

The Nation.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1910.

The Week.

The clique that rules in the Senate and guides the destinies of this nation must be beginning to wonder whether their tariff victory of last summer was not, after all, of the Pyrrhic order. When a befooled and disillusioned country voiced its resentment against the Aldrich and Cannon crowd, there must have been few who believed that punishment could come so soon after them. If there was hope of relief, it was of relief in some extraordinary way. The guilty men might die or be suddenly converted or go mad and resign. But who was sanguine enough to foresee that within half a year Cannon would be a sinking craft, and that they of the innermost circle of Olympus, Hale of Maine, Lodge of Massachusetts, Scott of West Virginia, would be anxious about their places in the Senate? Insurgency has become a nation-wide disease within the Republican party. When the closed Senatorial preserves in New England begin to fall away from their feudal owners we seem to be indeed on the eve of a *débâcle*. It is now impossible that the Aldrich-Cannon crowd can ever play another thimble-rigging game on the country. The question is whether they can escape the consequences of their past deeds.

The Administration policy of perfect frankness is plainly being followed in Ohio. It is openly admitted by the President that there is great danger of the Republicans losing his own State this year. Hence the need of beginning in February a campaign to prevent the re-election of Gov. Harmon in November. After frequent conferences at the White House, the Ohio Senators, with members of the Republican State Committee, decided that something vigorous must be done, and accordingly Mr. Wade Ellis resigns from the Department of Justice to take charge of the campaign in Ohio. He has been known as the chief "Trust-buster" of the Administration, but while it is important to curb Trusts, it is still more important to curb Harmon. This preliminary display advertisement will, of course, fix the attention of the coun-

try upon the fight in Ohio, and make the Democratic Governor of that Republican State even more of a national figure than before. If he wins, or makes a rousing campaign while failing of actual election, his nomination by the Democrats for the Presidency in 1912 will be highly probable. The elaborate preparations of the Administration to make war upon him will necessarily work towards that result.

The full text of the Federal incorporation bill proposed by the Administration is now published and it proves the so-called "outline" of the measure, printed a week or two ago in some of the newspapers, to have been based on rather absurd misinformation. The bill as drafted does not at all give a free hand to holding companies. It does provide machinery whereby a corporation may be formed under a Federal charter "to take over the property and business of any existing corporation" chartered by a State; but the primary purpose of the provision seems to be simply to enable State-chartered corporations to reorganize under the Federal law. Even this change of form is surrounded by careful restrictions. It must be approved by vote of two-thirds of the capital stock of the corporation whose business is to be acquired; it must be favorably passed on, after investigation and appraisal, by the Commissioner of Corporations, and it holds legally responsible for any mis-statement the directors applying for such transfer of property. Furthermore, the proposed bill explicitly provides that if the Sherman Act or any other Federal law shall be violated, through contracts, combinations, or attempt to monopolize interstate commerce, the offending corporation's charter shall be forfeited and a receiver appointed for it. Clauses affecting issue of both stock and bonds are drawn with the manifest view to preventing such financial exploits as the industrial combinations of 1899 and 1901, on the basis of inflated capital, and the bonding of numerous railways in 1902, and of the Union Pacific particularly in 1906, for the purpose of buying other railway stocks at inflated prices. As matters stand to-day, there is little probability of the enactment of such a law in the present session of Con-

gress. It is well, however, to have so careful and thorough a draft of the plan made public at this time, so that criticism, favorable and unfavorable, may be given to it.

Ex-Senator Edmunds's letter to Mr. Charles P. Howland on the Anti-Trust Law presents more than one element of unusual interest. In the first place, it comes from a man of eighty-two, but is written with a vigor and incisiveness much more suggestive of twenty-eight; and it comes from a man who was, for a generation, one of the small and remarkable group of great lawyers in the United States Senate. There are, in Mr. Edmunds's letter, two particular statements of fact that deserve special notice. The first is that the Anti-Trust Act, which is habitually referred to under the name of Senator Sherman, was not his work, or the work of any other member of the Finance Committee; it was completely rewritten by the Judiciary Committee, and was really the work of "one of the members of that committee"—which is merely Mr. Edmunds's way of saying that it was his own work. The other particular statement of fact is that, in the Knight case, the decision in which did so much to weaken the efficacy of the law, the feeling of members of the bar of the Supreme Court was that the case had been very feebly and inefficiently presented to the court. As for Mr. Edmunds's general views, they agree with a growing conviction in and out of Government circles—that a vigorous upholding of the law along lines that time will make plainer is capable of accomplishing great and vitally needed results. No law administers itself; and in establishing a law so comprehensive and complex in scope, we must be prepared for difficulties and delays.

