

few hundred editorials relating to Senator Depew which have been printed since July 11, 1905, would make an interesting appendix to the volume, whose frontispiece, by the way, carries the smiling features of the Sage of Peekskill and the significant inscription, "Yours truly."—New York World.

Whither are we drifting? With the members of the United States senate convicted of crime and a third one (Depew) under a cloud; with corruption running rampant in many of the state legislatures, and various governors severely censured for their actions; with pollution in many cities more glaring than prevailed in New York during the days of Boss Tweed—with all this corruption, whither are we drifting and what is to become of our country if it continues in years to come to grow as it has grown in years past?—Seward, Neb., Independent-Democrat.

Mr. Depew's fitness to remain in the senate is, of course, as much open to question as his fitness to remain a member of the Yale corporation. It is to be noted in this connection that he has just been re-elected for a full term of six years. How that re-election came about will be remembered. Odell had taken up ex-Governor Black for the succession, but for some reason not explained, Odell suddenly threw Black over and allowed Depew to take another term. It was supposed that the intervention of E. H. Harriman's influence over Odell is one of the interesting and unanswered questions of New York politics and finance.

REGULATION OF RAILWAYS

In the east editorial writers seem to be giving the serious issues of the day about as much thought as they devoted to the silver question in 1896. The bad breaks made in the first Bryan campaign by these moulders of public opinion were delightfully absurd. At present they are trying their luck on railway regulation and they are showing about as much sanity as a dog chasing a bird. For example, Collier's editor says:

The movement for fixing rates actually through a commission, as contrasted with regulating them, has lost ground of late. The president, responding to the public, has slackened speed in the onslaught he was making. We have never cared much to see the rate-fixing power in absolute form in a small group of government appointees. A sign of the trend was given when the organ of the locomotive engineers came out against the scheme. A railway is a thing peculiarly requiring regulation. It ought to be a monopoly, to avoid wasteful duplication, and yet unless there is competition the roads will treat the people like so much dirt. Compare the rival services between Chicago and New York with the performances of a fat monopoly like the Boston & Maine, which owns legislatures and with impunity maltreats the public in every known way. But it is perfectly simple to have monopoly and good service, by government and state supervision. Everything about a railway ought to be subject to the state, from rates to comfort, from equal privileges to safety, but the correct democratic principle is to let the roads know what is expected of them, and see that they perform it—not for the state to step in itself and undertake the conduct of the railway business.

Collier's estimable editor has a genial disposition, but his economic vision is afflicted with strabismus. His remedy for railway tyranny is simple and as impossible as it is simple. The roads know now what is expected of them and the interstate commerce commission has the power to enlighten them from time to time as to the reasonableness of certain rates. But the commission has no power to enforce its findings. How, then, can the government "see" that the railroads charge reasonable rates? It is easy to ask the government to "see that they perform it," but there is a glittering generally about this remedy which shows how cheerfully illogical some of the eastern editors can be when dealing with economic subjects. And yet Collier's editor concedes that everything about a railway, from rates to comfort, should be subject to the state. How would the editor make these things subject to the state? He would have the government "see to it." There must be a power in the govern-

ment's "see" which hitherto none of us has suspected. Instead of having a commission with power to fix a reasonable rate we should just ask the government "to see to it" and that would so frighten the railways that they would at once consent to be reasonable. The government has been trying the "see-to-it" plan for a long time and the railways still charge extortionate rates and grant rebates to big shippers. Collier's editor has another guess.

The Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde attitude of the railways, which pose as common carriers for some purposes and as private corporations for other purposes, is denounced by the Chicago Record-Herald:

A decision just rendered by the interstate commerce commission in a case involving the reasonableness of certain charges for transportation and refrigeration of fruit from Michigan points lays down a doctrine which whether sound or unsound in law, is certainly in harmony with the trend of public sentiment. The commission holds that railroads which hold themselves out as common carriers of perishable fruit must provide the necessary refrigerator cars for that traffic; that carriers of commodities that can only move under refrigeration are bound to furnish such refrigeration, and the icing becomes not a mere incident but part of the service itself; that the refrigerator cars, no matter how obtained, are during the transportation to be treated as the cars of the carrier using it, and that the charge for refrigeration stands exactly like any other charge for transportation and is governed by the same statutory provisions as to reasonableness, publicity, etc. That is, refrigeration charges must be published, observed and changed precisely as other charges are, the commission having full jurisdiction over them. In the same decision the commission finds that a certain charge for refrigeration based upon the cost of the ice used, would be reasonable. It does not, however, order that charge to go into effect, for the reason that it is without authority to prescribe rates for the future. In other words, we have again a decision without an order, an argument without a ruling. The defendant roads may or may not adopt the rate declared to be reasonable by the commission, just as they may or may not admire the logic of the commission in reaching the conclusion that a common carrier does not cease to be a common carrier when he moves perishable fruit in refrigerator cars.

