

THE ARMY BILL.

The army bill, as it passed the house, is unsatisfactory, since it does not answer the demand of the people for placing the army in suitable hands. It is a compromise measure, under which, if it becomes a law, the government probably will be able to supply itself with sufficient soldiers for a year or two to cope with all possible difficulties in the West Indies or the Orient. If this measure really stands for the best that can be hoped for in the near future, then we may despair of any genuine army reform. The trouble with the regular army, as tested by the Cuban campaign, was not in its rank and file. It was in its staff, which was practically a military machine worked at will by the secretary of war for political purposes. The infusion of utterly worthless political appointments from civil life into the staff of the army was the chief cause of all the complaint concerning the administration of the quartermaster, commissariat and medical departments.

Not only does the army bill fail to reform this evil, but it increases the opportunity for its growth. This evil could have been corrected by providing that no person appointed to the army from civil life should be commissioned until he had been examined as to his military attainments and qualifications before a board composed of the most accomplished officers of the army, men of long service and proved professional ability. To examine a candidate as to mental, moral and physical fitness for military life is not sufficient. No man should be admitted to the regular army who is not a man of military attainments. It is not necessary perhaps that he should always be a graduate of a military college of high repute, but he must be able to show that by military service and study he has become familiar with the duties of a soldier and understands the business methods of a staff officer's work in a campaign.

The weak point of the army is its staff, and this bill leaves it just as weak as it found it. If we have any serious war for the next three years in the West Indies and the Orient, we shall have, under a complaisant president and a political truck-and-dicker secretary of war, a repetition of all the maladministration of the past year. Just so long as the army staff is made a political house of refuge for decayed politicians or the worthless proteges and pensioners of congressmen, just so long will our army be without radical reorganization necessary to real reform. The notable thing in the whole house debate over the army bill is the fact that the opposition to the measure was upon the demagogue cry that the great corporate interests of the United States are demanding this large standing army; that in the hands of a president dominated by such interests this increased standing army would be

used "to invade popular liberty, suppress freedom of speech and desecrate the ballot-box."

No attempt was made to make the bill a measure of radical army staff reform and reorganization. Cummings of New York offered an amendment to prevent the army being used to suppress riots except upon application by the governors therefor. This was rightly voted down.

It would have been an attempt to rob the president by act of congress of his clear constitutional powers, the very powers exercised by President Cleveland in 1894, when he ordered General Miles at Chicago to repress disorder, to protect the mails and interstate commerce, by carrying out the decrees of the federal court. Of course no sane, intelligent man believes that an army of 100,000 men scattered over the United States, in the West Indies and the Philippines, "would in time of peace be a menace to liberty of the citizens of the United States," as some pretended in the discussion of this bill.

An army of 100,000 men, scattered among 75,000,000 of people, is a source of anxiety to nobody save those persons who expect to become rioters and do not wish to be interrupted as they were at Chicago in 1894. Opposition to the passage of the bill on the utterly puerile plea that an increased army is a danger to popular liberty was contemptible. The true ground of opposition to the bill was that it gave no promise of staff reorganization and reform. The chances of the bill in the senate are very slim, for the populists alone are able by mere talk to prevent any increase of the army at this session, and the populists are even more hostile to "militarism" than are the democrats. Even Senator Teller, although an expansionist, stands with all the other free silverites in the senate in opposition to increase of the army beyond 50,000 men. It is more than likely that no army bill will be enacted by this congress, although some temporary measure may be passed under which the president can secure men enough for an emergency until congress meets in December next.—Portland Oregonian.

THE LOAD GROWS. That Lexington speech made by Colonel Bryan, August 29, 1896, in which he so truthfully and eloquently said, "the load of the American farmer grows every year," when taken out of the can cold and immediately served with warm facts has a very peculiar flavor. Among farmers living near Nebraska City the "loads" grown in 1898 have been gigantic and burdensome. The number of bucolic brothers overwhelmed with "loads" grown in the last twelve months can hardly be counted. THE CONSERVATIVE names however: Geo. Prather, who has twelve thousand;

Talbot Mead, who has eighteen thousand; H. W. Frakes, who has nine thousand, and Miller M. Payne, who has fifty thousand bushels of corn to sell. That proves it. Their "loads" grow every year. At thirty cents a bushel—fifty bushels shelled corn to the "load"—each load is a burden of fifteen dollars. Worse than all the dollars is gold or its equivalent.

It has been recalled that there was a negro director on the board that built a North Carolina institute for the blind, and that his name appears on the cornerstone. Both branches of the North Carolina legislature have voted to have the stone removed. An examination of attempts at lithological immortality on the high school building at Omaha will show the nigger a plagiarist.

EIGHTY YEARS BEFORE JENNER.

To the Editor of THE CONSERVATIVE:

Something like eighty years before Jenner discovered vaccination, which prevents and modifies the virulence of smallpox, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduced inoculation into England. In a letter from Adrianople dated April 1, O. S. 1717, she describes the process of ingrafting smallpox into the health of human system as practised by "a set of old women" in that country, who made it their special business to perform the operation "every autumn, in the month of September, when the heat is abated." I quote from her letter as follows:

"Apropos of distempers, I am going to tell a thing that will make you wish yourself here. The smallpox, so fatal amongst us (in England), is entirely harmless by the invention of ingrafting." Lady Montagu goes on to tell how people "send to one another to know if any of their family have a mind to have the smallpox, and ask what veins you wish to have opened." The operation is to put "the best sort of smallpox" into several viens of the arm or leg, not more than can "lie on the point of a needle." The children or young patients play together all the rest of the day, and are in perfect health to the eighth. Then the fever begins to seize them, and they keep their beds two days, seldom three. They very rarely have but twenty or thirty spots in their faces, which never mark, and in eight days time they are as well as before their illness. * * * Every year thousands undergo this operation, and the French ambassador says pleasantly that they take smallpox here by way of diversion, as they take the waters in other countries. There is no example of any one who has died with it, and you may believe I am well satisfied of the safety of this experiment, since I intend to try it on my dear little son." This is the inoculation of our time.

GEORGE L. MILLER.

Deerfield, February 10, 1899.