

PRESIDENT LOWELL'S INAUGURAL.

With earnestness and enthusiasm the new president of Harvard devoted himself in his inaugural to some of the pressing problems before him. Reconstruction of the American college is, as he pointed out, urgent everywhere. To the problem as a whole, every institution contributes when it takes its own forward steps. Hence, waiving general discussion, he went straight to the root of some of the evils with which he must himself grapple in Cambridge. It is to be noted, too, that he spoke as president of Harvard College, deferring for the present his views of the problems of the University. This in itself is significant. Mr. Eliot's chief interest was the University, so much so that the College, rightly or wrongly, has deemed itself neglected, and must therefore now feel that it is once more coming into its own.

For it is the question of the undergraduate that rests most heavily on Mr. Lowell's mind. He made it clear that he is not one of those who could look contentedly at the crushing of the college between the upper and the nether millstones of the professional and the secondary schools. Far from being willing to abandon the American college, Mr. Lowell holds that it is capable of even greater service to the country than heretofore. Taking Harvard as it exists, he expresses well the feeling of thousands of recent graduates that the lack of the old solidarity, when classes numbered fifty or sixty, is deplorable; that the elective system needs recasting, or that the undergraduate's studies should be better directed and controlled; and that the student's attention should be centred more on his studies and less on other interests. Mr. Lowell's willingness to admit that there is anything wrong with the elective system is in itself a break with previous tradition and policy, but a break for which he can find ample justification. Let him turn, for instance, to the just-published report of the class of 1894, now fifteen years out of college. The doubts expressed by a majority of its members as to the value of unlimited election of studies, as seen in retrospect, are highly significant. But what shall be substituted? So far as Mr. Lowell went in his inaugural address, he holds that the wise policy for undergraduates would be that "of devoting a

considerable portion of their time to some one subject, and taking, in addition, a number of general courses in wholly unrelated fields." In other words, he desires an education which shall make a man a fair master of a specialty with enough training in other studies not only to give him a ground-work of culture, but to render him "capable of turning his mind effectively to direct preparation for his life-work, whatever the profession or occupation he may select."

To aid in producing men who know a little of everything and something well, Mr. Lowell proposes, as he has heretofore indicated, a series of honor examinations which shall stimulate to higher scholarship. These will doubtless be patterned after the Oxford examinations in literature, mathematics, and science. Something is certainly needed to make undergraduates respect achievements in scholarship as they do those of the athletic field. But the proposed honors can hardly be effective unless there comes into undergraduate life a wholly different attitude toward college work. Such a change may well be forwarded by the new scheme of freshman residence suggested by Mr. Lowell, giving a closer affiliation of students with the younger instructors, and that general inspiration to intellectual attainment which comes from contact with older and well-charged minds. Too often, heretofore, a man has spent four years at Harvard, and left without the memory of a single friendship with a teacher, with no spark of enthusiasm from the mind of one aflame with the desire for knowledge and truth. But we would not seem to under-value the proposed honor courses of study. The only real objection to them is that they will place a heavier burden on the overworked professor, even now often curtailed of strength and time for productive work, to such a degree that, as Mr. Lowell said, "America has not yet contributed her share to scholarly creation."

So far as the social life of the student is concerned, while Mr. Lowell might well have laid greater emphasis on the evil of athletics, his stand in regard to the democratization of the college must appeal to everybody. Harvard suffers but little more than other colleges from the false standards that mark social life in our rich communities. Every college, in its endeavor to place men on a common

footing, has an increasingly hard fight against such foolish parents as that insurance company official who did not know what his son's allowance was because his secretary sent the boy whatever he wanted. Mr. Lowell's plan for housing the freshmen in separate quadrangles, we have already discussed, to approve. It means a long step forward, not so much in what it may actually accomplish, as in the abandonment of the impotent *laissez faire* policy of the past, in the face of new and luxurious dormitories, built by private capital, and utterly out of place in a society of scholars. Present conditions breed not merely the waste of scholastic opportunity which Mr. Lowell laments, but that class feeling, based on material possessions, against which every democracy must fight as for its life, and which is nowhere so incongruous as in the republic of science and letters.

About these and still other questions there will be much more to say as time passes. The essential point for thanksgiving to-day is that Charles William Eliot, the greatest pathfinder in our collegiate history, is followed by one who adds to noteworthy scholarship and equal idealism an insight into the weaknesses that have grown with our educational strength. It might easily have been Harvard's fate to have fallen into the hands of a business man, pure and simple, or into those of one absorbed in scholastic matters, without thought of the human problems involved. Her good fortune attends her in that the direction of her affairs has gone to one who sees clearly the needs of the hour, and is ready to grapple with them in a spirit of self-devotion, which, in itself, augurs success.

THE MORSE SENTENCE UPHOLD.

