

OUR LINCOLN LETTER

Gossip from the State Capital, Legislative and Otherwise

The Higher Obligations.

Recent events have made imperative some consideration of the ethics of giving testimony. Every one despises a talebearer. Even the children call such a person a "tattletale," and justifiably look down upon him. The informer is a spy, a breaker of good faith, a violator of the sacred laws of hospitality. Loyalty to family and to friends is the cement which holds society together. Trouble comes when men act upon a mistaken view of what constitutes loyalty to society at large, that society which is but an aggregation of families and friends. The existence of orderly government depends on the observance of certain laws, unpunished disobedience to which produces anarchy. When crime is committed, every person with knowledge of it is under moral obligation, when asked, to tell what he knows. In some cases the obligation extends so far as to require him to volunteer information against his friends. The maintenance of order and safe government is of so much greater importance than the protection of law-breaking friends, that the state justly conceals the crime or who assists the guilty to escape. This rule is the result of long experience, and its justice is nowhere disputed. Yet, in practice, it is difficult to enforce it, says Youth's Companion, because of the prevalence of false standards growing out of abhorrence of the informer. There is no high school principal or college president who has not come in contact with these false standards in his attempt to maintain discipline. There is scarcely a large city in the country in which members of the police force have not at some time or another been actuated by belief in the mistaken notion. In the army and the navy a similarly false idea of the obligations of company loyalty has many times confronted the commanding officers, as if the men regarded it as of greater importance that half a dozen friends should be saved from the consequences of their misdeeds than that the body of national defenders should be preserved from those who would undermine the foundations of all orderly institutions.

New Varieties of Sin.

The real weakness in the moral position of Americans is not their attitude toward the plain criminal, but their attitude toward the quasi-criminal—the "criminaloid." Let a prominent man commit some offense in bad odor and the multitude flings its stones with a right good will. The social lynching of the self-made magnate who put away his faded, toll-worn wife for the sake of a soubrette proves that the props of the old morality have not rotted through. Sex righteousness continues to be thus stiffly upheld simply because man has not been inventing new ways of wronging woman. So long ago were sex sins recognized and branded that the public, feeling sure of itself, lays on with promptness and emphasis. The slowness of this same public in lashing other kinds of transgression betrays, not sycophancy or unthinking admiration of success, but perplexity, says E. A. Ross in Atlantic. The prosperous evildoers that bask undisturbed in popular favor have been careful to shun—or seem to shun—the familiar types of wickedness. Overlooked in Bible and prayerbook, their obliquities lack the brimstone smell. Surpass as their misdeeds may in meanness and cruelty, there has not yet been time enough to store up strong emotion about them, and so the sight of them does not loose the flood of wrath and abhorrence that rushes down upon the long-attained sins.

The Chinese have long been credited with the invention of gunpowder, but Prof. E. O. Von Lippmann, of Halle, has collected evidence to indicate that this is a mistake, and that the Arabians did not, as commonly stated, introduce gunpowder into Europe during the eighth and ninth centuries. Prof. Von Lippmann believes that the manufacture of the first gunpowder was based upon the "fire-book" of Marcus Graecus, which appeared in Constantinople about the middle of the thirteenth century. This was the source from which Roger Bacon, Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas derived their knowledge of gunpowder. The first use of gunpowder to drive projectiles is ascribed to a monk, Berthold Schwarz, whose discovery was made accidentally while preparing the mixture for medicinal purposes.

A St. Louis typo, employed on one of the dailies of that city, put in type a paragraph describing the dress of a bride at a fashionable wedding. It contained the amazing statement that "the bride's train, five years long, swept the aisle."

Lillian Langtry's name has been changed again, but the astonishing feature about it is that it was the death of her father-in-law, and not a new matrimonial venture, which caused the change.

In making changes in the Aldrich railroad bill, referred to elsewhere, the joint committee has a number of matters under consideration. For instance, the task of making the rate schedule—when it shall be done and what shall be the nature of the immediate work expected of the commission—is one of the most important questions. The Aldrich bill compels the commission to prepare a classification of rates as soon as practicable. This classification is expected by many at an early date, while others believe the wording of the bill should give the commission fullest opportunity for investigation and study and should not fix the time when it is expected, though of course so providing that immediate relief might be given in many lines. The task of compiling a new schedule will be a monumental one and should the commission be expected to promulgate a complete rate sheet at an early date, some who have studied the matter believe the best results would not follow.

