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Hearst's Chicago American of a recent issue contained the following editorial, which has created no little comment on the part of the press generally because of the fact that it shows a spirit of fairness which does not always characterize the American's editorials. It says:

"It would be a misfortune to the country if the few big papers in the big cities should interfere seriously with the publication of the valuable and intelligent local newspapers—for upon these local newspapers the welfare of the country very largely depends. The metropolitan daily cannot possibly know the needs of the various localities and small cities. Only the local newspapers can protect local needs and influence local opinion. Of course we are very glad to have as many people as possible read the Chicago American in the big cities and the little cities. But we hope that in every small town and every village there will be enough intelligence and public spirit on the part of the local inhabitants to support earnestly and enthusiastically the best local newspaper, giving encouraging approbation and a good living to the local editor, who alone can represent and defend justice and public spirit among his neighbors. The man is unfortunate who cannot afford to take two newspapers at today's prices. He who can afford only one newspaper, in our opinion should display his sense of duty to his locality by taking the local newspaper."

News columns of eastern papers give evidence of considerable attention being paid to the exposure of blackmail methods that have been pursued in New York City for some time by certain notorious and noxious publications of that city, and surprise is expressed that prominent business and social men should submit to the terms laid down by such publications. And yet the very same method of blackmail has been practiced in Washington at the beginning of every congress for the past ten years or more, and there has been no outcry from a single victim or intended victim. United States senators, rather than run the risk of being roasted or shown up, have gone into their pockets for anywhere from \$100 to \$1000 every two years, at the dictation of as bold and villainous scoundrels as ever worked a flim-flam in that city. At the beginning of every congress these bunco artists appear in the capitol,

call on the various senators, represent that they are going to issue some book on the lives of all senators. Each senator is asked to furnish his portrait "which the company will publish free of cost if you have a copper plate engraving." Of course no senator has a copper plate, so it costs him anywhere from \$50 to \$500 for the plate. Something extra is thrown in for writing up a creditable biography. But there is not alone one holdup artist of this sort; there are usually three or four at the opening of every congress, and it is a graft that is worked as regularly as congress convenes.

Life insurance costs too much by far in America. This is the great lesson of the Equitable scandal. The public may demand that state or nation run the insurance business. In Germany the government's industrial insurance is run at a cost for administration of only 7 per cent. of the receipts, in England the cost is only 9 per cent of receipts in the government's ordinary life insurance, but in the average American company it is 34 per cent. Out of every dollar paid for life insurance in this country 34 cents goes for expenses, while government insurance in England is run at one-fourth this expense. America may well take a lesson in life insurance from Germany and England. It is too sacred an institution to be allowed to continue without suitable regulations in the interest of the insured.

THE PLEA OF THE PIRATES.

(Oregonian.)

Had Governor La Follette made the same remark a few years ago which he made at Galesburg the other day, he would have been numbered thenceforth among incendiary anarchists. "I should like," said the governor, "to have a hand in hanging Stayvesant Fish." The nation does not shudder; it merely wonders why Mr. La Follette should limit his sanguinary impulse to Stayvesant Fish out of the great multitude who are ripe for the halter. Indeed, a very audible sigh of regret ascends from the American people that the belligerent reformer cannot proceed from the wish to its fulfillment. Nevertheless, Stayvesant Fish is a great man and Mrs. Stayvesant Fish is something more than a great lady. He is president of the Illinois Central railroad, and she has declined to be the wife of the president of the United States. To be sure, she declined without being asked, but it is the feeling of the heart, we must remember, that counts, not the external circumstances.

Later, and at a Chautauqua Assembly, too, where incendiary utterances must fall on the timidly correct congregation, one would suppose, like a band of pirates upon a nunnery, Mr. La Follette violently denounced that pillar of the church, the college and society, John D. Rockefeller. It is added in the account that what he said was applauded. Trifling in themselves, such facts as these are far from trivial when they must be taken as symptoms of a profound ethical revolution in the nation. They are the surface wavelets which tell something of a deep disturbance in the ocean of society. It is not unlikely that the American people are feeling just now the initial stirrings of a tremendous revival. Not a revival of ecclesiasticism, but of vital and efficient righteousness. That this is coming there are many signs. The enduring popularity of Theodore Roosevelt, who is a righteous man in the sense of Matthew Arnold and the Hebrew prophets, is one sign. It is another, most ominous for evildoers in high places, that the wrath of the people against them does not burn itself out. The public does not weary of the continuous flood of exposure and de-

nunciation in the newspapers. As people wake to the meaning of it, they are fascinated and enraged. They are stricken with the wholesome, old-fashioned conviction of sin, not in the gratters only, but in themselves. A whole nation is crying "Lord, be merciful unto us miserable sinners." The belief is coming home to all of us that if Diogenes were to set out with his candle today to find an honest man, he would be still less successful than he was in Athens two thousand years ago. The nation sickens of its moral filth.