The verdict last Friday of a jury at Hartford fixing at \$74,000 the damages which the hatters' union must pay to a firm whose business it had sought to cripple or destroy by means of a boycott, is only a logical carrying out of the decision of the Supreme Court. The question of law was taken before that tribunal on demurrer, and it held that a labor union was exactly on the footing

of a corporation in being subject to prosecution for conspiring to stifle competition and obstruct the flow of interstate commerce. After that, the facts being established, it was only left for a jury to assess the damages in accordance with the law. Here is no question of refusing workingmen the right to combine, no quarrel about "government by injunction," but just the simple principle that laboring men and labor unions must submit like everybody else to the law of the land. An appeal is to be taken on the ground that the damages are excessive—they are automatically tripled by the Anti-Trust Act, so that the total would be \$222,000—and doubtless the lawfulness of making the individual members of the union liable will be argued before the courts. That is within the rights of the men. They are as much entitled as millionaire bankers to exhaust their legal remedies. But the more thoughtful and sober leaders of labor organizations must see that, with the law laid down as it was in the Gompers case and now in the case of the Danbury hatters, such boycotts must be abandoned as illegal.

The refusal of Western railways to comply with the demands of the firemen for a heavy increase of wages and other changes was accompanied by an expression of willingness to arbitrate the question of wages. This would seem to indicate a recognition of the changed conditions that must be reckoned with, and probably, above all, of the advance of prices. Whatever the causes of increased price, the increase itself is a palpable fact, and one that is world-wide in its manifestation; and all employers of labor will have to give this fact adequate recognition sooner or later. What was insisted on, in season and out of season, by the opponents of free silver is now taking place, though the era of advancing prices has come about in quite other ways than the adoption of Mr. Bryan's proposal. The working people of the country were warned that when the dollar was cheapened—that is, when prices were raised—they would be among the last to have the higher scale of prices applied to what they had to sell, labor. This was the experience of the civil war days, with the greenback standard, and it is our experience now. Salaries, of course, are slowest of all to rise, and go up, naturally enough,

only after it has become perfectly clear that the new scale of prices has become fixed; but next after salaries in slowness are wages. The time has now arrived, however, for a general recognition of the question of wages as related to high prices, and thoughtful employers of labor will not ignore it.

The fact that Mr. Procter has withdrawn his offer of half a million to Princeton University will excite keen interest among all who appreciate the influence exercised by our colleges and universities upon the tone of national life. Just what the precise questions were upon which disagreement developed is not clear at the time of this writing; but the essential nature of the difficulty is no secret. On the one side are those who find nothing to object to in the growth at our colleges of luxury and of social distinctions based on wealth. On the other side are those who look upon these developments as an evil in their immediate effect upon the young men involved in them, and as an even more serious evil in their effect upon the spirit of the place. They find the prominence of luxurious living and of the exclusiveness of wealth tending to displace learning and intellectual distinction from its natural position of dominance, in the college world; and they find it subversive of the democratic ideals for which American institutions of education ought to stand. Between these two mental attitudes there is an irrepressible conflict. All the pressure of circumstance is in favor of the steady growth of luxury, and if it is to be resisted, it can only be by persistent firmness in opposing it in the face of temptation. If, as seems clearly to be the case, President Wilson has been actuated by this feeling in taking his position on this question, he and the trustees who have sided with him have earned the approval of the whole country.