The following preamble and resolution adopted in the house is its own explanation:

Whereas, in the consideration of the various bills now pending relative to the powers of the railroad commission and freight and passenger rates, it is imperative that the joint railroad committee of the house and senate have for its guidance and information all the data and facts available pertaining to these subjects; therefore be it

Resolved, That the state bureau of statistics be instructed to furnish the joint railroad committee of this legislature with the tariff schedules of the railroads operating in Nebraska and all obtainable statistics and data concerning railroad rates, shipments and such other information as may be germane to the subject.

Some legislators are of the opinion that the university 1-mill levy should be abolished and a direct appropriation made for its maintenance. A bill is pending providing that the government funds given to the university and all other funds except the levy shall be paid out by the state treasurer on warrants issued by the auditor upon certificates filed by the Board of Regents. This includes the cash fund, which during the last biennium amounted to almost \$120,000. It has been pointed out that should this bill pass it will not be necessary for succeeding legislatures to appropriate this money as has been the custom in the past, and therefore in asking the legislature for appropriations the regents need not take this money into consideration. As the law stands, the supreme court has ruled that it is not necessary for the government funds to be appropriated, but it has said nothing about the cash fund.

At this writing members of the joint committee, two senators and two representatives, appointed to draft railroad bills, are busy with their work. It will be their duty to frame a measure that will empower the railroad commission to act and define its powers and mode of procedure. Senator Aldrich, one of the committee, has made an extended study of the railroad situation in those states where railway commissions have been in effect for many years and where the laws have been tested in the courts. He, in drawing his bill, sought to follow those provisions which have stood the brunt of most litigation. It is quite well understood that in the main the style and form of his bill, known as S. F. 45, will be followed.

A bill that Senator Lalla of Burt has introduced provides that any railroad company operating a train of more than one car, who shall make up or operate a train carrying passengers on any car who shall make up or operate a train with a car carrying passengers in front of a car carrying express, freight or baggage, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$100 and not more than \$1,000.

The anti-sporting element will probably be disturbed over the bill introduced in the house allowing base ball to be played on Sunday if the city council or the county commissioners give permission, in any town or county in the state. Back of the bill are lined up the base ball fans of Lincoln and some of the smaller towns of the state.

There will be no house daily printed, the committee on printing having so recommended after the reception of bids that were not at all satisfactory.

The house has gone on record as favoring an income tax.

The east wing of the state house has been officially declared unsafe and dangerous. Architect Berlinghof, who recently made an examination of the building, reported to Land Commissioner Eaton that the east wing had settled six or eight inches within the last month and there is grave danger of a collapse of that section of the building.

House roll 64, appropriating \$80,000 for salaries of legislators, was passed by the senate without change as it came from the lower branch.

The proposed dairy commission bill designates the governor dairy commissioner with power to appoint a deputy who shall be a practical dairyman and who shall receive a salary of \$1,800 a year. He shall be recommended by the president and directors of the Nebraska Dairymen's association. One stenographer at a salary of \$70 a month and one chemist at \$1,500 a year are provided for in the bill. It also provides for four dairy inspectors to be appointed by the deputy, with the approval of the governor and on recommendation of the president and directors of the Nebraska Dairymen's association and the professor of dairy husbandry of the state university, each inspector to receive \$3 a day and traveling expenses.

If the bill introduced by Senator Sackett of Gage becomes an enactment the responsibility of enforcing all laws will devolve directly upon the governor. The act makes it the duty of the attorney general of the state, when directed by the governor, to oust from office any officer, including mayors, who wilfully neglects to enforce a law and it makes such neglect punishable by ouster from office. The bill is intended to remove local officers who refuse to enforce a law, and it is made stronger by making it the duty of the attorney general to proceed against such officers, when directed by the governor.

The senate refused to concur with the house in an appropriation for postage stamps to be furnished daily to members of the house. The bill appropriating money for the expenses of the session was amended by striking out the word "postage." The vote was 15 to 10 in favor of the motion by McKesson to concur in a report of the appropriation committee that the word "postage" be stricken from the bill. The house early in the session, after three attempts, voted that members of the body be allowed five 2-cent stamps daily. The senate's action will prevent carrying out the resolution and house members will have to buy their own stamps.

