

The Separate Street-Car Law in New Orleans

By A. R. Holcombe

ON November 3 the "Jim Crow," or separate street-car, law went into effect in New Orleans. This law was passed at the last session of the Louisiana Legislature. By its terms the street railway companies are compelled to use separate cars for the carrying of white and colored passengers, or to fit the cars with wire screens or wooden partitions.

When the bill was introduced by Mr. Wilson, of Tangipahoa Parish—a parish, by the way, that hasn't a street-car in it—there followed a perfect hail-storm of editorials and letters to the press, some condemning or approving such a law *in toto*, others discussing certain phases of or deductions from the law and its operation. One of the most surprising things about the discussion was the fact that popular opinion, so far as both races were concerned, was about equally divided on the matter. So strong, indeed, was the opposition that at one time the bill came near not passing, and had it not been for the fact that in Louisiana the negro is practically without political influence, it is almost certain that it would not have passed. In support of the measure there was, however, a strong following. It is neither unjust nor inaccurate to say that this following was made up principally of those who dislike the negro because he is the negro. This fact is indicated in the chief argument advanced by those supporting the measure, *i.e.*, that refined women and men were forced to sit by and rub elbows with negroes.

Those who opposed the passage of the bill were led by one of the oldest, most conservative and representative daily newspapers in the South. They declared that such a law was neither necessary nor expedient. It is a well-known fact that negroes getting on street-cars choose to sit by negroes rather than by white people, and particularly is this so in the case of the badly dressed or otherwise objectionable kind. There are, to be sure, negroes who, pushing themselves forward, choose

to sit by the best, the cleanest, and the most refined people in the car, but these negroes, as a rule, are themselves clean, well dressed, and, in some cases, refined. On the whole, therefore, it was thought to be very unusual that a negro would prefer to sit by a white person, and more so that a white person would be compelled to sit by a negro who, on account of his dress or uncleanness, was obnoxious. Under the circumstances, the passage of the law was thought to be clearly unnecessary. And, being unnecessary, it was inexpedient, since, without subserving any good purpose, it would certainly provoke ill feeling and possibly friction between the races, as used to happen when the famous "star cars" of the fifties and sixties were operated.

To understand the different opinions expressed regarding the law by several groups of negroes in New Orleans, it is necessary to say a word about the negroes themselves. One group, that which is conducting the educational campaign recently described in *The Outlook*, favored the passage of the bill, but took no active part in the discussions. With a view to bringing about a friendlier feeling between the races, it is probable that these negroes would have advocated openly the separate car system had not a large number of their own race been strongly opposed to the measure. It was fear of alienating these, and of destroying the growing influence for good already existing, that this group of negroes kept silent. With hardly an exception, they kept away from the meetings and refused to discuss the question except privately or by anonymous communications to the press.

Another group of intelligent negroes, the class that take the leading part in the various non-religious organizations, openly opposed the bill, and took steps, after it was passed, to prevent the law affecting the negro population. An association of women attached to the Masonic Order proposed to run 'bus lines to accommodate

negro passengers, and issued a call to the fifty or more negro organizations in New Orleans to send representatives to a meeting at which the question would be considered. Unfeasible as the scheme was, it nevertheless appealed strongly to the negroes, and at the meetings representatives from nearly all the organizations were present.

It was apparent from the discussions that the "ruling passion" back of it all was a sense of deep humiliation that negroes as a race should be considered unworthy to ride in conveyances with white people. The railway companies had announced their intention of putting wire screens in every car, and to have negroes occupy the rear seats. This idea of sitting behind screens, as if they were wild or obnoxious animals, was another fact contributing to their mortification. Many of them, it was said, took pride in keeping clean, in wearing good clothes, and in behaving well, as much because they could feel at ease in decent company as because it gave them other personal satisfaction. To exclude such negroes from compartments occupied by white people would, they said, be as unjust as it would be to force them to sit in compartments with unworthy representatives of their own race, whom they, as much as the white people, despised. It would be equally unjust to admit obnoxious white people to white compartments and exclude respectable negroes from enjoying the same privilege.

Probably the next most pronounced sentiment of the meetings was a demand for negroes to support one another in business enterprises. To the negroes, the strongest argument in favor of a 'bus line was the fact that it would be a negro enterprise supported by negro capital and conducted for the general benefit of the race in New Orleans. Out of this assertion grew many an urgent appeal for negroes to acquire property and contribute to the general welfare of other negroes by patronizing them in their businesses. This sentiment is growing stronger and stronger every day, and the results of it are more and more apparent. Negroes no longer wish to send their children to white teachers; negro patients demand the services of negro physicians; drug-stores, saloons, grocery-stores, coal and

wood shops—in fact, almost every retail business in the city—are conducted on a small scale by negroes, and patronized almost exclusively by members of that race.

Of course the plan to establish a 'bus line failed. Opposition to it grew as its impracticable features became known, and at the third or fourth meeting nothing more was heard of the idea. The prevailing statement then was that the meeting was for the purpose of devising means to better the negro's condition in New Orleans.

The most sensible suggestion came from a band of ten or twelve negroes, who met several times to oppose the 'bus line movement. This suggestion was that eligible negroes register and vote, and that ineligible ones become educated or acquire property in order to be able to exercise the franchise rights granted under the Constitution of Louisiana. At the pro-'bus line meetings no such suggestion was hinted at, and even when it was suggested to the negro community by this small band of clear-headed men, it created absolutely no comment.

