

should prove the candidate to be generally intelligent, endowed with business capacities, skilful and correct in his English, possessing a good knowledge of French and the language of the country of his residence, and endowed with a good character, good habits, and good manners. Efficient service in the consulate should insure not only retention in office, but promotion in due course. This would remove from the consul not only the feeling that it was not worth while to attend to his duties, since his removal was probable at the end of his term, but the temptation to "make the most" of his tenure so long as it existed.

There is only one more feature of the service apparently capable of improvement, which can just be touched upon. The consuls in Europe are, at the best, three thousand miles from their responsible chief. Would it not be well to create a superior officer nearer at hand? Would not the service be improved if the consul-general at the chief centre of a country—say at London or Paris—should be made the responsible chief of the consuls resident in that country, keeping watch over them, giving them instructions when necessary, and consulting with them as occasion demanded?

GEORGE MAKEPEACE TOWLE.

## II.

### A LEGISLATIVE KINDERGARTEN.

THIS great land of ours abounds in all sorts of educational institutions. In one cooking is taught, and the graduates on exhibition offer doughnuts and croquettes, instead of essays and disquisitions. Others take a grist of raw boys and run them through the hopper of applied journalism. Others, again, teach political economy according to the American plan, which abhors reason and theory. Telegraphy, type-writing, plumbing—but I am not Walt Whitman and I fear my catalogue would be as dull as the second book of the "Iliad." Besides, I do not wish now to be eulogistic, but suggestive, and to point out a lack. There is one great lack that, it is surprising to me, has as yet never suggested itself to the enlightened minds of our Republic. And that is a legislative kindergarten.

It is a perpetual surprise to most people that Congress each year accomplishes so little and wastes so much. There is a gathering of men chosen presumably for superior merit or talent or experience. Most towns are rather proud that Senator So-and-so or Mr. Blank, M. C., lives within their limits. We may indulge in sarcasm, but we are glad to see "my friend the Senator." Each man in Congress may be considered to be in some way above the average. Why on earth, then, is the aggregate of these great men so disappointing? It is a curious phenomenon: a session of Congress is a disorderly bedlam, a seat of idiotic gambols, a pathetic ambuscade of incompetency, a bear-pit of rascality, where all that should be done is neglected and everything unworthy is perpetrated. Not one single man out of that assembly would ever think of doing such foolish things as they all do when put together. It is almost incomprehensible; but the explanation is utterly simple—so simple, in fact, that so far as I know it has never been pointed out.

It is this: each new legislature is an infant, and as irresponsible as an infant. You do not expect staid gravity from a yearling. What is an infant? His little body, so apparently fresh and new, is made up of constituents that are as old as the hills. Star-dust may make the circuit of his veins; the perished leviathan that swallowed Jonah may, by only a few metamorphoses, be built into his bones; Solomon's very brain may be represented in his occiput. He is the resultant of a million intellects—who knows? His spirit may be the spirit reborn of one who but a twelvemonth back, was expecting obedience and most loath to render it. Then, again, so far as we know, thousands of living organisms swarm through his frame, as conscious of their own happiness, and as unconscious of his, as devoted to their own affairs, as long-lived in proportion, as any man. Yet that infant, bristling with all ages, full of all wisdoms, containing a macrocosm, kicks up its heels, crows, creeps into the fire, carries his spoon to the ear instead of the mouth, is toothless, helpless, vacuous, cruel, everything bad and everything good, the darling of our hearts, and the last person to look to for practical wisdom!

So the legislature, made up of separate Solons, becomes a new entity, as hope

less, as helpless, as pitiable as a new-born babe. It sprawls, it clutches at the moon it indulges in senseless cries, it has the colic, it crawls for any bright light that attracts it. Thus it often falls into the fire. And the greater entity, the country, the mother of it, she who brought it forth in travail, looks on and endures its imperious moods and forgives its impudent mewling. Doubtless the spark of Plato that is imbedded in my brain protests loudly at my folly, and so throughout the land men grumble at Congress and wish they were there to be wiser. But the wisest would be just as foolish in the foolish whole.

But in the case of the child, as soon as he gets out of his swaddling-clothes he is sent to a kindergarten, which is an institution for organized laziness. He is, at least, kept out of mischief, and his spirit of destructiveness and waste is turned into harmless channels. I would propose, therefore, to have a kindergarten for legislatures, It could be arranged this way: the first year, or possibly the first two years, of its corporate existence should be merely experimental. It might pass as many laws as it cared to spend the time on, but none of them should take effect. Meantime the legislature last elected would have been somewhat schooled and have come out of that foolish stage, and might be entrusted with some genuine functions. The details of this kindergarten can be easily worked out; but the suggestion I offer with no mistrust that there will be seen in it any insidious plea for a revolution in our government or a suggestion for a tenure of office dependent on something as fickle as the "popular will."

N. H. DOLE.

### III.

#### HOW TO SUPPRESS QUACKERY.

Dr. AUSTIN FLINT, in the October issue of *THE REVIEW*, outlines a plan which, he thinks, if adopted by the Legislature of the State of New York, would also be adopted by all the other States in the Union, and do much towards closing the door of quackery in the medical profession, which now stands so wide open. Many of the provisions of the proposed act are very excellent, but the opening article would, I think, prevent the regents of the State University from giving the plan a moment's consideration. The article reads as follows:

"I. The regents of the University of the State of New York to appoint a board of medical examiners, to consist of fourteen members, seven to be nominated by the unsectarian medical colleges empowered to confer the degree of M.D. in the State of New York, and to be teachers in said colleges, and seven to be nominated by the unsectarian State medical societies; the board to be so constituted that there shall be two examiners for each of the seven subjects of practice of medicine, surgery, obstetrics, materia medica and therapeutics, physiology, anatomy, chemistry and the collateral branches."

I do not believe the State will ever lower the dignity of its University or insult its officers by permitting any medical school or society to dictate to them in the appointment of their committees. The same power which made the State University can unmake it, and its officers will be pretty careful how they violate in their work the strict principles of justice to all.

In the discussion of the question of a "State board of medical examiners" before the Senate committee last winter, I was present by special invitation. I stated that I believed an arrangement could be made by which the license to practise medicine by a board of examiners of one State would be good in every State when the provisions of their boards of examiners were the same. I argued that the board of examiners of this State should be appointed by the regents of the State University, of which the medical schools form a part; the examinations to be written in answer to questions selected by the regents from those sent them by the examiners; the name of the student and the college from which he graduated being in no case communicated to the examiners. I recommended also that there should be no examiner in therapeutics, but the student, having mastered the groundwork of his profession and familiarized himself with the physiological action of remedial agents, should be left to his own judgment in their application. As the examination papers would be deposited in the archives of the University for future reference in case of supposed injustice, there could be no possible chance of favoritism, and all the colleges would stand or fall solely on