This resolution directed against introduction and passage of appropriation bills that do not specify the amounts asked passed the house after protracted debate: "That all appropriations for the support and maintenance of any charitable, correctional, educational institution or for the erection or equipment of any new buildings for any purpose by the state of Nebraska, be made in definite and specific sums of dollars and cents and so expressed in the bill, making the appropriations and not in mills levy on the assessed valuation of the property, listed for taxation by the state of Nebraska."

Railroad operators are working for enactment of a measure that will control hoboes. It has been recommended for passage. It is designed to give all railroad employes the power to arrest persons found stealing rides on trains or climbing upon the cars when they have no right so to do. Some opposition was manifested by the minority on the ground that the bill gave too much authority to the railroad men, that it was the principle of the dollar against the man and was undemocratic and a wrong bill.

Senator Sackett has introduced a bill to prohibit the pooling of bridge contractors or the division of territory by them. It makes them liable for damages due to pooling and fixes a penalty in the way of a fine of \$1,000 or imprisonment not more than six months. Provision is also made for inspection of contractors' books in court. It looks like a good move in the direction of removing some of the abuses suffered by counties in building their bridges.

The resolution by Weems to have the speaker appoint a committee to find out why farmers do not get as much for their grain in Nebraska as in other states was laid on the table. The resolution had been referred to the railroad committee, which reported it back to the house with no recommendation.

In the case of the State of Nebraska against the Nebraska Lumber Dealers' association, an alleged trust, Referee Post ruled in favor of the state's attorneys by deciding that the courts have jurisdiction and can proceed against the lumber dealers for violation of the state's anti-trust laws.

Governor Sheldon has appointed Edward G. Maggi of Lincoln chief clerk in the executive office, a position formerly held by E. S. Mickey. Mr. Mickey was recently appointed state bank examiner.

The senate has passed a measure that its author calls the "cat wagon" bill. It places wagons used for immoral purposes in the same category with houses, tents and boats, gives justices of the peace jurisdiction over such cases and reduces the penalty. It is designed, the introducer says, to get quick action.

The senate, by a close vote, in committee of the whole, recommended for passage a bill by Patrick of Sarpy, declaring void judgments of execution if not issued within five years.

Remains Loyal to Husband.



EVELYN NESBIT THAW

From stereograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.
Young wife of Harry Thaw, soon to be tried for the killing of Stanford White. Before their marriage she was an actress and had become famous for her beauty. She was the indirect cause of the sensational tragedy.

A NEW STEAM TORPEDO.

SEA TERROR WITH TWICE RANGE OF OLD ONES.

Little Vessels Now Able to Defy Big Battleships—May Launch Deadly Missiles Without Coming Under Fire.

New York.—By devising a torpedo propelled by steam generated in the burning of high explosives carried within it in concentrated form, Hiram Maxim has concluded experiments from which he asserts that the range of naval torpedoes will be doubled and naval warfare revolutionized. To meet the demand that torpedoes must have effective range equal to the gunfire to which the attacking torpedo boat would be subjected, Mr. Maxim burns motorite, a new explosive, to generate steam at a high pressure, and by this means the regulation naval torpedo is made much more efficient

than when driven by compressed air, the motive power now generally used.

In his home in Brooklyn, Mr. Maxim told of his latest invention.

"In spite of the wonderful things that had been expected of the automobile torpedo as an auxiliary arm in naval warfare," he said, "disappointment has been the result when it has been relied upon. The cause of this failure and disappointment is because the deadly quick-firing gun has been developed to such a degree of perfection and such great range that when the torpedo boat of an enemy comes to the attack it is sunk long before it can get anywhere near enough to be within torpedoing distance of a battleship. It is met with a storm of projectiles from quick-firing guns which fly toward it with frightful accuracy, and the range of these projectiles is so much greater than that of the automobile torpedo that the torpedo boat is destroyed in not much

more time than is needed to make this statement. "In outward appearance my torpedo is no different from the regulation type, but a self-combustive material called motorite, similar in composition to smokeless powder, is employed to furnish the motive power for driving it through the water. This dispenses with the use of the heavy air flask and the latter is replaced with a light casing in which the motorite is burned in the presence of water to produce steam with which to drive the torpedo engine. "It ought to give us a range at least twice as great as the present torpedo with the maximum speed that can be got from the propellers. "The enormous range of the Maxim torpedo is a great desideratum, for it will then bring the range of the torpedo up to that of the guns which will be opposed to it. "Summing up for the new motorite propelled torpedo, I am sure of producing a greater efficiency due to longer range, more uniform speed and higher speed during the entire run; inexpensiveness, as the high cost air flask is done away with; greater safety on shipboard, as the highly charged air flask—2,250 pounds to the square inch—makes the torpedo a huge bomb if struck by a shot from the enemy, and the great item of saving the expense of air compressors now installed on torpedo boats. "Filled with motorite, the Maxim torpedo will always be ready for discharging like a shotted gun."

