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PORTLAND, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18, 1907.

A COMPLEX PROBLEM.

No doubt the argument that the income from the liquor tax is essential to support of government will be ridiculed by prohibitionists; yet it is an argument that has a very practical side. The tax on the manufacture brings into the Treasury of the United States \$150,000,000 a year. What form of taxation would take its place? Direct taxation, undoubtedly, of some kind would fall on a class of people different from that which ultimately pay the liquor tax; yet this class has already plenty of taxes, direct and indirect, to pay. But the Government tax on manufacture, great as the sum produced by it is, is not a bagatelle when compared with the municipal taxes collected from the sale. This runs into hundreds of millions. The little city of Portland alone collects \$325,000 a year, which, if liquor taxation were abandoned, would be added to the direct taxes.

The financial side of this subject is not to be ignored in the discussion of general and local prohibition. It will force itself on general attention and will prove no unimportant factor. Revenue from taxation of liquors, malt, vinous and spirituous, is an important part of the revenues of every great country. The harm done by abuse of liquors is everywhere patent, but in the common sense and judgment of the world there is no difference between use and abuse, and taxpayers will not wish to take on themselves, for a sentiment which all do not share, the vast additional burden of taxes that would be imposed on them. This consideration will certainly be a prominent factor in the debate and in the formation of final opinion. And while it will be said that if sale and consumption of liquors were wholly stopped society would have fewer burdens to carry and fewer charges to meet, it won't be wise to depend on this argument, since, in the long run, the operations of government will be found an expensive as ever. The official system will not be cut down.

On the economic and industrial side, too, there will be much loss. We are brewers and distillers and producers of cereals; we are makers of bottles and barrels and cases; we are carriers by water and rail. Thousands of employers are in these lines of industry and business. Owners of real estate, in large numbers, also have an interest, direct and indirect, in one part or another of this great economic, industrial and financial problem. These facts are mentioned merely to remind such as wish to think of it how important and far-reaching the general problem is. Recalling these various facts, we do not think the people of the United States will, as a whole, accept the prohibition program. It will prevail in many localities, where men vote for prohibition, yet go off at intervals "for a change" to places where prohibition does not prevail. In the country districts, in the smaller towns and cities, there will be prohibition; but elsewhere, in the larger towns and great cities, for multitudinous reasons, some of which we have recounted, it will not prevail. The revenue question is in the industrial question in it; the question of free choice and of dependence is in it. There are always will be multitudes of persons, especially in the larger towns and cities, who will be unwilling to put themselves in leading strings to the state. And all over the state there will be other multitudes who, while willing to join in local prohibition, will not vote for general prohibition. Benton County will give a majority for prohibition in Benton, but will not cast a majority for prohibition in Multnomah. The reason is obvious. Country life and city life have different conditions.

The Oregonian therefore is of the

opinion that prohibition, as a state policy, would not carry in Oregon. It believes such proposition would be defeated by a heavy vote. We do not overlook the fact that it has carried in several of our great Southern States. That, however, is due to the presence therein of a very heavy negro population, which it is desired to keep under control. But it constitutes the very reason why the people of other states, who feel able to control themselves, do not want it. Yet in all these states there are large districts which will enforce prohibition for themselves through local option. They wish and intend to cut out the saloon at home, because it has been conducted in such a way as to make itself a nuisance.

It is not, however, the saloon order for themselves from the city such liquor as they want. Let us be frank about this business and avoid cant and humbug. The people of the United States, speaking at large, do not want prohibition. Nor will they have it. But they do intend to keep the traffic in liquors within closer bounds and regulations than heretofore. It has been too loose, too free and too easy. It has fallen too much into irresponsible hands. Abuses of the saloon, abuses of "treating," with concomitant gambling and other vices, have been carried in our country to an extent elsewhere unknown. The liquor trade has deeply offended the people by its intermeddling with politics. It has been thrown as a solid force for or against candidates, and has provoked just retaliation. The saloon, in many cases, has been permitted to be a "public house" for the characters. "The lid" is going down fast on all these abuses, and on "the revolver habit" that accompanies them. There will be fewer drinking places, and these will be conducted within strict regulations; else the time is too short for the doing of any public drinking places anywhere. In our old and large cities restrictions are more closely enforced than in the smaller ones. It is the small town or village where the police regulations are less strict, and the sense of responsibility less developed among the sellers of liquors, that the abuses are most flagrant. And, moreover, in such places they are under everybody's eyes. About the fringes and outskirts of large cities prohibition by local option makes progress, yet those districts which are not yet under prohibition will not vote for prohibition in the whole city. All these circumstances are part of the whole problem; and there are many more. It is a fiscal, economical, social, political, moral and financial problem, all in one; and therefore it will be a long time yet awhile, and perhaps indefinitely.