Aside from the forces that are silently operating everywhere to raise the scale of luxury and to make wealth a predominant factor in all human relations, the American college has been subject to two special influences. The first is the general ambition to grow in numbers; the second is the desire to stand well with a class from which it so largely derives its financial resources. In view

of these things it can, we believe, be said truthfully that the colleges have done better than there might have been good reason to fear that they would do. The democratic idea has remained fundamental; the encroachment of plutocratic notions and of snobbish standards has continued to be nothing more than encroachment, though sometimes a very serious one. But while the colleges have done better than might easily have been feared, they have not done so well as might reasonably have been hoped. Many a departure from sound traditions and worthy ideals has been permitted for want of a firm assertion of principle. And such assertion has a value far transcending the immediate purpose that called it forth. It has a tonic influence as a pronouncement of attitude, over and above its direct effect.

The Maryland Legislature has, for some years, been making the small annual grant of \$25,000 to the Johns Hopkins, and it appears that there is some danger of this grant being discontinued by the present Legislature. Such action could be justified only on the theory that to keep money in the State Treasury is a gain to the State, no matter how much value there might be to the State in its expenditure. The Johns Hopkins University does for Maryland what no other establishment does. It is the only institution of higher learning in the State. Its presence supplies a stimulus to intellectual activity and ambition, the value of which to the people of Maryland is inestimable. It has, in the past thirty years, done more to give distinction to the State and to its chief city than any other agency. It has caused the adoption throughout the country of higher university standards than had previously been known; and it has itself maintained these standards in the face of great difficulties, its financial condition being in painful contrast with that of any of its principal rivals.

So the garrulous, cowardly, spiteful blackbird in Rostand's barnyard masterpiece is supposed to typify the press! For who has suffered from the stupidity and impertinences of a debased press like Edmond Rostand, unless it be George Bernard Shaw or Richard Strauss? These tender souls, so averse to the slightest taint of publicity, so timid in confiding their hopes and their

doubts to a great, big, bouncing world, naturally fall into the tradition of whacking the newspaper in the sacred name of Art. Hundreds of thousands of dollars in advance royalties, and the four corners of the globe waiting breathless for the masterpiece to be translated and put on—such things bear testimony to an art of publicity compared with which the idle gossip of the reporter is like the first tottering footsteps of the babe in arms. Balzac was never tired of picturing a debased press which blackmailed vice and sold two-line notices to deserving virtue at exorbitant prices. Conditions may still be the same to-day. Nevertheless, the law of compensation that rules the universe sees to it that the successful genius shall exact from the editors ten columns of free newspaper notice for every stickful the struggling artist must purchase with his money or his self-respect.

The British Labor party is rent between joy at its increased influence as holder, with the Nationalists, of the balance of power in Parliament, and sorrow at its actual loss in numbers. From nearly sixty in the last Parliament, the Laborites have dropped to forty-odd, a loss proportionately larger than that the Liberals suffered. This falls in line with the general trend of the election, which was a triumph of moderate opinion. The Labor members, as the extreme left wing of the Government coalition, were bound to suffer most. The outcome, so far as Government policy is concerned, is as yet uncertain—how uncertain is shown by such widely differing rumors as that which relegates the radicals, Lloyd-George and Winston Churchill, to a back seat in the Cabinet, and that which foresees the inclusion of one or two Labor members in the new Government. In theory, there is no reason why Mr. Asquith should, on the face of the country's pronouncement, give added recognition to the Laborites. In practice, there are their forty valuable votes to be taken into account. One probable result will be greater recognition for the Laborites by the Government, accompanied by a greater moderation on the part of the Labor members themselves.

On the adjustment of our tariff relations with Germany upon the basis of minimum duties on both sides, the peo-

ple of both countries have reason to congratulate themselves. There probably was at no time any strong reason for fearing a different conclusion to the negotiations, though certain stumbling-blocks, owing to the shortness of the time at the disposal of the negotiators, threatened the possibility of failure. The bottom fact was that the responsible heads of both Governments were too sensible of the mischief that would be done by a tariff war to do otherwise than make every effort for mutual satisfaction. The potash trouble, which suddenly obscured the sky, we hear nothing of to-day; presumably all ground for objection on our part was removed when it was made plain that there would be no violation of existing contracts with American concerns. President Taft has earned, and will receive, recognition for his successful management of a difficult negotiation. At the same time, there is always, to any mind with a trace of philosophical detachment, an element of the ludicrous in the solemn rejoicing of two protectionist countries when they have succeeded in preventing an aggravation of the difficulties which their tariffs naturally interpose. It may be a good thing not to have the bars put up higher than they are; but it is a bit funny that people who insist on a six-foot fence and think it a priceless blessing, should be so very sure that to be saved from a seven-foot fence is an occasion for devout thanksgiving.