CAN HARDEN PURE GOLD.

Alabama Man Accidentally Made Remarkable Discovery.

Montgomery, Ala.—Alfred Weaver, of this city, has, in collaboration with John Edward Carney, and while engaged in laboratory experiments in search of a new coherer material for wireless telegraphy, discovered the art of hardening and tempering the precious metals, such as platinum, gold and the like, without alloying them with other metals.

The results obtained by Mr. Weaver's process are the enormous reduction in the fusing point of those metals and the imparting to them of a degree of hardness in some instances surpassing that of the best tool steel when hardened. Platinum, one of the most refractory of metals, heretofore requiring for its fusion the oxyhydrogen flame, or the voltaic arc, is, after being subjected to the new process, easily melted before an ordinary gasoline blowpipe and may be cast, again melted and recast indefinitely.

So great a hardness is imparted to these metals by Mr. Weaver's process that a piece of gold or platinum, for instance, can with the greatest difficulty be abraded by the best steel file and a sphere of either of these metals of say two millimeters diameter, when placed upon a hardened steel anvil and struck a sharp blow with an eight-ounce steel hammer, will resist such a blow and suffer only the slightest alteration in shape.

SWELLS THE SHEEP'S HEADS.

Peculiar Disease in South Africa Decimates the Flocks.

London.—South Africa, which is noted for its curious animal and human diseases, has none more curious than the trouble affecting Merino and Africander sheep and Angora goats in which the heads and ears of the animals swell to grotesque size, finally resulting in the death of the animal. This disease, the exact nature of which or its cause is not recognized, is known chiefly by its Dutch name, "geel dikkop," which, translated means yellow thickhead.

The trouble usually appears in herds which have been grazing on low land and is particularly prevalent after a heavy rainfall, though what relation this may have to the disease is a mystery. The head and ears assume a dropsical condition, growing to enormous size, and if no treatment is adopted the swollen parts become dry, shrivel up and crack. This swollen condition is accompanied by a general condition of jaundice.

Postmortem examinations disclose, in addition to the general jaundiced condition, an abnormal condition of some of the vital organs, as the liver, spleen, etc. The average mortality is 40 per cent.

LONELY ONES ORGANIZE CLUB.

Unite to Drive Away Solitude Incident to Life in Great City.

New York.—There is no longer any excuse for men or women in this great city to suffer the pangs of loneliness. A club has been organized exclusively for the lonely ones. Eighty "lonlies," 40 men and 40 women, attended the second meeting of the organization the other afternoon.

Several young men, unknown to one another, chanced, at about the same time, to write letters to the newspapers telling how lonely they were in New York, especially on Sunday afternoons. Next these young men began writing to one another. Then they got acquainted and out of their acquaintance came the idea of getting the "lonlies" organized. It is said that Charles Knox, is really father of the club idea, and it was he who hired the hall and called the first meeting. At the first meeting appeared Dr. Ekner Lee, and he took to the idea with a fervor that set it going with whirlwind momentum. Dr. Lee was named as temporary president.

Indian Prince and Family.



From stereograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.
The Nawab Muntaz Jurg of Hyderabad, his ten wives and four children. This is the first time that this Indian prince permitted his family to be photographed.

France Has 200,000 Hoboes.

Army of 32,000 Rural Guards Found Insufficient to Curb Them.

Paris.—An investigation just ended by the ministry of the interior has revealed the fact that in France there are at least 200,000 tramps. Against this horde of regular tramps the government has opposed a regiment of 32,000 rural guards whose duty it is to protect life and property in the country.

It is proposed to increase the number of rural guards so as to check vagrancy. A request from all the de-

partments of France brought 26 municipalities of those departments provided night lodgings for 456,000 persons last year.

In the 38,000 municipalities of France, however, there are to be found only 3,000 night refuges and in many places the tramps cannot be arrested because there is no place to imprison them. During last year 32,000 tramps were arrested, but about 20,000 of them could not be held because of lack of evidence to prove a crime.