

STEPHENS BILL PROTECTS PUBLIC

Aimed at Dishonest Advertising
and False Pretenses.

TO AID HONEST BUSINESS.

Measure Will Prevent Injury to Small
Cities and Towns From Cutthroat
Monopolistic Methods of Mail Order
Houses and Big City Stores—Will In-
sure Uniform Prices and High Quality.

By W. BOB HOLLAND.

"A bill to protect the public
against dishonest advertising and
false pretenses in advertising."

This is the comprehensive title of a
measure introduced in the present con-
gress by Representative Dan V. Steph-
ens of Nebraska. A similar bill has
been introduced in the senate by Sen-
ator Ashurst of Arizona. No one can
find fault with legislation that will
achieve the objects stated in the title
of the Stephens-Ashurst bill. "The public
certainly needs protection against
dishonest advertising and false pre-
tenses in merchandising."

The bill now under consideration is
the successor of the Stevens bill, a
measure introduced in the last con-
gress by Representative Stevens of
New Hampshire. It was widely dis-
cussed and died in committee after
several public hearings, at which its
merits and demerits were considered.
The Stephens bill embodies the changes
that seemed advisable after these
hearings and discussions, and it is be-
lieved that in its present form it safe-
guards the producer, the merchant and
the consumer.

For many years the right of a pro-
ducer to contract with merchants for
the resale of his products at standard,
uniform prices was generally recog-
nized and its legality was not ques-
tioned. Then the supreme court of the
United States held that such a contract
was "in restraint of trade" and
"against public policy." The court di-
vided on the question, 5 to 4, and the
majority found no specific law forbid-
ding the practice that had long been
common, but held that congress had
intended the Sherman law to prohibit
such business methods.

Agency System Is Legal.

This court made law upon long es-
tablished custom, but it does not pre-
vent the end sought from being reached
by other means. Producers who
wish to have no discrimination shown to
favored individuals can insure uni-
form prices for their goods by estab-
lishing branch establishments or by
appointing agents. This is the method
followed by manufacturers of auto-
mobiles. Bakers who sell their products
within a restricted area can also regu-
late their prices by making grocers
their agents and thereby retaining title
to their bread and rolls until they
reach the consumer.

Producers of other articles, goods
sold in small quantities and which
must depend on established merchants
for their distribution, are denied the
right that men in other lines have. The
Stephens-Ashurst bill is designed to re-
store to these producers a protection
they had before it was taken away
from them by the supreme court.

Cut rate department stores, so called
"chain" drug and grocery stores in the
large cities, and mail order houses use
cut prices on standard, well known
articles to draw trade away from
small stores and small towns. The
loss they may suffer on these stand-
ard articles is more than made up by
the high profits on anonymous goods or
goods put up under their own brands.
In this way the producer is injured
because the reputation of his product
is ruined; the retail merchant is dam-
aged because he cannot afford to ad-
vertise widely a special bargain "bait"
to attract customers to whom other
goods may be sold at a profit; the con-
sumer is damaged because producers
are not encouraged to maintain qual-
ity and because inferior articles are
substituted.

Ample Protection Afforded.

The Stephens-Ashurst bill is not
compulsory. To take advantage of its
provisions the producer must register
his trademark or special brand with
the bureau of corporations in Wash-
ington and must pay a fee of \$10. He
must not have a monopoly of articles
belonging to the same general class of
merchandise, and he must not agree
with any competitor to control prices.
The producer must also file a sched-
ule giving the prices at which his listed
article is sold to wholesalers, to retail-
ers and to the consumer. This sched-
ule of prices becomes a public docu-
ment. The prices scheduled must be
uniform to buyers under similar cir-
cumstances. This permits reduction in
prices for quantity purchases and al-
lows to equalize freight rates.