This decision points the way for a commission which shall be vested with the power to enforce its rulings. When congress grants a commission such power the refrigerator car discriminations, which have constituted one of the most flagrant abuses of railway mismanagement, will disappear. The press continues to criticize the railway policy of placing a greater value on earnings than on human life:

By good fortune the Pennsylvania railroad's Chicago flyer escaped serious consequences in its collision with a loose freight car near Port Royal Saturday. Luck does not destroy the lesson of the averted disaster. This accident was the third of recent record caused by the buckling of a freight train. In the second of the three, which like the third was on the Pennsylvania road, twenty-two passengers were killed. Now, a freight train buckles in a sudden stop because only the cars equipped with air-brakes stop immediately. Intervening cars which have no air-brakes collide with the cars ahead and buckle. The argument would seem to be complete, without further casualties, for compelling railroad companies to put the air-brake on all freight cars, as they do on all passenger cars.—New York World.

REVIVAL OF TARIFF ISSUE

The tariff issue has been revived not more by the government's action with reference to canal supplies than by the agitation of those who favor tariff revision and of those who advocate reciprocity. The Record-Herald has this to say regarding the reciprocity conference to be held in Chicago.

The New York Merchants' association, without reference to the conference planned by western friends of reciprocity, has adopted

plans for an extensive campaign of reciprocity education. Its resolutions were commented upon in these columns at the time they were adopted, but since then thousands of copies of a very informing and impressive circular have been sent out in which the tariff developments in Europe are reviewed and their lessons emphasized. In view of the action of Germany, France and Russia, and the proposed tariff changes in Austria, Switzerland and other countries, indifference and standpattism on our part would be culpable. Europe takes more than two thirds of our exports, and all of our principal articles of export will be seriously affected by the new laws in question. And the association reminds us that in these days of intense rivalry our foreign trade, "when once lost or taken, cannot be recovered, except with great difficulty." The Merchants' association does not mention the double tariff plan. It explicitly advocates "a policy of reciprocal trade agreements in accordance with the last words of President McKinley." It cannot be supposed, however, that it is committed to the special treaty plan, and no doubt a liberal, fair double tariff system, one that would invite reciprocity rather than retaliation, would receive the association's endorsement should it, upon discussion, present superior advantages. New England, we know, is keenly interested in reciprocity, and the Boston board of trade has recently adopted strong resolutions urging that policy. We shall doubtless hear from that influential section apropos of the conference proposal.

There has been a great advance recently in public opinion. For instance among the people, the demand for a radical revision of the tariff schedules is almost universal. But the old time conservative bosses and captains of industry oppose it and progress seems almost impossible. Elected by an accident, President Roosevelt, a man of progressive ideas, is bound hand and foot, and while he has done much by way of agitation, he has not succeeded in bringing about any substantial reforms. But as days go by, the task will come easier. Time is no respecter of persons. The boss cannot command the sun to stand still.—Columbus Press-Post.

WAR AND PEACE

Russian and Japanese affairs still afford material for much comment. Peace possibilities, the defiant action of the zemstvos and the military situation are discussed:

That indorsement undoubtedly represents the fixed view of Czar Nicholas. But so many things have happened since then that on March 30, 1905, the czar's official organ, "Slovo," announced that the presidents of the provincial zemstvo boards should be summoned to give their opinion on what might be best, to save Russia from disaster. Of course, the grand dukes, the police and the reactionaries of all ranks negated this permission, as far as they could. But the zemstvo presidents have met, relying on the autocrat's promise of immunity. As stated in the Post-Dispatch, the prefect of police of Moscow was present, with a sufficient force to put a stop to the deliberations. But he does not seem to have dared to do so. He contended himself with taking the names of all present and making a report of the proceedings for his masters. But who are the masters? The government is evidently divided against itself. In all its branches are men who are tired of bureaucracy and who are determined, if possible, to put a stop to its corruption and tyranny. The outcome of this great representative meeting will be of vital importance to Russia. It may mark the beginning of the end of autocratic government.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The state of affairs in Manchuria is such as to create the impression that Linevitch and Oyama have an understanding that there is to be no serious fighting while the peace negotiations are on. Reports come occasionally from St. Petersburg of the growing strength of the Russian army and its desire to take the offensive, but it makes no forward move. General Oyama sends in no reports of progress, and presumably he is simply marking time and refraining from sacrificing the lives of many of his men. It may be that without any formal agreement there is a practical armistice so far as the Manchurian armies are concerned. It would not be surprising, however, to hear at any moment of the Japanese activity in the neighborhood of Vladivostok.—Chicago Tribune.