

prestige might be increased, our burdens would be multiplied many fold. Great Britain, by reason of her conspicuous position in Europe, her important colonial possessions in every quarter of the globe, and her aggressive commercial policy, is far more exposed to the danger of frequent wars than the United States, or at least far more than the United States have heretofore been under the wise counsels of our early statesmen. An alliance with Great Britain or any other power would necessarily impose upon us reciprocal obligations and duties, which, when once assumed, could not be disregarded without a breach of good faith, no matter what loss or damage a compliance with them might entail upon us.

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It is best to keep our domestic affairs and the conduct of our foreign relations in our own hands under all circumstances; and if we distrust the power of our own government successfully to prosecute the policy of conquest and aggrandizement, that is a sufficient reason, if there were no other, for condemning the policy itself, but not by any means a sufficient reason for the formation of an alliance which would require us to assist another nation in extending or preserving its colonial possessions.

THE TURNING OF THE TIDE. During the century which is now nearing its close

four hundred thousand square miles of heavily timbered forest area have been converted into cultivated farm land.

Very much of this timber have been destroyed in order to provide homes quickly for a rapidly growing population.

So great has been the demand for cleared farm land, that in many of our states there has been practically no woodland left.

That serious results have already become apparent is known by all thinking Americans.

The great railway corporations, which are so great consumers of wood products, find their supplies more difficult to obtain. Prices of the finer sorts of lumber have steadily advanced, although some of the inferior woods still remain near their former values.

Railway cross ties, of good hard timber, have become very scarce, and many roads are using the soft and far less durable timber, and are taxing the ingenuity of their engineers to prolong their existence.

Not a few railways now haul their ties, fence posts, car materials, and other lumber several hundred miles.

Several of these corporations are now seriously considering the advisability of planting forests on their unused real estate.

Some years ago the Pennsylvania Railway company planted a large number of catalpa trees along their right of way. Many of these trees are now of

sufficient size to make two cross ties, besides affording several fence posts, yet they have not received the care required for best results.

The Fort Scott & Memphis road planted a large tract in Kansas which has been a good investment.

The Burlington planted a large number, and in variety, at points along the western portion, but they received no further attention.

They have proven the adaptability of the plains for timber growth.

Recently the officials of the Big Four, or Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis railway, have gone so far as to employ an expert forester to examine all the lands on their system, with a view to planting hard wood trees for ties and other uses.

It is not yet determined how extensively they will go into foresting their lands, but so much is assured that when corporations make such a beginning, and see the absolute necessity of planting for future supply, it may be considered a favorable omen that the tide of timber destruction is giving way to the return flow of reforesting much of the now unprofitable lands.

If it is considered necessary and profitable for railways, is it not also desirable that every individual landowner shall do his share—and receive his profits as well?

JOHN P. BROWN.

"Unforeseen Tendencies of Democracy," by E. L. Godkin, is a book that should be read by every political student. While Mr. Godkin furnishes no remedy for the decadent tendencies of democracy he shows that by some undercurrent (over which we have no control) democracy has drifted from the course intended and is now approaching unknown and possibly dangerous seas. The book is divided into seven chapters, the titles to which partly indicate their contents, viz: "Former Democracies," "Equality," "The Nominating System," "The Decline of Legislatures," "Peculiarities of American Municipal Government," "The Growth and Expression of Public Opinion," "The Australian Democracy." One cannot help being impressed with the candor and research of the author after reading it, and be startled with the facts presented. But after all what is it but another illustration that the best laid schemes of mice and men have always unforeseen tendencies and results. Differences incident to environment must be expected in government as in everything else. It is to be regretted that Mr. Godkin does not offer a remedy for the supposed ills towards which democracy is drifting. He, however, may be impressed with the possibility that the remedy might strike that unknown current that deflected the course of the democratic ship and be confronted by the unforeseen tendencies of the remedy. There is a con-

solation left us that so long as we have writers like Mr. Godkin to caution us against those tendencies of democracy which we cannot see we shall not perish from the earth.

DISGUISED AS A PART OF THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

There is no publication on earth which so graphically portrays the calibre and character of its editorial writers and managers as The Congressional Record. There is certainly no other great daily chronicler which allows intellectual and social tramps so many columns in which to exploit their hobbies and vagaries. And in recent years senators and representatives have injected entire volumes, like Henry George's first book, into their skeletons of speeches, and thus taxed the public purse for reprinting and circulating the same through the mails under official "franks." This fraudulent method of publishing and distributing pernicious and mendacious party literature is illustrated by a recent gratuitously carried envelope received at THE CONSERVATIVE office.

This interesting bit of patriotic pretense is stamped on the upper left hand corner:

"SENATE UNITED STATES.
PART OF CONG. RECORD.
FREE."

And in the right hand corner is the artistic and unselfish autograph of that great and good friend of only the plain common people—Wm. V. Allen, U. S. S.!

THE CONSERVATIVE was delighted by the considerate condescension which had thus sent to it even a small portion of the erudition and philosophy evolved in a single day by Messrs Quay, Chandler, Pettigrew, Vest, Allen and other profound students of economics and government.

But when the delusive envelope was opened it contained only a political tract written by a learned Frenchman of Paris, a Monsieur Charles Q. de France, in which that learned *savant* attempts to show the speedy progress of populist policies in Nebraska and their effect upon early potatoes and spring plowing. The Congressional Record as the organ of M. de France of Paris is a singularly vapid and useless periodical for which the people must with patriotic pride foot the bill. Senator Allen calls this subterfuge and swindle legitimate; in any event he is its author and conservator.

Swift said "Vanity is the food of fools" and this leads THE CONSERVATIVE to remark that there is a very large amount of fool-fodder stowed away among the legislative lofts of the United States.