A merchant who decides to quit busi-
ness, who wishes to discontinue any
line of listed goods or who becomes
bankrupt must first offer such listed
articles to the manufacturers for re-
demption at the full price paid. Should
the manufacturers neglect or refuse to
redeem the goods then the dealer can
sell them at any price he desires or can
get. Damaged goods must also be of-
fered for exchange or redemption, and
if later offered for sale at reduced
prices the reason for the reduction
must be made known to purchasers.
There is also a clause permitting sea-
sonable sales.

DETECTING A FORGERY.

A Game at Which the Scientists of
Germany Are Masters.

In all questions of disputed docu-
ments, forgery or alterations of
written instruments and the like the
German scientific departments are of
inestimable value to the police. The
age of a writing can be determined,
and consequently the time at which
the writing was made can be precisely
arrived at.

In order for a forger successfully
to impose on the German authori-
ties he would be compelled to have
for his alterations the identical ink in
which the original documents were
written. Proper chemical tests show a
brilliant change in the colors of cer-
tain inks. Thus logwood inks treated
by the hydrochloric test give purple-red
reactions, while iron nutgall inks show a
blue-green color under this test. When
all the data in respect to commercial inks
are assembled and known any sort of
false alteration becomes an exceedingly
hazardous business.

The paper used in frauds of this
character has also been the subject of
elaborate study and experiment.

All water marks on paper are
known, with the dates and issues
corresponding to any peculiarity or
defect in the mark, so that, though
one might be able to obtain paper of
identical water marks corresponding
to the original of the forged in-
strument, nevertheless defects in the
issue of the paper of that year might
not be known to the forger. These
defects of a particular issue, known
to the scientific department of the
police, would disclose the fraud.

It is well known that water marks
on paper may be imitated by several
devices. But such imitations would
be quickly detected in the laboratory
at police headquarters in Berlin or
by any competent expert. —Melville
Davisson Post in Saturday Evening Post.

The "White Kings."

Purple has always been considered
the royal color. The ill fated
Charles I. was, however, at his own
desire, crowned in a robe of white,
although he was seriously reminded
that of the two exceptions to this
rule, Richard II. and Henry VI.,
who wore white satin robes at their
coronations, both had come to a vi-
olent end, one at Pontefract castle
and one in the Tower. Charles I.
was resolute in his decision, and
when, twenty-three years afterward,
almost to a day, his body was con-
veyed to its grave through a heavy
snowstorm the superstitious could
not help remarking that the third
"white king" had suffered a violent
death. —St. James' Gazette.

Duration of a Dream.

One evening Victor Hugo was
dictating letters to his secretary.
Overcome by fatigue, the great man
dropped into a slumber. A few
moments afterward he awoke,
haunted by a dream which, as he
thought, had extended over several
hours, and he blamed his secretary
for sitting there waiting for him
instead of waking him or else go-
ing away. What was his surprise
when the bewildered secretary told
him that he had only just finished
writing the last sentence dictated to
him.

An Object Lesson.

"I shouldn't care to be the wife
of a man who never smoked."
"Well, it is comfortable to see
one's husband sitting down after
dinner to enjoy his cigar, and, be-
sides, there is something rather
soothing about the aroma of good
tobacco."

"Oh, I don't care about the com-
fort of it or the aroma, but as long
as my husband smokes it will al-
ways be so easy to tell him how to
begin when he insists that we have
got to economize." —Exchange.

A Slip at Whistler.

A young San Franciscan, the
owner of a large and valuable col-
lection of autographs, once wrote to
James McNeill Whistler, politely re-
questing his signature. The letter
was sent in care of the London Royal
Academy, with which the famous
American painter was at odds. After
four months the letter was re-
turned to the San Francisco ad-
dress from the dead letter office in
Washington. Covering the envelope
was the word, repeated numberless
times, "Unknown."

No Wonder.

"How was it Dr. Knowit got such
a big fee from Talkative?"
"Because when he was called to
attend Mrs. Talkative for a slight
nervous trouble he told her she had
an acute attack of inflammatory ver-
bosity."
"Well?"
"And recommended absolute quiet
as the only means of averting para-
lysis of the vocal cords. She's
scared dumb." —Baltimore Ameri-
can.

