

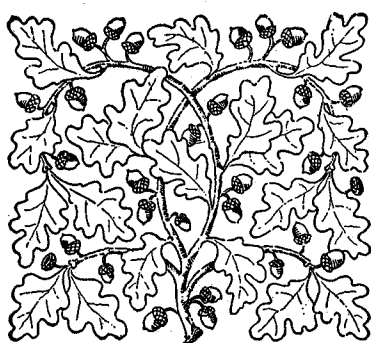
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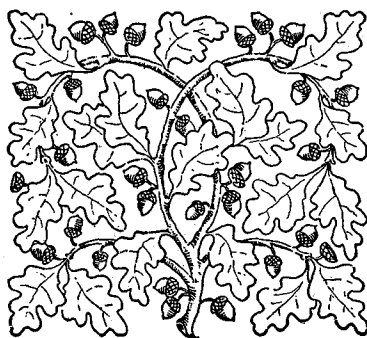
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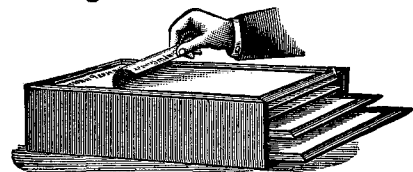
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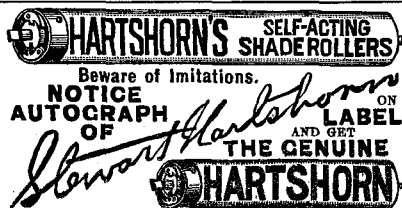
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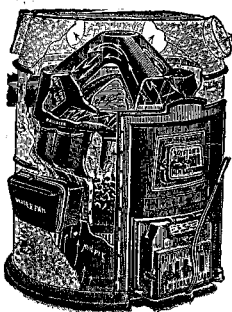
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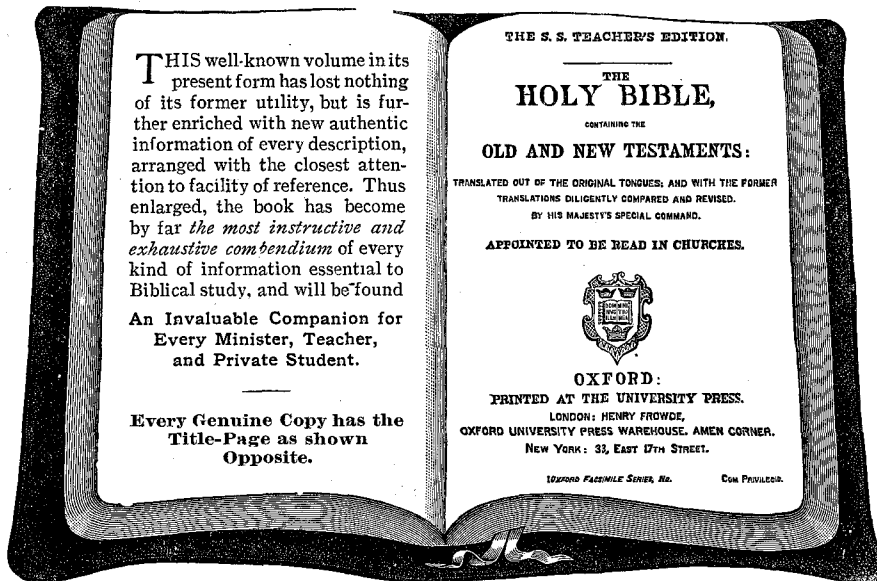
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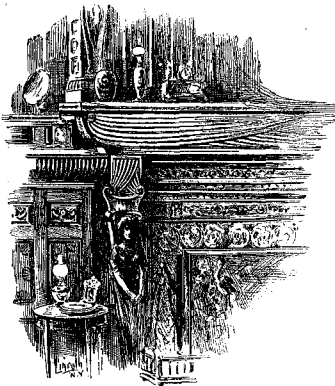
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Volume 48