The decision rendered Monday by the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, upholding the sentence in the case of Morse, the bank wrecker, is an event of the first importance. One aspect of the decision peculiarly interesting at this time is the way in which it strengthens the wholesome tendency, at last manifest in our courts of appeal, to ignore trivial objections. What the court says on this head is plain common sense, and it expresses what must become the standard attitude of our higher courts if justice is to be placed on a sound footing

in these days of enormous legal and business complexity. "In an unusually protracted trial," says the decision, "depending upon a wilderness of figures and during which a vast number of complicated transactions were investigated, it is not unnatural that mistakes should have been made. Neither is it surprising that judges removed from the excitement of the forum, who have time to examine the events of the trial as they appear when portrayed in cold type, should have discovered some rulings which may be open to criticism. But we are convinced that no prejudicial error was committed." Only by taking this stand can the administration of criminal justice, when applied to men of wealth or resources, be made a substantial reality, instead of a game of combined skill and chance, with the odds all in favor of the man who is fighting the law.

So far as public opinion is concerned, that appeal to the easy-going sympathy of the American people which is always made in conspicuous cases has here taken rather a curious shape. The very magnitude of the disaster caused, or at least precipitated, by Morse's dishonest operations has been made the basis of the most prominent and probably the most effective pleas in his behalf. Had it not been for the panic, we have been told again and again, Morse would never have been prosecuted so vigorously; he has been made a scapegoat, and it isn't fair to do to him what would not have been done under ordinary circumstances. Such a view of the matter may be creditable to the good-nature of our people, but it is anything but creditable to their sense of justice or of expediency. If it be true that the administration of justice in our country is so defective that a man may systematically violate the laws, endanger the safety of millions of money entrusted to his care under solemn obligations of fidelity, make false entries in his books to cover up his illegal transactions, and yet count upon immunity unless his crimes happen to result in a national calamity—if all this be so, is it rational to conclude that we ought to let the culprit off even in the one case in which we can lay hands upon him? Rather, is it not sounder doctrine and truer consistency to brace up the processes of justice in the ninety-and-nine cases where it fails, and not to nullify them

in the one case where it succeeds?

However, it is only necessary to read the Court's decision in order to see that the conviction of Morse was not the result of undue severity, occasioned by the distress of the panic. The acts charged against him were of a definite and specific character. As a matter of course, those upon which the jury actually passed must have been, in the nature of things, only a little specimen of a multitude of similar transactions; but, at least, the illegal use of the bank's funds and fraudulent entries to conceal such use were fully established. Thus the higher court finds neither any substantial error in the conduct of the case by the court below, nor any reason for upsetting the jury's conclusions as to the facts. Such being the case, nothing remained to consider but the severity of the sentence, and on that head the Circuit Court of Appeals likewise found no just ground of complaint. Nor should the public. If fifteen years' imprisonment is too heavy a penalty for gross and continuous misuse of bank funds for the purpose of deliberately carrying on vast schemes of reckless speculation, then we had better make a radical revolution in our whole scale of punishments. Custom has hardened us to the spectacle of big criminals like Morse getting off with light punishment or none; now let those who are such sticklers for consistency demand that the little criminals—the people who commit petit larceny or pass counterfeit coins, or swindle people in a common confidence game—receive sentences of a few days in jail. The truth is that the glamour of wealth and success blinds us to the true nature of rascalities committed in the high fields of finance; and we have substituted for the benefit of clergy that prevailed in the days when a "clerk" was admired and feared of the people, an unwritten law of benefit of prosperity. Now, however, the signs point to a gradual but ultimately thorough emancipation from its dominion.

MANŒUVRES AND THE MILITIA.

The reported decision of the War Department against further army and militia manœuvres comes as a surprise—even to army officers, as Gen. Wood's interview of Friday morning attests. It was not understood that the hardships of the troops taking part in August were

extreme—certainly they were not so severe as those experienced a year before in the camp at Pine Plains in this State. Lack of food at times there indubitably was. Some men went nearly twenty-four hours without a real meal, and fodder for horses was frequently lacking. This was due to the inexperience of the militia commissaries and quartermasters and to the reliance upon improvised transportation. Instead of taking regular army trains, reliance was placed on the wagons of farmers and on coal trucks secured in New Bedford, with the double purpose of placating the farmers and of teaching the troops what to do when turned adrift in a strange country. This was carrying realism too far, particularly as there were few farmers' carts available for the invading army. Many of these broke down, and frequently soldiers who had "fought" and marched all day, had, on bivouacking, to go to the assistance of disabled wagons and haul them into camp.

So far as the published official reports go, the actual disabilities appear to have been fewer this year than last. But that there were any serious complaints is a reason for taking up anew the whole question of the relationship of militia and regulars in this matter of joint manœuvres. The truth is that, since the war with Spain, the status of the National Guard has undergone a change. It is no longer merely a State body, as originally organized, drilled and trained for emergency duty, but is developing as a reserve to the army. At the present time, however, the militia is neither quite one thing nor the other. The old status and ideals have been abandoned, but the actual position as a reserve to the regular army has not been attained. Nor, in our judgment, can it be attained. If we must have such a reserve, it would be better to create one, according to the plan proposed in Secretary Root's time, when there was suggested a reserve of 100,000 men, honorably discharged from the regulars and paid a small sum to go into camp once every year for several weeks.

This is the European plan, and such reserves might be either in separate organizations or utilized as additional battalions of existing regiments. At present, we ask the physically impossible. Our militiamen are intelligent and thinking bayonets, of better physique and better officered than ever before. But in