothing to dispute it, that while he had contemplated the purchase of land, he had not completed the transaction and that he finally decided not to do so. It might have been better if, instead of using the word "undertaken," he had gone into detail and told the senators what correspondence he had had. But in view of the fact that the purchase of the land, even if it had been made, would not have been a violation of the law, and considering the further fact that nothing Mr. Tillman could have said would have affected the subject under discussion, it is not fair to condemn him. He declared in his statement before the senate that he told the attorney general that he had considered the purchase of some of the land. The attorney general does not remember the conversation exactly as Senator Tillman does, but even the attorney general's statement, as it stands, is sufficient to corroborate the testimony of Senator Tillman.

We may reach the time when public sentiment will condemn participation by any legislator in the deciding of any matter in which he has the slightest pecuniary interest, but that is not the law today, neither is it public opinion. A large number of the senators and members of congress are interested in national banks as stockholders, directors or officials, and yet no ques-

tion is raised about their speaking and voting upon measures affecting the national bank. Senator Platte, of New York, is interested in express companies, and yet he takes an active part in the consideration and decision of questions affecting postal rates which come into competition with express rates. Many of the senators and members are interested in railroad companies, and yet they take an active part in the consideration of rate legislation and railroad regulation. Many of the senators and members are interested in manufacturing enterprises, and yet they speak and vote upon the tariff laws which directly affect their business. Senators and members are interested in corporations known as trusts, and yet they take part in the consideration of measures affecting the trusts. Judges often hold stock in railroads which have cases before them. Why this singling out of Senator Tillman for anathema. If no one could cast a stone unless he himself was free from sin, Senator Tillman would have few accusers in either body.

Senator Tillman was endeavoring to recover for the public a large tract of territory which a railroad company was, in his opinion, unlawfully holding. It would have been better, as it now appears, if he had never thought of purchasing, for the president's criticism will go farther than Senator Tillman's defense can reach, and the senator will be condemned by many who will forever remain ignorant of the facts. But is the senator's usefulness ended because of this? He immediately called attention to the misuse of his name in this connection and protested against the attempt of speculators to use him to practice a fraud upon the public.

Measured by the rules that are applied to other senators and members of congress, he has not sinned at all; measured by the most exacting rules, his offense can not be considered a grave one. Why should the public forget his long career of honesty and fair dealing? A man charged with a crime is entitled to the benefit of his record, not only to mitigate his punishment, but to explain any transaction that is capable of two constructions. Senator Tillman has been in public life for many years and his name has stood as a synonym for integrity. No matter how men may have differed from him in opinion, they have conceded to him honesty of purpose and fearlessness in his attacks upon wrongdoing. Is it possible that a man with such a career can be seriously damaged by such an indictment as the president brings against him?

If Senator Tillman were a university president or an expert in the use of language, there might be more reason to question his good faith when he used the word "undertaken," but those who have in the past found fault with him because he lacked college polish ought not to judge him too technically in the selection of words.

But what shall we say of the president? Is he entirely disinterested in picking out Mr. Tillman for denunciation? It is a matter of common knowledge that Mr. Tillman is the only senator from whom the president has withdrawn an invitation to the White House, and it is also known that Mr. Tillman has used emphatic language in criticising certain acts of the president. One must give these facts weight in considering why the president has attempted to destroy Mr. Tillman's standing among his associates. These may have made the president forget that Senator Tillman championed the rate bill when republican leaders fought it. The reader will recall the time when, a few years ago, Mr. Bowen made a report reflecting upon the conduct of our minister to Venezuela, Mr. Loomis. The investigation showed that the minister had interested himself in claims against the republic—had been guilty of conduct which had affected any European nation of standing, would have resulted in his immediate recall. But the president, instead of punishing him, criticised Mr. Bowen and then gave the accused an honorary appointment on the commission that conveyed the bones of John Paul Jones from Paris to the United States. It will be remembered, also, that when a member of the president's cabinet was charged with the violation of the law, the president submitted the question to two distinguished lawyers; that he rejected their opinion when that opinion would have put the cabinet officer on trial, and the said cabinet officer, when he retired from his position, received a cordial and enthusiastic endorsement. It seems to make a great deal of difference whose ox is gored. It is a pity that the president confines his indignation to an act like that charged against Mr. Tillman, when there are so many republican officials