

**REASONLESS DEBATE.**

The Chicago Federation of Labor is gravely discussing the tragically amusing, or amusingly tragic, question as to whether or not the mechanic should be allowed to live longer than 45 years.

Without discussing the sentimental or sociological features of the question, it seems that some men of that age are both useful and ornamental; while others should have been shot long, long before they attained maturity, so far as their being of any real benefit to the world is concerned.

If the Chicago Federation of Labor wishes to air its eloquence in debate, it might take up the old question, "Resolved: That there is more nourishment in a crooked fried-cake than in a straight one," or some proposition of equal depth, and allow the busy mechanic of mature years to proceed with his business, without fear of being snuffed out at about the stage of life when he has become fit to marry and settle down.

If the country should put its whole trust in men who have not reached the age of 45, many a young cub who belongs to the Chicago Federation of Eloquence and gets his father to aid him in securing credit with the tradespeople, would, ere the robins nest again, hear the dolorous rasp of the flour-scoop as it harrows the bottom of the bin, and answer the disconsolate yawn of the empty coal-hod, which keeps him company beside the cheerless, dejected grate.

**HAVE NO FEAR.**

The recent ruling of the post-master-general, with regard to the transportation of second class mail matter, is intended to aid, rather than to hinder, those publishers of bona fide journals who do a legitimate business.

Abuses of the law governing the mailing of second class matter are wholly responsible for the annual postal deficit, of \$12,000,000, and a correction of these abuses would eliminate that deficit, and grow in its stead a surplus of probably \$10,000,000.

The sending of books through the mails as second class matter, and the continual flooding of the country with fictitious publications, whose mission is, not to instruct the reader but simply to serve as an advertising medium, are pointed out as perhaps the most flagrant of the many evasions of the present law.

These evils corrected, a considerable amount of money formerly expended in publishing "fake" journals, will flow into the coffers of those who are engaged in printing periodicals as a business, not as a side-line.

**WORTHY OF ATTENTION.**

President Roosevelt, with his usual directness has made his position on the question of making tariff concessions to Cuba so clear that it cannot be mistaken.

Ex-President Grover Cleveland, and Hon. T. Estrada Palma, president-elect of Cuba, are no less outspoken. Opinions voiced by such men as these must not be passed with contempt, neither must they be laughed down.

Mr. Roosevelt's opinion has been repeatedly given to the public; Mr. Cleveland says:

"The arguments used in opposition to the tariff concessions she implores, based upon our material interests are fallacious, mistaken and misleading, while their source and the agencies of their propagation and spread cannot fail to be recognized by every honest, patriotic citizen with shame and humiliation.

"It seems to me, however, that this subject involves considerations of morality and conscience higher and more commanding than all others.

"The obligations arising from these considerations cannot be better or more forcibly defined than was done by President Roosevelt in his message to congress, nor better emphasized than has been done by Secretary Root, and yet congress waits, while we occasionally hear of concessions which rich sugar interests might approve in behalf of trembling Cuba.

"I do not believe that nations, any more than individuals, can safely violate the rules of honesty and fair dealing.

"Until there is no escape, therefore, I will not believe that, with all our fine words and lofty professions, our embrace of Cuba means a contagion of deadly disease."

Mr. Palma, speaking, as it were, from the other side of the fence, says:

"Looking only two years ahead, I can see a thriving republic just off your shores, our people prosperous and happy, owning their own little homes and having enough money so that we would be spending at least \$150,000,000 a year buying your natural and manufactured products.

"When I think of that picture I cannot bear to look upon the dread alternative of ruin and anarchy."

**A FATAL OMISSION.**

When Mr. John W. Mackay, in behalf of the Commercial Pacific Cable Company, offered to lay and put in operation a submarine cable to the Philippine Islands, he agreed to place the same at the disposal of the government, the rate to be fixed by the post-master general. The cable was to be laid at the least possible cost consistent with the maintenance of a high degree of efficiency; and, should congress so elect, was to be sold to the government, at a valuation to be found by appraisers. The company agreed to release the government from any responsibility in case of war, and

government work was to receive preference over any other, at all times.

To an individual possessing no more than that measure of intelligence commonly referred to as "horse sense," this proposition looks infinitely better than the plan of laying the cable at great expense to the nation, but the superior astuteness of the solons at Washington has caused them to sniff all around the proposition, and finally shy away from it, with the astonishing statement that, in this era of subsidies, when every branch of industry, from the greatest ship yard to the smallest penny-pop-gun factory, demands to be subsidized, the supposedly insane president of this apparently idiotic corporation mildly makes a business proposal, without asking for government aid.

In nervous haste a bill carrying a subsidy of \$300,000 per year for the good Lord knows how many years was prepared; a company was found willing to make a proposition on that basis, and the deal will go through congress on a "tidal wave of patriotic enthusiasm," unless Mr. Mackay's company regains consciousness in time to submit an amended proposition, asking for more money and for a longer time.

Verily congress helps those who help themselves; also helps them to help themselves, in all that the term implies.

**FAIR DAY FRIENDS.**

There are always more covers laid at the ratification banquet than at the nomination dinner, and the torch-light procession assumes more gigantic proportions on the occasion of the post-election function.

This same spirit prevails also among nations. Mark the clamorous demands for recognition which sound across the Atlantic, and the no less noisy protestations of friendship from the antipodes, since the United States stepped into prominence in the political arena of the world.

With England, Germany, Russia, France, Japan, in fact, all nations, kissing our hands and extending felicitations, we are led to wonder as wonders the successful, candidate, where in the world our opponent drew his votes from.

That Spain had the moral, if not tangible, support of one or more of the powers, is certain. Which was it? With this question before us, it would, perhaps, be inadvisable to disband our armies, dismantle our fortifications, and divert the navy to commercial uses, solely on account of the hypocritical plaudits of a band of floaters who, it will be noted, carried no banners in our parade, until the votes had been counted.