IS FRANCE DECADENT?

The problem is one which has been engaging for years the attention of observers and rightly do the historians of France descend on the glorious part she has played in the general work of civilization, of the sympathetic genius which has seized and translated for the world the ideas of reason, justice and all the things of life, private and public; the idealist perseverance whose experiments have saved the world so much suffering and "made of her follies the wisdom of other nations." It is the idea of the brilliant French historian Michelet that his nation died upon the cross in her "Great Revolution," to expiate the crime which she had committed. It is a certain, of deep significance. "All nations had sinned in her way, though not indeed to the same extent. France can even boast, in her fascinating fashion, of having pushed logical tendencies to their vicious extremes in order to show us the danger of going too far. This is the danger that set up dominate literature and thought. In her we may see ourselves—as we should be, and as we might have been."

The vital statistics again call attention to the fact that her population is not virtually on the gain. In 1800 there were only 29,847,847 births, while thirty years ago the number was 260,000. What these figures mean can be seen by comparing them with those of Germany, where the excess of births over deaths last year was 782,839; or Austria, where it was nearly 1,000,000; or Great Britain, where it was 493,878. Germany's present rate of increase is fourteen a thousand, while thirty years ago it was only twelve a thousand. France is short of 400,000 births a year to meet the proportionate increase of other countries. This is a decidedly extraordinary, because while the birth rate in 1906 fell, 34,000 below that of the preceding period, the marriage rate rose by more than 10,000. The divorce factor appears to be unimportant, the number of divorces in 1906 being only 25,000, or less than the average during the preceding decade.

France, then, is becoming sterile. The causes lie in the Great Revolution and in its consequences. Bodley, in his great book on France, explains that the determination of the peasants not to have many children, primarily due to the law which enforced the division of real property among offspring, has become a habit and has encouraged the idea that the land is incapable of supporting even those who already dwell upon it. In nearly three-fourths of the departments of France the population is decreasing. Only the large cities hold their own, with Paris showing some gain.

Again, there is the moral and psychological result of a people which never yet has found a political government to soothe and hold together the elements of the great upheaval. The factions in France are enemies of each other, to an extent elsewhere unknown. All are intensely devoted to France, but co-operation among them is impossible.

It would be absurd to take Mr. Tillman more seriously than he takes himself. The vehement South Carolina orator is by no means a fool; hence it stands to reason that he knows all about the element of vaudeville in his speeches and conduct and values it as an advertisement or for something else. Perhaps he plays low comedy because he likes it, which, after all, is the very best of reasons. In his latest Senatorial diatribe he naves at Mr. Roosevelt because the President has not yet put any of the border ruffians of finance in jail.

Of course, Mr. Tillman knows very well that the President has no power to put anybody in jail but when a man has made up his mind to be abusive one reason serves as well as another. All he needs is a text; the sermon then takes care of itself. The rambunctious Senator talks as if Mr. Roosevelt could issue a lettre de cachet whenever he liked and hale a trust magnate off to a dungeon every minute in the day if he was so disposed. Perhaps he is right, but the country that he has not this prompt remedy at his command. It would not only be most wholesome when applied to the freebooting fraternity who find the courts so sympathetic, but it would also be useful at times in shutting out certain elements which pour out a superfluous stream of sewage. How long would Mr. Tillman remain at large if the President had the power to shut his opponents and critics up in jail?

This is not written to urge that the President be granted the power to issue letters de cachet, but to imagine a case when it would be most refreshing to see him own and exercise it. Such a case would arise when some Senator, say Mr. Tillman or his blood brother, Jeff. Davis No. 2, arose in the Senate and demanded himself, in a stream of vituperation, the impossible reason except to make a sensation; or when some trust orator gravely prints a long list of falsehoods to prove that Mr. Roosevelt created the panic which the buccanniers engineered to wreck his reputation and fill the pockets of the trust magnates. In such cases, if it is hoped that these men almost regret that Mr. Roosevelt has not the power to put them in jail and keep them there until they learn to behave decently. But he has not, and for that reason Mr. Tillman may possess his soul in peace and make his speeches as scandalous as he chooses.

