

will counterbalance the greater amount of time demanded by his less facile methods of writing out exercises in linguistic and ciphering in mathematical branches; so that in taking the regular course at academy or university, he will require, all in all, neither more time nor more labor than the average student.

Of not less value in after life is this extraordinarily trained and developed memory. It enables the blind to derive from lectures, conversation, and general reading ten times the benefit of others, on whose minds a single mention of facts and thoughts makes little or no impression.

Thus the law of compensation is seen working in all things, making good on one hand, approximately at least, what is wanting on the other; not by the special mysterious interference of Providence or other power with natural conditions and processes, for the benefit of the individual, as many claim, but through the inevitable sequence of cause and effect, by which senses and faculties become, through unusual training, abnormally developed and their value radically enhanced.

Edward B. Perry.

Sugar.*

PROBABLY most of those who are classed as free-traders or revenue reformers, if they could fix the policy of the country in accord with their own theories, would retain the duty on sugar, because it yields a very large revenue easily collected and widely distributed, the protective feature being relatively small; for although the duty is high, being more than 100 per cent. *ad valorem* at the present time, the amount of sugar produced in this country is so small that it may be accounted a *quantité négligeable*. Some of this class, among whom the writer is one, consider the fact that sugar is an article of universal consumption (being a common and almost necessary kind of food among the poor as well as the rich) the strongest argument for reducing the duty, the condition of the national treasury admitting of large remissions of taxes. Accordingly, when we are told by the sugar protectionists that we are paying \$48,000,000 per annum in sugar taxes to the Government, in order that the Louisiana planters may get only \$7,000,000 by the enhanced price,—a total burden on the consumers of \$55,000,000,—we reply that the means are immensely disproportionate to the end, because if we could get our sugar free of tax, we could pay the \$7,000,000 and still save \$48,000,000. If we are really paying nearly seven dollars in order that the Louisiana planters may get one dollar, hardly anything could be more wasteful and extravagant. This is upon the supposition that the Government can now afford to dispense with the sugar tax altogether. It can easily afford to do so if it leaves the other sources of revenue untouched; but as it is almost certain that the internal taxes on tobacco will be repealed, it would not be prudent to wholly abolish the sugar duties until some time shall have elapsed sufficient to show the fiscal effect of that measure, together with a reduction of say one-half of the sugar tax. That the sugar duties will be entirely repealed within a very few years there can be little doubt. The outgivings of leading protectionist statesmen

like Senators Sherman and Dawes should be taken as fair notice of what is coming. With the question of bounties to compensate the planters for the loss of the protection to which they are accustomed, I do not purpose to deal in this article, except to express the opinion that even if such bounties should be allowed they would not be of long duration, and that those who advocate them can hardly expect them to be so.

In reply to the argument that the taxpayers are committed to continue paying a bonus to the sugar planters,—or to any other class, for that matter,—because they have paid it so long that the recipients have become accustomed to it and think they cannot get on without it, it strikes me that equity rather requires the repayment of some part of the \$7,000,000 per annum that has been so long contributed to the Sisyphean task of putting sugar on a self-sustaining basis in this country. The United States makes no contracts with industries, express or implied, to “carry” them beyond the next election. Taking the most favorable view of the claim made in behalf of the planters, the contract was never made to bolster them up or to bolster up any trade indefinitely. It would be safe to challenge anybody to find any speech in Congress, since the foundation of the Government, advocating a policy of perpetual protection to sugar or to anything. Nor can any such thing be found in any national platform of any political party. The doctrine of implied powers has been pretty well stretched at times, but the doctrine of an implied contract to pay \$7,000,000 per year in perpetuity to the cultivators of less than 200,000 acres of land in Louisiana is rather too absurd for serious discussion.

There are many duties the repeal of which would be equally, perhaps more, advantageous to the taxpayers than the repeal of the sugar duties; as, for example, those on cheap blankets and low woolen goods, ranging from 100 to 116 per cent. *ad valorem*. This article does not profess to deal with the tariff question at large.

Horace White.

The Incompetence of Legislative Bodies.

THE important question of to-day is that arising from the realization of the general incompetence of legislative bodies, the appreciation of the need of some change, and the query, What shall that change be? Legislatures are now meeting once a year, or in some States once in two years. A great bulk of statutes, most of them worthless, many of them dangerous and injurious, is passed at every session. The statute-books are becoming cumbered with numberless laws, whose only excuse for existence is a negative one, that they are harmless. It may be safely stated, that in most of the States hardly more than a statute a year is absolutely needed. The same may be said of Congress. It passes what is questionable, rejects what is good, discusses endlessly and fruitlessly what is indifferent—the contrary is the exception that proves the rule.

The great struggle must be, then, to change the character of our legislatures, State and National, or to prevent our present representatives from continuing this indiscriminate heaping up of laws. Thus far, the endeavor to purify the legislature has been unsuccessful. An effort to induce the men now in it to consent to a change that will decrease their own powers may prove

* For the planter's argument see “Sugar-making in Louisiana,” in this number of THE CENTURY.—EDITOR.

equally unsuccessful; but it certainly extends more hope of victory, and is worth making. This effort must be concentrated on a change that will be simple. Not only is the average legislator incapable of understanding a complicated scheme, but the simpler the bill the less opportunity there is of discussion of details, and change of incidentals, and the more hope it has of passage.