STANDARD PRICES AID COMPETITION

The Stephens Bill Encourages
Rivalry in Quality.

REAL BENEFIT TO PUBLIC.

False Pretense in Merchandising as
Practiced by Big City Stores Is Meth-
od Used to Injure Small Dealers and
to Destroy Small Towns—Dishonesty
Can't Benefit Consumers.

The true competition is between
rival articles, a competition in ex-
cellence, which can never be main-
tained if, through the perfidy of the
retailer who cuts prices for his
own ulterior purposes, the manu-
facturer is forced to compete in
prices with goods of his own pro-
duction, while the retailer re-
coups his losses on the cut price
by the sale of other articles at, or
above, their reasonable price. IT IS
A FALLACY TO ASSUME
THAT THE PRICE CUTTER
POCKETS THE LOSS. THE
PUBLIC MAKES IT UP ON
OTHER PURCHASES. Fixing
the price on all brands of high
grade flour is a very different thing
from fixing the price on one brand
of high grade flour. The one
means destruction of all competi-
tion and of all incentive to in-
creased excellence. The other means
heightened competition and inten-
sified incentive to increased ex-
cellence.

This language, used by the supreme
court of the state of Washington in a
unanimous decision of the case of the
Fisher Flouring Mills Co. versus C. A.
Swanson, clearly sets forth the in-
terest the consumer has in maintain-
ing the highest form of competition—that
of quality. Competition in price re-
sults in inferior quality and the evil
of substitution. Dishonest advertisers
use cut prices on standard and widely
known merchandise to lure customers
into their establishments, where an
effort will be made to sell anonymous
goods.

The genuine bargain is used as "bait"
to spread the impression that all mer-
chandise is sold at the same low mar-
gin of profit. If this impression can be
created the cut rate merchant can sell
unknown goods at as high a figure
as his conscience will permit him to
charge—and his conscience is elastic.
Nearly every man's is more or less so
where profits are concerned.

A Bill to Protect the Public.
Representative Dan V. Stephens of
Nebraska and Senator William F. Ash-
urst of Arizona have introduced in
congress "a bill to protect the public
against dishonest advertising and false
pretenses in merchandising." A simi-
lar measure was introduced in the last
congress by Representative Stevens of
New Hampshire.

It ought to be axiomatic that the public
cannot profit through dishonesty or
through false pretenses. The individual
may make a pecuniary gain; thieves,
burglars and confidence men occa-
sionally escape paying the penalty of
their crimes and are peculiarly bet-
ter off. But the public, the victims of
the successful criminals, loses.

The Stephens-Ashurst bill provides
for standard and uniform prices on
articles sold under a trademark or spe-
cial brand, with the widest possible
publicity for buyers and sellers. Oppo-
nents of the bill—adherents of dishon-
est advertising and users of false pre-
tenses in merchandising—have de-
clared that it will encourage monopoly
and prevent competition. They have
tried to make consumers believe that
it will increase the cost of living, that
it will raise the price of everything
sold in any sort of store.

No Monopoly Possible.
The bill does not encourage mono-
poly, because producers who have a
monopoly of any particular line or who
make an agreement with a competitor
to maintain prices are barred from
taking advantage of the privilege of
preventing discrimination by contract-
ing for the resale of their goods at uni-
form prices. A monopoly, no matter
how it is gained, cannot do business
under the terms of the Stephens bill.

On the other hand, cutthroat com-
petition in price has always been the
chief weapon of monopoly.
The bill will not raise prices and in-
crease the cost of living. Producers
already have the right to sell their
goods at wholesale at any price they
can get, at what they are worth. The
proposed legislation merely permits the
producer to control the retail price, and
if he puts this too high—higher than
the public is willing to pay—then his
goods will not be sold and he loses.

The cut price storekeeper that sells
goods at a loss does not stand the loss;
he passes it on to his customers. What
he loses on one article is made up, or
more than made up, on another. The
use of cut prices on standard articles
for the purpose of drawing customers
into the store with the intention of
selling them something else, that is
where "dishonest advertising" is found
and where "false pretenses in mer-
chandising" injures the public.