As shown at the recent International Congress of Inventors in New York, about 15,000 applications for patents on various devices await action in the United States Patent Bureau. Five years ago the number of cases thus held up aggregated \$397. To relieve this enormous volume of delayed or neglected business a strong plea was made for a five per cent increase in salaries and office force in the Patent Bureau, which plea

grew, who, with mathematical certainty, figured that in twenty years the natural increase in his flock of chickens would give him something like 200,000,000,000 fowls. "I knew as soon as I learned that my flock would ultimately reach such vast proportions, I took a hatchet and removed the head from each of the birds."

Now, if Western Union should follow out the system of paying dividends with stock and increasing stock for the purpose of paying more dividends it is difficult to foresee the consequences. Someone should apply the hatchet before it is too late.

GOVERNOR HUGHES OF NEW YORK.

Reasons Why He Would Be the Most Available Candidate.
 (Yakima) Wash., Republic.
 The Oregonian says that from now on the minds of Republicans will turn more and more to Governor Hughes of New York, as the most available candidate for President next year. Secretary Taft was for a while the popular favorite. That we believe, was because Mr. Roosevelt seemed to want him chosen. It was not because Mr. Taft had done anything to entitle him to preference, and it was not because he was especially available. The drift of sentiment now is plainly away from him.

The Oregonian points out the reason in half a dozen words—Mr. Taft is a representative of controversies in the Republican ranks.

It ought to be plain, and we think it is, that the Republican party cannot afford to have a man for President who would go into the fight with the bitter opposition of certain factions and elements. Mr. Taft could not get away from this position, nor could Mr. Cannon or Mr. Fairbanks. Mr. Hughes is a man who has no prejudices to overcome. It is true that he is cordially disliked by the bosses of his own state, but the gentlemen have so far been powerless in opposition to him and will have no choice but to support him if he is nominated.

Governor Hughes is one of the most remarkable men of the day, and the most remarkable thing about him is that he has won the absolute confidence of the people of his country without resorting to the use of methods which usually corrupt ambitious public men, and which have been a blight on the career of even Mr. Taft. Mr. Hughes is regarded as absolute integrity is regarded as absolute. He is just as much of a reformer as Roosevelt, and just as honest as Roosevelt. He is not a man who out doubt an able man in some respects than the President, and he has the wonderful knack of compelling the right man to do the right thing. He is the tonic, playing to the galleries or "appealing to the people." He is a man of clear vision. He knows what is right. Knowing the right, he stands for it, and he is not afraid to make mistakes, he asks no concessions, he will listen to no suggestion of compromise. He stands for what is right, and he is not afraid to stand in the wrong if they oppose him.

This remarkable system of playing the political game has enabled him to accomplish remarkable results as Governor of New York. He has won every fight for popular rights, has carried out great reforms and has brought the political machine of that state to its most powerful in the Union—so his foe. He is the most irresistible man who ever occupied the Executive office of New York state, and yet he has never been favored nor sought a promise nor made one.

ARE FRENCH DUELS SERIOUS?

They May Be If Mugged With the Care of a Late Event.
 (New York Sun.)
 The curious attitude of the French mind toward duelling is clearly illustrated by some authoritative comments on a recent meeting. The affair was very distinguished, the principals being men of title and well known sportsmen and all four seconds prominent figures in Paris life. The weapons were pistols and the conditions stringent—four shots to be exchanged at 25 yards within the space of something more than a minute, and four seconds to elapse between the final "bug" "Are you ready?" and the first shot, thus insuring plenty of time for accurate aim. As one at least of the principals was notoriously a dead shot, these conditions made it extremely improbable that both men would leave the ground unscathed unless they fired into the air. They were only too much mock heroes. Both were hit at the first exchange. Neither was killed, however, nor it appears, seriously wounded, though sufficiently disabled to be taken to the hospital. The figure, which is always punctilious about duels and permits no scoffing at them, was especially so in this affair from the pen of its editor, M. Leudet, who is a well known authority on sporting matters. M. Leudet winds up accordingly the triumphant exclamation: "After this no one will be able to laugh at pistol duels!" But he has previously made some revelations, such as seldom appear in print, about the inside of the matter. He says that the fight was not so serious as it appeared. The minds may seem to discount his triumph. He states that the pistols had unusually stiff "pulls" and that the surgeon who had to attend the principals had assumed about the other "precautions" to be taken. "The seconds deserve praise for the pains they took to avoid a disaster without in any way impairing the character of the event. Every duel must possess a certain element of risk, but it is not to be ridiculous."