For Week ending 21 October, 1893

Number 17



The Week



THE continuous session in the Senate ended in the way that seemed inevitable to those who understood the rules of the Senate. Even had the opponents of repeal been fewer in number, they could still have prevented a vote, if the rules were followed. In the first place, the majority had to keep a quorum constantly present, or an adjournment would be ordered. In the next place, the minority only needed to keep enough of its members present to prevent the debate from ending. In the third place, even those members of the minority who were present could not be compelled to answer to their names, and the Democratic President of the Senate was unwilling to adopt Speaker Reed's ruling and record them as present in order to make up a quorum. The result was that, in the contest of endurance, the majority was obliged to keep nearly every one of its members present continuously, while the minority could relieve one another by watches. Beyond this, the minority had the further advantage that its members were generally younger men, and could better have endured such a contest had the terms been equal. These, however, were not the most decisive of the minority's advantages. At the outset of the struggle on Wednesday evening, Senator Dubois, of Idaho, stated the relative strength of the two parties in a few words singularly accurate. He said:

"There are 39 Senators who favor unconditional repeal; 38 Senators are opposed to unconditional repeal, and would so vote. Eight Senators are against free coinage and against unconditional repeal, and desire a compromise between the two which will furnish a constant and continued use of silver. Some of these eight have introduced amendments which they would prefer, but all of them are anxious to reach a basis of settlement on a compromise. I admit that most likely every one of these Senators would vote for unconditional repeal if forced to a vote. Their reasons are honorable and sufficient for themselves, and their motives are not questioned. They would much prefer not to be forced to vote on the pending bill, however."

This statement was substantiated by the whole course of the struggle. A majority was in favor of unconditional repeal if forced to vote on that question; but a majority, to all appearances, was not in favor of a vote. It was this fact which made impossible the adoption of closure in order to bring about a vote, and made it extra hazardous for any of the numerous presiding officers who relieved Vice-President Stevenson to put the question to a vote in violation of the rules. When Senator Allen, of Nebraska, had talked the entire first night without a break in his voice, it was evident, not only that the contest would end in favor of the silver side, but that it would end speedily. At a quarter before two o'clock on Friday morning the Sergeant-at-Arms reported in writing his inability to secure the attendance of a quorum. Forty-two Senators were then

present and answering to their names. Twenty-one were Republicans and twenty-one were Democrats.



The result of the attempt to force a vote in the Senate on the Silver Bill has thus far failed. The indications are that, under the rules of the Senate, the minority control that body, and that, if it is sufficiently unscrupulous, or partisan, or even conscientiously obstinate, it can prevent the majority from taking action upon any measure brought before the body. It is idle to complain of the majority for not passing a closure rule, for the minority are equally able to resist indefinitely the passage of such a rule. It is idle, on the other hand, to defend the minority for their present course on the ground that they are standing for free discussion. Senator Voorhees has again and again appealed to the minority to designate a date when they are willing that a vote should be taken, and always without response. Neither the present debate of the minority, nor the amendments introduced by them, are for the purpose of securing action of any kind whatever. They are for the purpose of preventing action. The deadlock is apparently complete, and we can see but three possible outcomes. First, a compromise measure may be arranged by which silver shall continue to be coined for a certain specified period. A compromise on the silver question, though it would be unfortunate, would not be disastrous; but the question whether, in a constitutional government, the majority or the minority shall govern, is one on which compromise seems to us impossible. Secondly, the Vice-President might follow the example set him by Mr. Reed, of the last Congress, and practically set aside the rules of the Senate and so compel a vote. This would be revolution, and, in our judgment, revolution more disastrous than any panic produced by delay in the Congressional legislation. Thirdly, the Senate may adjourn and the majority may issue an appeal to the people of the United States, putting the facts, not of the silver question, but of the question, Who shall govern in the Senate of the United States? (and so in the Nation) tersely and clearly before the people. This might lead to some temporary financial depression, and probably would, but we believe that it would clear the air, settle the issue, and certainly result in such reconstruction of the Senate rules as would no longer give to a minority in that body power to permanently obstruct all legislative progress.



That there is no danger of a new sectionalism was again illustrated last week by the numerous resolutions passed by Southern Boards of Trade demanding the immediate repeal of the Sherman Act. Memphis, Tennessee; Charleston, South Carolina; Charlotte, North Carolina, and Norfolk and Richmond, in Virginia, all took action in this way. Senator Harris, of Tennessee, who reviewed in the Senate the action of the Memphis Board of Trade, denied that this exchange represented the general sentiment in his