The secret workings of reaction in Russia are now dragged into the light through the efforts of Vladimir Burtseff, a scholar of radical affiliations, who has made the study of the Russian revolutionary movement his life-work. His disclosures regarding the system of espionage by which the Russian Government combated and crushed the revolutionary movement which began in 1905, are by this time fairly familiar. That system, in a few words, consisted in having agents of the secret police take a leading part in the revolutionary propaganda and initiate acts of terrorism in order to supply the Government with an opportunity and an excuse for employing ruthless methods of repression. The Government's spies penetrated into the very heart of the revolutionary councils. It was a terrific shock to those who have the cause of Russian re-

form closely at heart when Vladimir Burtseff, about a year ago, proved, before a revolutionary tribunal in session at Paris, that Azeff, the leading spirit in the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, was a government spy. The revelation was both a shock and a tragedy. It meant that for years the revolution had been fighting an utterly hopeless fight. It meant that thousands of Russian men and women had gone to their death, not in a struggle against tremendous odds, but in a struggle that offered the opponents of the Government no chance at all.

But the Azeff affair had also its almost comic aspects. It threw a glaring light on the mixture of ruthlessness and inefficiency, of stupidity and cunning, of Imperial despotism, bureaucratic wire-pulling, and more or less petty palace intrigue, which goes by the name of government in Russia. Repression had not even the excuse of high effectiveness, such as, for instance, a secret police system would have in Germany. While the Government's agents were fighting the revolution, they were busy betraying one another. The fact is that Azeff, although a traitor to the revolution, did bring about the assassination of the minister of the interior, Von Plehve, in 1904, and of the Czar's uncle, the Grand Duke Sergius, in February of the following year. How came it that an agent of the Government, even if it was necessary for him to play out the full revolutionary rôle, was allowed to strike so perilously near to the throne? The answer is found in the jealousies and intrigues of the Government's hired men. The police at Moscow were at odds with the police at St. Petersburg, and the regular police authorities at St. Petersburg were jealous of the extraordinary authority that came to be vested in General Trepoff, upon whom devolved the special task of guarding the Czar's sacred person. To protect the Czar, General Trepoff needed a man like Azeff, and if Azeff, to keep his hold on the revolutionary movement, found it necessary to kill a minister or a grand duke, he was practically allowed to. It was personal politics with a vengeance within the ranks of the government's defenders. It was government by chaos; and to this may be attributed the long stand the revolutionaries managed to make in spite of the odds against them.

THE DEFEATED REFORMER.

In the ever-repeated contest between the "practical politician" and the "fool reformer," the reformer is always getting the worst of the fight. He never "gets there." His childishness, self-conceit, folly, want of horse sense, is the constant theme of the successful politician and the clever newspaper man. He makes a mess of every favorable situation, he lets every practical opportunity pass him by. He is constantly fighting the bosses, and the bosses simply laugh in their sleeves; they know that their business is a solid institution, whose foundations rest on the bed rock of human nature, while he is a feather-brained enthusiast, tilting at a castle of stone with a wooden spear. They let him play at the game of reform, and get what amusement he may out of it, while they go on their way as if he were not. He may make a deal of noise in the newspapers, but when it comes to counting the votes he is not "in it." In fact, if it were not for his incurable childishness, he would long ago have given up trying to accomplish anything, seeing that he hardly ever scores a success, and when he does is unable to hold its fruits for any length of time.