Seeing that the principals were provided with a doctor, and that the fight was ordered to fire at an unexpected moment the foreigner may fail to understand how "the serious character of the meeting" was not so important as it appears. He would perhaps answer that the principals faced each other's pistols without any knowledge of the "precautions," and so subjectively exposed to a full mortal risk.

WOMAN IN HARD TIMES.

Most Extravagant in Fashion Times, Are Those of Women.
 (Chicago Evening Journal.)
 In November, 1906, there were imported through New York diamonds and other precious stones to the value of \$2,751,471. Last November the imports of these articles totaled only \$2,455, a decrease of \$1,287,722. This change was undoubtedly due to the financial stringency. When money becomes scarce men do not buy jewelry and other expensive luxuries for women; that is evident.

Men's luxuries are cut down, also, but men have very few such extravagancies. If a man has a yacht and automobiles, the chances are that he has them, not for his own pleasure, but for his wife's or for that of his friends. He has the necessary living expenses of even rich men, taken by themselves, amount to very little in comparison with their annual outlay. What, for example, does Stuyvesant Fish care about a palace at Newport and another in New York? But Mr. Fish cares, and so Stuyvesant has them. The fact is that the money spent by the men of the United States is spent for women's benefit.

When a man has money in hand to get women to suffer, whereas men suffer very little, except through sympathy. Tolstoy, in the Kreutzer Sonata, tells of the man who, in the end, is great and splendid shops of the world are great most exclusively for women, dealing in women's goods; and this is as true in Chicago as in Moscow. In hard times women cannot make purchases. Doubtless the dressmakers and furriers of New York and Paris have endured as great losses as the diamond merchants.

MUSIC.

WILLIAM BRUNETTE, the baritone with Fritz Schert, is a fine and successful singer. He was born in Robert Burns, a fact that seemed to have escaped the notice of Portland Scots who very much enjoyed the music of "Mie, Modiste." Brunette is an accomplished musician, has a repertoire of 130 operas, and his voice was trained in the Paris Conservatory. He was the pupil of Ettore Barilli, a half-brother to Adelini Patti. Brunette's smooth emission of tone and correct vocalism are admirable. One of his first professional engagements was with the Metropolitan Opera Company, when the two stars were Patti and Nelli, the tenor. The opera that Brunette particularly figured in was Donizetti's "Roméo and Juliet," in which he was the Count de Paris.

Now, it so happened that the professional wigmaker of the company dearly loved a joke and knowing that Brunette was a stage "greenhorn" at the time, offered to make up the baritone's face for him. Brunette agreed, and white grease paint was used on his face and his cheeks were rouged and whitened to a bristling degree, etc. It so happened that he and Juliet had to "open" by first walking to the footlights and suddenly gazing upon each other. When Patti saw that blue-white face glaring at her in the dim light, she was so shocked that she broke up the joke and was played on the young baritone, and was so agitated with silent laughter that she dropped her handkerchief. But both singers managed to sing their lines. The next day the wigmaker, the handkerchief she had dropped to Brunette, who kept the relic until it was burned with more of his personal effects. In the New York Venetian fire about 12 years ago.

When Brignoli, the great tenor, first came over to this world, he spoke broken English, many phrases in the English language puzzled him greatly. He was very popular among his associates in old Madison square, who were his friends. One day when he arrived at the theater for his rehearsal, morning, his newly-made friends said to him: "Good morning, signor Brignoli. How do you feel? How do you feel now? Better since you've had breakfast?"

"My health quite well—never better," said Brignoli, who had broken English. "I did not know that you people are a race of physicians." Later, when his mistake was explained to him, he laughed heartily.