Cut rates by big department stores
enable them to kill off the small store
and the small towns. Those residents
of rural communities, villages and the
lesser cities who want to see their
home folks injured that the large cities
may grow richer and larger should
naturally oppose the Stephens bill.
Those who desire to see their own
communities prosper should support the
principle of uniform standard prices.

THE LIVING SPONGE.

Its Curious Structure and the Way It
Gathers in Its Food.

A living sponge is a kind of cell
city. If you can imagine thousands
of Siamese twins all joined into one
composite body you will have an
idea of the kind of multiplex animal
that a sponge is.

Formerly many thought that
sponges were a kind of seaweed.
They grow attached to rocks, shells
and other objects in the water and
nearly all live in the sea, although
there is a fresh water species called
spongilla. The skeleton or frame-
work of a sponge is formed in some
species of carbonate of lime (which
constitutes the greater part of our
own bones), in other species of silica,
a flinty substance, and in still
others of a hornlike material.

Sponges manage to draw their
food within their reach by setting
up currents in the water. If you
and your family were microscopic
organisms, dwelling in the neigh-
borhood of a sponge, you might
some morning find that you were
being swept along by a gentle cur-
rent, as soothingly unobtrusive of
its real import as the little shore
eddies a mile above Niagara, and
when, too late, you awoke to the sit-
uation you would be rushing
through a crooked tube, with hun-
dreds of cilia (living hairs) reaching
for you from every side, and you
and yours would quickly become the
subjects of "intracellular diges-
tion." Professor Thomson gives
this very graphic description of the
way in which a cup shaped sponge
lives:

"The particles are drawn in
through minute pores all over the
surface of the sponge. They pass
into the cavity of the cup, and they
are driven out again in a stream
from the large upper aperture. To
what are the currents due? Obvi-
ously to the lashing activity of the
ciliated cells.

"The community is Venice-like,
penetrated by canals. By these
food and other necessities are con-
tinually supplied to the houses, or
cells, on the banks, and a constant
current is sustained by the life of
the city." —Garrett P. Serviss in
Spokane Spokesman-Review.

The Dinner Hour.

The hour for dinner has under-
gone several changes. About 1400
it was 10 a. m. Henry VIII. dined
at this time and supped at 4. In
the sixteenth century dinner was at
11, breakfast at 7 and supper at 5
or 6. In the following century
meals were an hour later. Disraeli
tells us that in the reign of Francis
I. of France folks went to 5, dined
at 9, supped at 5 and went to bed at
9, which, according to a popular
saying, made them live to be ninety-
nine. Louis XII., it is said, hast-
ened his death by altering his hours
to please his young wife. Instead
of dining at 8 a. m. and going to
bed at 6 p. m. he took to dining at
noon and often sat up till midnight.

Old Tin Can.

Malaria experts of the United
States health service have found
that discarded tin cans containing
rainwater are breeding places for
the mosquito, which is the sole
agent in spreading malaria.

A hole in the bottom of the empty
tin can might have resulted in
the saving of a human life. Cer-
tainly it would have assisted in pre-
venting a debilitating illness. Em-
pty tin cans have no business about
the premises anyway, but if we
must so decorate our back yards let
us see to it that the can has a hole
in the bottom.

Instinct of the Mudfish.

The remarkable instinct of the
mudfish to roll himself in a ball of
mud when the dry season approaches
is a wonderful provision of na-
ture intended solely, it would seem,
to prevent the extinction of the spe-
cies. The most interesting fact
about this fish is that it breathes by
means of its gills when in its na-
tive element and by means of lungs
during its voluntary imprisonment
in the mud cocoon.

Meanings of Several Names.

Asia means morning or east; Eu-
rope, evening or west; Australia
means lying to or in the south;
hence we may consider that these
names mean eastern land, western
land and southern land. Asia is a
Greek word, Europe is a Hebrew
word, and Australia is a Latin word.
The origin of the word Africa is un-
certain. Some conjecture that it is
a Semitic word meaning "land of
wanderers."

