

privilege of continuing their defective breed.

Truly the question is "worthy of observation," and of earnest consideration by every man and woman. The universal practice of civilized mankind at present seems to be based on a theory that the undesirable must be carefully fostered at no matter what cost, while those classes in whom is some hope for the future of the world are thus left to bear a double burden.

Very different is our action in the case of our field and garden. There the harmful or useless vegetable is carefully destroyed before it has time to shed its seed, that the good plant may not only escape harm from it, but may also enjoy the further room which it occupied. Why, then, do we hesitate before a course which we know to be good for humbler creatures, when it concerns the highest being whose care is in our hands; namely, man himself?

"Thou shalt not kill." What is this? A general precept, by no means to be taken literally. At all events, a commandment riddled with exceptions. Read on but a little further in that strange compilation of laws, and see for how many offences it is changed into "thou shalt kill." "Ye shall stone them with stones that they die." And with what end in view; prevention of further wrong-doing by the individual? Moral effect on the community?—No; revenge.

"Deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die." "Thine eye shall not pity; life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

It is much more in accordance with God's latest revelations to mankind, to read the divine will thus: "Kill, wisely, but kill; or if not, withhold your hand at least from interference with my natural agencies, lest in breeding an artificial race of monsters, ye kill their betters, even your own children."

It was said to a certain king of France, who had expressed horror when the murderer of a score of persons was brought before him: "this man has killed one, no more; you killed the other nineteen yourself, in that you permitted him to live."

RIVALRY IN WEAKNESS.

Mr. Cleveland warned his party, in his letter to the Brooklyn democratic club, not to base a hope for success upon "the shortcomings of our adversaries." But that is precisely what both parties are now doing. What is the greatest argument for the reelection of President McKinley? The control of the democratic party by W. J. Bryan. What alone gives the democrats a chance of winning with Bryan? The renomination of McKinley. Thus each party finds its strength in the weakness of the other. Each appeals to the voters, not to elect its candidate, but to prevent the calam-

ity of the election of the candidate of the other. The competition is one in feebleness. McKinley may not be all we could wish—but look at Bryan! Bryan is not exactly the ideal of a president—but think of four years more of McKinley, Hanna & Co.!

All the preliminary talk about "running mates" for the two predestined candidates; about taking little dodges in the platforms for either, and about electoral probabilities, amounts to a confession that either nomination, taken by itself, is a weak one. Why should the republican managers be so anxiously looking about for a vice-presidential nominee who would be "a tower of strength" to the ticket? We had thought Mr. McKinley was tower, buttress, and bastion, all in one. Can there be a possible qualm about his running like wild-fire over the prairies? Any given candidate has always before been certified in advance to be just the man to run in that way; why should doubt now arise in Mr. McKinley's case? For the same reason that makes Mr. Bryan's friends desirous of getting a "hero" on the ticket with him—a feeling, namely, that the idol has feet of clay.

Can Talk Without Stopping to Think.

The exceedingly subdued prediction of victory in the electoral college made by the president's next friend, Congressman Grosvenor, is an admission that Mr. McKinley will be a much weaker candidate than he was in 1896. A margin of only 36 votes, and New York (with 36) reckoned in as surely republican! A miserable comforter is such a prophet. What he makes absolutely clear is that, if the democratic party were in such a position, under such leadership, as it had in 1884 or 1892, McKinley would never be thought of as the republican candidate, or else his candidacy would be considered hopeless from the start. On the other hand, Mr. Bryan would not be thought of after his great defeat of four years ago, and the disappearance of the one issue that made him, unless the weakness of Mr. McKinley encouraged the desperate venture of his second nomination.

So we have the strange spectacle of two great parties each counting less upon its own merits than upon the shortcomings of its adversary. Mr. McKinley's reelection is in doubt, but Bryan will effect it if the thing can possibly be done. Mr. Bryan's candidacy looks like a counsel of despair, but, weak as he is, his opponent may prove weaker. Thus the rival managers are like two generals, admitting that their plan of campaign against each other is rash and unmilitary, and ought not to succeed, yet maintaining that the other is such a fool that anything may be tried with so feeble an antagonist. On one side we are to have a candidate whose principal recommendation is that, as Lowell said, he can talk for two hours

and a half without once stopping to think. On the other we are to have renominated a president whose weakness in office has become a standard theme for the newspaper satirists even of his own party. The "man on horseback," some excited people have pictured him. Rather, he is the man on two horses, going opposite ways.

Weakness Against Weakness.

This rivalry of feeble men, each looking to popular dislike of the other to elect himself, threatens danger to the republican party. We say this, because there are certain principles of human nature involved which make the peril of the disagreeable dilemma greater to the republicans than to the democrats. Disgust, for example, is a stronger motive than vague dread. Men do, in spite of sage advice, fly from the ills they have to evils that they know not of. Thousands of independent and republican voters are, beyond all question, disgusted with President McKinley, for one reason or another. Now, it will not do to rely upon their distrust of Mr. Bryan to prevent them from voting against Mr. McKinley. We hear, for example, of a New England college whose faculty, almost unanimously for McKinley in 1896, will be almost unanimously for Bryan this year. The reason assigned by these professors is that McKinley has betrayed them. They will not be the fool of the Spanish proverb and break a leg twice over the same stone. They consider their first duty to be to punish a great offender, and to meet the public risks involved in his punishment as best they may.

Then there is that touching readiness of the American people to believe any man a hero until he has been tried and found wanting. Why, there were many people four years ago who insisted that Mr. McKinley was a great man? The magic of a nomination for the presidency had transformed him in their eyes. They are undeceived now, but the same process of canonization, no longer possible in his case, is at present being applied to Mr. Bryan. Why condemn a man before he has been tried? Don't you know that the responsibility of office sobers an agitator? Was it not Mirabeau who said that a Jacobin who became Minister was never a Jacobin Minister? All these forms of flattering unctious are available now to Mr. Bryan. The argument from the unknown future, instead of the known past, which made out Mr. McKinley a great man in 1896, is Mr. Bryan's sole property now. Thus in the mere pitting of weakness against weakness, and trusting to the blunders of their opponents, the republican managers may find that they stand to lose more than the other side; and that it is better to rely upon a strong man and a good cause of their own than upon the weak candidate and bad platform of the rival party.