Sembrich, the prima donna soprano, who is quite a favorite in this city, possesses a voice which would put the average male to shame. The result of her persistent piano practice. On one occasion while riding her Barbary mare along one of the Berlin parade grounds, the animal reared and she fell. She was there was a struggle of about five minutes until Sembrich tamed down the animal. Sembrich did not notice that an interval of time had elapsed. She was obliged to watch her taming process, among the spectators being three army officers on horseback. Suddenly, the tallest of the three rode up to the singer, saluted, and said:

"Madame, if you were not the greatest soprano in the world, you would be the press of the circus." The speaker was Emperor William of Germany.

When John Folis, 58 years old, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Edith Bertram, in Anderson, Ind., a unique character passed away. Mr. Folis had traveled continually for 35 years past in the middle of the continent, and he was old fiddle, and in Mexico played for dances and concerts. Once he dropped his fiddle in the Gulf of Mexico and swam a mile to the shore.

Shortly before he died, surrounded by his children, Mr. Folis had his children open a trunk, and to each he gave a small amount of money. From these money and steeves. Then he called for a Mexican guitar that he carried. In it he put a hole, extracted the seed and equally dividing he gave 12 to each of his children.

"Now tune the fiddle," said the dying man to his oldest son. Mr. Folis was given the fiddle, and he played across the strings of the instrument the old fiddler passed away.

Fannie Bloomfield Zetser, the pianist, has been receiving ovations remarkable for their warmth, wherever she has played this season.

A cable message from Paris is to the effect that Ethel Altman, the young Philadelphia pianist, was very successful at her professional debut there recently. Miss Altman's recital was given by a soloist for one of the Philadelphia Orchestra's concerts.

Charles Bond, of Boston, who paid for the musical education of Gertrude Farrar, for two seasons soprano soloist with Sousa's Band, has been invited to visit Chamberlayne to Europe, and he expects that she will become equally as famous as Miss Farrar.

Having quarreled with her husband, Princess Victoria, of Thurn and Taxis, of Austria, the Princess Josephine has joined the singing section of a chorus on Broadway. She is a soprano, and she has taken this means of earning her living. Before her marriage to the Prince she was Mrs. William Pike, of Chicago, and before that she was Miss Josephine West, of Jacksonville, Fla.

"Musical America," in a dispatch from Pittsburgh, announces that at a recent concert there were several women present to remove their hats. The women who did not wish to comply with the request went to the rear of the house.

Unfriendly relations still exist between Miss Roscoe Elliot, the soprano, and Helmholtz Corbett, according to the soprano herself. Miss Corbett has been out of the city for some time, in which she asserted that he had not kept his contract with her.

This season it was thought that the opera war had abated, but Miss Corbett's action has not settled the case. The soprano has made arrangements for several engagements, and it is expected that Miss Corbett's contract such engagements were to be made only with his sanction. Consequently it is expected that Miss Corbett's appearance at one of these concerts will bring the various issues to the attention of the court.

Mrs. Corbett's action for \$20,000 against the Metropolitan Opera Company for breach of contract and Mr. Corbett's retaliatory action for an injunction are on their respective calendars of the Supreme Court awaiting trial.

A new \$20,000 pipe organ, the largest on the Pacific Coast, is being built for St. Dominic's Church, San Francisco, and it will have 6023 pipes, and it is expected that Dr. H. J. Stewart will be continued organist. The opening recital will occur Christmas day.

CONGRESS ALLOWED.

Congress allowed. A much larger increase is now urged in order that this greater volume of delayed business may be brought up. Perhaps if the number of hours a day that Government employees are required to work were increased to a reasonable limit, and superannuated men and fagged-out women who hold positions under civil service regulations were superseded by active, effective, competent workers, the desired end might be attained without a horizontal increase in the cost of doing business to the employees. If all hands could be induced to work for three months, as the accountants in an ordinary wholesale hardware house that is doing a heavy business, this great volume of delayed patent business would doubtless disappear.

Very appropriately, the Railway Critic, published in the interests of the transportation companies of America, remarks that there is a great deal of the "friendly" in the case of the City Railway Company of New York. It was reported that a "friendly" creditor applied to a "friendly" court and secured the appointment of a "friendly" receiver. No doubt the "friendly" receiver employed a "friendly" lawyer and the bonds of friendship among those on the inside were unbroken. It was this "friendly" attitude among the managers that made the mutual robbery operations possible. It is quite to be expected that the continued "friendly" relations will permit the robbery to go on in the future and cover up and protect the thefts of the past. The chief cause for regret is that the "friendly" attitude among the managers that made the mutual robbery operations possible. 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