His Text and His Talk.

Bishop X. had officiated in the
college chapel, and, though his dis-
course was most excellent in itself,
it had no obvious connection with
the text. At dinner Professor Y.
was asked his opinion of the bishop's
sermon. "Dear old apostle!" he
exclaimed, "it was truly apostolic!"
He took a text and then went
everywhere preaching the gospel.

WHEN IS A PUMP NOT A PUMP?

When It Is a "Shadoof" or Egyptian
Water Lifting Machine.

"When is a pump not a pump?"
is not proposed as a puzzle, but seri-
ously asked as a question which ex-
pects the answer, "When it is a
shadoof."

That would be wrong, however,
as the shadoof fulfills the dictio-
nary requirement that a pump shall
be a mechanical device for raising
a fluid from a lower to a higher
level and also fulfills, albeit slowly
and laboriously, the irrigation pur-
poses for which during some thou-
sands of years it has been used in
the east.

The construction of the shadoof
is simple. Sometimes a single up-
right is used—a tree trunk or a col-
umn of mud or of cornstalks stiffen-
ed with mud. Sometimes there are
two uprights bearing a crosspiece,
with perhaps a cradle for the sup-
port of one or two poles. In either
case a fulcrum is provided with a
long pole to which at one end is
fastened a leather bucket and at the
other a counterweight of mud or
stone.

At many points in the Nile's
course the water must be raised
twenty or thirty feet before it can
be emptied into the grooves cut in
the bank, through which it must
run into the tiny channels that
serve to irrigate the land of the
delta. As a single shadoof can
raise water to a height of but six
or seven feet, these laborious con-
trivances must frequently be work-
ed in series. Each bucketful of
water, in amount two and one-half
gallons, must then be handled three
or four times by the fellahin, or
Egyptian peasants, standing at vari-
ous levels upon the bank. Yet by
this means, at the rate of 1,800 cu-
bic feet per ten hour day, the irri-
gation of millions of acres in the
Nile region is accomplished.

In China also and in former
times by the Romans and Anglo-
Saxons these machines were em-
ployed for irrigation and for other
purposes. Even the primitive dor-
ries, by which, as Herodotus sup-
poses, the huge stones of the Egyptian
pyramids were swung into
place were similar, but of heavier
construction. —Edison Monthly.

The Poor Man.

A man sent to an insane asylum
with a load of coal found on his ar-
rival the gates were open; but, not
knowing where to deposit the fuel,
he left his horse and cart outside
while he went to inquire. He walked
about the grounds, but failed to
see any one, so made his way back
to the gates, but to his horror found
they were closed. He tried in vain
to open them and appealed to pass-
ersby to help him, as the horse and
cart belonged to him. "Fancy," said
one passerby to another, "that poor
man thinks he is a carter!" —Lon-
don Ideas.

Why Insect Pests Increase.

How are we to protect the trees
and crops against insect pests?
Millions of dollars are spent every
year in spraying trees, cleaning their
cavities, etc., and still year after
year injurious insects appear and
multiply so rapidly that they threat-
en the destruction of crops and seri-
ous injury to shade trees. One re-
ason for this is that man in his reck-
less slaughter of birds and other in-
sect eating animals has disturbed
the balance of nature, and the con-
sequence is an appalling increase of
insect life. —W. L. Finley in Coun-
try Life.

Curing a Snake Bite.

This is how the Indians of Cen-
tral America cure a snake bite:
They pin the unlucky patient to the
ground and wind strong creepers
above and below the bite until they
cut into the flesh. Then they ap-
ply a live coal to the wound to cau-
terize it and follow that up by rub-
bing in a mixture of chewed tobacco
and crushed garlic. By this time
the victim is nearly mad with pain
and ready to kill everybody in sight,
especially when he finds, as he often
does, that the snake was not
venomous.

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