This is what we hear from the practical politician and from many practical men who are not politicians, and it is what a surface view of events may seem to justify. But when we come to think about the matter, we see that something else is happening besides the carrying of elections, either by the friends or the enemies of political improvement. Just as, in struggles between parties, the defeated side may impose upon the victorious party the necessity of adopting the very policy against which it had been fighting—as was done sixty years ago in England by the free-traders, as has been done more recently by the Democratic party in our own country in some important directions—so the reform agitations in our politics, while continually meeting with defeat, are continually bringing about the results toward which they are directed. The classic instance of this is the case of civil service reform. There has never been a time when it could be said that civil-service reform had at last carried the country, or had come anywhere near carrying the country. It began as an agitation stirred by a little group of earnest men, and advocated by a very

few superior journals; and from that day to this, it has never counted among its genuine adherents more than a small minority of the members of Congress. But at an early stage it got itself embodied in an act of Congress, at a time when the public conscience was peculiarly roused; and in the face of the aversion and hostility of the great majority of Congressmen, it has grown stronger and stronger ever since. At the present time its principles govern appointments and promotions in about 200,000 Federal offices; every President, every high executive officer, has for years been emphatically its friend; and there is scarcely a respectable newspaper in the country that is not its hearty supporter. And all this has been accomplished by the steady pressure exercised by the merit of the cause. It must be traced to its source in the persistent efforts of a handful of men who were laughed at for years as the most visionary of visionaries, the most impractical of theorists.

What is thus exhibited on a national scale and in a clear-cut way in this conspicuous instance manifests itself less definitely, but no less effectively, in a thousand shapes in other governmental matters, both national and local. In spite of all deficiencies and discouragements, the standard of American city government is steadily rising, and has advanced far beyond what was familiar to the men of twenty or forty years ago. The opportunity for abuses is tenfold what it was in those simpler days, but abuses are held in check by an increase in the efficacy of public opinion and by a great change in the standards of public judgment. And this has not come to pass of itself. It has been brought about by unceasing effort, and especially by the fight for reform, ever beaten and ever renewed. If the "Oh, well" people had had their way—the people who would admit that thus and so was very bad, but who knew that nothing could be done about it and that it was sure to stay—we should have been not only as badly off as ever, but a great deal worse. Again and again, the politicians have won, but had first been made so uncomfortable that they found it best to "pander to the better element." Whenever a painful inch has been won in this way, it has been pretty sure to stay won; and by slow accumulation we have gained in the course of time a great deal. Many a

thing which would have been a matter of course in the days of Fernando Wood or of A. Oakey Hall would to-day seem to Tammany itself too shocking to be thought of.

Sanguine people in Boston, it is stated, are hoping that Mayor-elect Fitzgerald will be as good as some of his promises, and a great deal better than his record. They point to Mayor Gaynor, and say: "Is he not on his mettle, and trying to justify himself after all the unkind words spoken in the New York campaign? Well, that is the case with Fitzgerald." Now, whatever may be the case as to either Mr. Gaynor or Mr. Fitzgerald—two men, by the way, about as different as possible, in their past record—certain it is that precisely that thing has happened again and again; the reformers and the "kickers" have been beaten at the election, but have in large measure had their will nevertheless. Their candidates have failed to get the offices, but their principles have been recognized by those who did. Thus, though from day to day, it may have seemed as if nothing was being accomplished, a glance backward through the decades shows that the good work has yielded good and substantial fruit.

THE ARMY ELIMINATION BILL.

We have received within the last ten days many requests from army officers for aid in opposing Senate bill 1018, which provides for promotion in the army by elimination. Introduced in similar form in 1906 and 1908, it is now being vigorously pushed in Washington, by those who are hopeful of its passage because it does not carry an immediate and definite increase in expenditure. Its purpose is to insure a regular flow of promotion at a rate sufficient in the opinion of the War Department to bring officers into the upper grades at an age it deems desirable. This the bill does by providing annual elimination of officers—if there be not sufficient vacancies caused by death, resignation, or retirement for age or disability. It was recommended by President Taft when Secretary of War in these terms:

It is a remarkable fact that our organization and our promotion laws are such as to insure in the greater part of the fighting force the minimum of promotion with a maximum of rust and decrepitude, exactly the reverse of what a wise policy would dictate. It is to remedy in some degree this unfortunate and unwise condition that this bill is offered. It makes no extravagant