My suggestion is a change that will make a two-thirds majority necessary for the passage of a bill through either house of Congress, or a legislature. No measure absolutely demanded by the people will fail to secure such a majority. The presidential succession bill did not, for instance, at the late congressional session. And so with every such bill. If the people do not demand its passage, it ought not to pass. The bill that is simply the idea of the legislator is an unnecessary bill,—and these bills form the bulk of our new laws.

The Constitution provides for a two-thirds vote to *propose* amendments, deeming it necessary to make the vote more than a majority, to prevent ill-considered action. Yet, all will agree—with the possible exception of the prohibitionists—that we have as many amendments as are needed.

Ill-considered action is what we must guard against to-day in mere law-making, and the requirement that bills should receive this two-thirds vote is the simplest safeguard yet suggested. In a smaller country, perhaps, the bills might be voted on by the people after the final adjournment of the Congress or legislature. In a State, this certainly would be a safe and by no means inconvenient plan. But a movement in this direction would be more radical, and would have less of a chance of success. A measure that changes the vote necessary to the passage of a bill, from a bare majority to two-thirds, would meet with greater support, and would have a fair chance of success. If adopted, it would satisfactorily meet the evil it was intended to remedy—it would reduce the bulk of legislation; would prevent the passage of most unnecessary or dangerous bills; and would leave ample opportunity for the passage of good laws, demanded by the people; besides insuring their better execution when passed, since the larger the majority favoring a law, the stronger will be the effort to carry into effect its commands.

Charles Fiske.

Lynching.

THE number of reported murders in the United States in 1882 was 1266. There were only 93 persons executed and 118 lynched,—in all, 211. Consequently, very nearly 1055 criminals escaped. We say very nearly, because some criminals may have had more than one victim each. If any of those who were executed and lynched were innocent, then perhaps more than 1055 criminals escaped. Under any government where 1173 murderers out of every 1266 escape legal execution, it is a wonder that there are not 1000 lynched, instead of 118. A man planning a cold-blooded murder may safely calculate upon more than eleven chances for escape to less than one for his detection, conviction, and execution; and taking in the conjoint probabilities of legal and extra-legal capital punishment, he may safely calculate on five chances to one, for escape.

Lynching will hardly be defended by any man in sober mood. What is the remedy? *Increased care and*

zeal upon the part of all good citizens to secure the execution of the law. If all men, good and bad, could rely upon that in every case of capital felony, there would perhaps be almost no case of lynching.

Taking the figures of 1882 as a basis, it would appear that if hereafter out of every 1266 murderers, 619 were sure to be executed, the cases of lynching would probably diminish to 58; if, out of every 1266, only 66 escaped, there would probably be not more than 7 cases of lynching. Of course this is only mathematical, subject to the fluxions introduced by free human nature and ever-changing circumstances, but these would probably be in favor of the abandonment of the lynching process. We see that even when it is known that only *one* in about every *fifteen* murderers is legally punished, the people lose patience only to the degree of taking into their own hands the punishment of less than one in nine escaped murderers. This must give us the assurance that such are the restraints of our Christian civilization as to warrant the belief that if the present rate of legal executions were doubled there would be less than half the number of cases of lynching. The conviction should be strong in us all that it is the duty of each citizen to see, so far as in him lies, that the laws applying to the taking of human life be promptly and thoroughly enforced. Laxity in this increases the danger to every man. Certainty and promptness of punishment would diminish both ordinary murder as well as lynching. It is not a comfortable fact to contemplate that in each State of the Union we have on an average *forty murderers* now going about freely among the population.

In treating this phenomenon one must take the statistics of the country generally. It is only fair, however, to say that lynching is rarer in the Eastern and Middle States than in the Western and Southern States. It would naturally more readily occur in frontier communities in which it was difficult to meet the case by any accepted legal process, while it would be destruction to the inchoate community to allow the special crime to go unpunished. On the other hand, it would seem that the cases of escaped criminals are more numerous in our Eastern than in our Western States. There must be something in our compact population and in the provisions of our civilization to make it more easy for a murderer to escape. Three times murders have occurred near the residence of the writer, in the city of New York, to which not the slightest clew seems to have been found. In addition to the moral sentiment which will not acquit the guilty, there seems to be the need of an intellectual alertness which will not allow a criminal to elude both the processes of law and the violence of popular resentment.

Charles F. Deems.

The Powel Portraits of Washington.

THE oil-painting from which the frontispiece of this number of THE CENTURY Magazine was engraved was painted from life in 1784 by Joseph Wright, a pupil of Benjamin West. The portrait was a commission from Mrs. Elizabeth Powel of Philadelphia, and through inheritance is now owned by Samuel Powel, Esq., of Newport, Rhode Island, through whose courtesy we are permitted to engrave it for the first time. Of this portrait it is stated that "Washington wrote