Some time before the law went into effect it had ceased to be generally discussed by both negroes and whites. At no time during any of the discussions was there the least violence either in language or conduct, and throughout it all the negroes have retained the sympathy of a large part of the white population. There was, of course, no trouble in enforcing the law. What effect it has had on the number of negroes carried by the cars cannot be accurately known, but the conductors say that there has been a large falling off. Several prominent negroes have refused to be seen on a "Jim Crow" car. They prefer to walk. Others ride on the cars, but stand on the platforms rather than be forced to sit behind the screens.

But, whatever has been the bad or questionable effects of the law, there has been at least one good effect. It has been demonstrated that the negro has more friends among the intelligent white people of New Orleans than he has ever had before; that he is to-day regarded as more capable than ever before of those finer sentiments of which the white race is so justly proud.

Books of the Week

This report of current literature is supplemented by fuller reviews of such books as in the judgment of the editors are of special importance to our readers. Any of these books will be sent by the publishers of The Outlook, postpaid, to any address on receipt of the published price, with postage added when the price is marked "net."

Adventures of Baron Munchausen (The). By Rudolph Erich Raspe. (Children's Favorite Classics.) Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York. $4\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$ in. 250 pages. 60c.

Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha. By Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. (New Century Library Edition.) Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York. $4 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ in. 784 pages. \$1.50.

Thin paper, clear type, and pretty binding unite to give us another of the remarkable small-volume editions now so popular.

American Animals. By Witmer Stone and William Everett Cram. Illustrated. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ in. 318 pages. \$3, net.

The six plates in color and the many photographs from life make this volume agreeable to the taste, and by picture and description it brings before the reader all the important North American mammals. The text has been prepared with evident accuracy and thoroughness; as a scientific handbook the work has solid and permanent value.

American Literature—A Laboratory Method. By H. L. Mason. (Second Edition.) The Drexel Institute, Philadelphia. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ in. 186 pages.

Andy's Adventures on Noah's Ark. By Douglas Zabriskie Doty. Illustrated by Louis M. Glackens. J. F. Taylor & Co., New York. $6 \times 8\frac{3}{4}$ in. 218 pages. \$1.20, net.

Angel of His Presence (The). By Grace Livingston Hill. Gabriel the Acadian. By Edith M. Nicholl Bowyer. The American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. $4\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in. 136 pages. 75c., net. (Postage, 7c.)

Book of Romance (The). Edited by Andrew Lang. Illustrated. Longmans, Green & Co., New York. $5 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in. 384 pages. \$1.60, net.

The latest volume in the long series of fairy tales and folk-lore edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, and forming an admirable collection of the literature of the youth of the world. This particular volume, largely written by Mrs. Lang, retells the story of "Arthur and the Round Table," and a number of other equally well-known tales. The volume is handsomely printed, and is uniform with the long series of its predecessors.

Book of Weddings (The): A Complete Manual of Good Form in all Matters Connected with the Marriage Ceremony. By Mrs. Burton Kingsland. Illustrated. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. 5×8 in. 245 pages. \$1.20, net.

Boston Conference for Good City Government and Eighth Annual Meeting of the National Municipal League. Held May 7, 8, and 9, 1902, at Boston, Mass. Edited by Clinton Rogers Woodruff. The National Municipal League, Philadelphia. $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ in. 357 pages.

Cambridge Modern History (The). Planned by the late Lord Acton, LL.D. Edited by A. W. Ward, Litt.D., G. W. Prothero, Litt.D., Stanley Leathes, M.A. Vol. I. The Renaissance. The Macmillan Co., New York. $6\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ in. 807 pages. \$3.75, net.

Reserved for later notice.

Cathedrals of Great Britain (The): Their History and Architecture. By P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A. Illustrated. The J. B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$ in. 452 pages. \$2.

A compact volume giving an architectural description and historical account of the cathedral churches of England, Wales, and Scotland, the endeavor of the writer being to omit the unimportant details but to leave out nothing which the visitor needs in order to get the atmosphere of each cathedral and to understand its architectural quality and significance. The volume is compact, and is abundantly furnished with illustrations and plans.

Citizen in His Relation to the Industrial Situation. (Yale Lectures.) By Henry Codman Potter, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of New York. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 5×8 in. 248 pages. \$1, net.

Reserved for later notice.

Danny. By Alfred Ollivant. Illustrated. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York. 5×8 in. 425 pages. \$1.50.

Danny is as different a dog from "Bob, Son of Battle" as well could be, yet Mr. Ollivant has made him just as true to his own individual character. The story is more pathetic than its famous predecessor, and has three or four really well-portrayed men and women in it, but it is not quite so vigorous and dramatic in the story it tells.

Dogtown. By Mabel Osgood Wright. Illustrated. The Macmillan Co., New York. $15\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ in. 405 pages. \$1.50, net.

Not only dogs, but cats, birds, and horses, are in this book, which is written for "all who love children and dogs," while the children themselves, foremost among whom is our old friend "Tommy-Anne," are natural, simple, and pleasing. There are many good dog-portraits, and the stories show true knowledge of dog-character. Mrs. Wright is one of the most acceptable and agreeable among American writers for young people.

East of the White Hills. Compiled by M. E. Eastman. Richards' Book Press, North Conway, N. H. $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8$ in. 139 pages.

Elegy of Faith (The): A Study of Alfred Tennyson's "In Memoriam." By William Rader. Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., New York. $5 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ in. 57 pages. 50c., net. (Postage, 6c.)

Mr. Rader agrees with those critics who regard Tennyson's memorial of his friend Hallam as one of the great world-poems. He compresses into a few pages an all-round and felicitous critical estimate of it in its various aspects, literary, theological, and religious, comparing and contrasting it with Shakespeare's "Hamlet," Milton's "Lycidas," Shelley's "Adonais," and Goethe's "Faust." It is "a household poem," as no other of the world-poems is; "the poem of the new theology;" "the soul's song in the world's storm." So well wrought an essay should not have