How will it fare with pillars of society like Fish and Rockefeller in that day of wrath which seems to be at hand? No sane person looks for a bloody, and, possibly, richly deserved, retribution upon these men; but there is going to be a fearful coming to judgment of some sort. What can they say in their defense? They can say, for one thing, that they are symptoms, rather than causes, of the national disease. Rockefeller can successfully plead in reply to Miss Tarbell, for example, who indicts him again in the August McClure's, that he has not made the nation dishonest but, rather, that the dishonesty of the nation gave him his opportunity to achieve his bad eminence in piracy. He was born into corruption, and, like the larvae of certain insects, he found it uniquely adapted to his nature, and threw in it. Not one of his schemes could have been manned or executed in a community of sound moral ideas. All of them must have failed in a country where adequate laws were faithfully enforced. Mr. Rockefeller found the law neither adequate to cover the conditions of modern commerce, nor enforced when its antiquated rules did apply. For every principle of law he found a method of evasion with as good or better standing in the courts. He has used the law as an apparatus for plunder; but he found law and lawyers ready to his hand. He created neither of them. Nor has he ever failed to find plenty of helpers in all his predatory undertakings.

With the soul of a miser and the intellect of a Bacon, Mr. Rockefeller was born at a time when lax morals and inadequate laws invited avarice to plunder. He accepted the invitation with determined zeal, and for many years he spent all his energy in devouring his abundant and easy prey. A student of the evolution of Mr. Rockefeller would naturally call this the larva, or grub, period of his life. The student would also expect to see him emerge from this lowly estate, as all grubs do, and soar above the earth as a winged creature. Mr. Rockefeller, and all his genius, try very hard to complete their evolution and show themselves as something of a finer nature than mere devourers. No one enjoys the hatred of his kind. In these men the hunger for approbation even overcomes their avarice, and, without forsaking their evil ways, they pay enormous sums to buy the praise, or at least, the silence, of those who lead public opinion. They find both the praise and the silence for sale; but they find also that in this matter public opinion will not be led. It moves more and more strongly toward condemnation and begins to repudiate the leaders who would, as it thinks, mislead. These criminals, who have so long defied the law and despised the rules of manly fair dealing, and who now wish to pose as philanthropists and benefactors of humanity, hear nothing from the great public but sneers and satire. They may ultimately hear something worse, for the American people are growing impatient of hypocrisy. But, whatever may fall, they are entitled to plead that the nation which now condemns them tempted them to commit their misdeeds by its own inadequate laws, pliant judiciary and lax morals.

WHITE WATER IN THE OCEAN.

Regular Phenomenon Witnessed at Rare Intervals in the Tropical Regions.

Of the many sights witnessed in the oceans of the globe, one of the most curious and most weird is that described by sailors as "the milky sea," ships being surrounded for several hours by water that appears to be a snowy whiteness. Compiled from experiences recorded during the last 70 years, an interesting account of the phenomenon is given on the North Atlantic and Mediterranean Pilot Chart. The spectacle is restricted to the darkness of night and rare occasions, and, while it is limited mainly to the warmer waters of the tropical belt, it appears to be more common in the Indian ocean than in the Atlantic and Pacific. From the white water the light is so strong that ordinary newspaper print can be read on board ship, but the scene all around is of an awe-inspiring description. The horizon is blotted out, sea and sky seem to become one in a sort of universal luminous fog, which, like a London fog, robs the observer of the sense of distance and direction, the deck being lit up with a ghastly, shadowless light. Last June off the west coast of South America a bucket of the white water emptied back into the sea resembled molten lead. This curious sight has interested scientific investigators, Darwin among them; but while it is, no doubt, related to the many phosphorescent displays common at sea, there is no difficult explanation forthcoming of this particular manifestation or of the singular atmospheric effects resulting from it.

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