

in the United States we are so thoroughly disarmed morally that it is hard for us to imagine the state of mind of those countries who have to keep morally armed because they know their neighbors are morally armed, and who therefore fear any scheme which may give their neighbors an advantage in case they have the chance to translate their mental state into a material form.

In particular, Americans have shown themselves incapable of appreciating as a people the French point of view. It has been very easy for us to lay down our arms. So when the French come to such a conference as that at Geneva and ask that in any plan for disarmament every nation's potential military resources should be taken into account, so that those without such resources might be allowed to make up for their lack by the maintenance of a larger military establishment, they find the Americans hard to persuade. Moreover, they have to face the fact that estimating potential resources involves complicated technical difficulties, and besides is largely a matter of opinion, and therefore provocative of dissension. Fortunately, Hugh Gibson is a man of experience and of tolerant mind, and as head of the American delegation has welcomed the expression of the French view. In spite, therefore, of the enormous difficulties which any estimate as to potential military resources would encounter, the French delegation, under M. Paul Boncour, succeeded in getting the French proposal on the program as a subject for discussion and inquiry.

At first thought this may seem to be a serious check to any progress toward disarmament; but it is not. There can be no progress toward disarmament until the minds of nations are set at rest. The first business of the conference now in session at Geneva is not to get rid of arms, but to get rid of fears.

In fact, what is called the preliminary conference on disarmament at Geneva is not really a conference at all. It is rather the session of a large committee to ascertain and establish facts and, if possible, to draw up a program. It is not a political discussion with a view to international action, but the proceedings of a commission of experts. Its purpose is not one of diplomacy, but one of research.

In all such conferences expectations far outrun possible achievement. In the case of this conference popular expectations are likely, not only to outrun

achievement, but to be altogether on the wrong track. People who are seeking to find a means for establishing just and peaceful relations between nations must not look to this conference for establishing such a means. That is not its function. That may be the function of some gathering in the future. At present what these experts are to do is to reconnoiter the ground, find where fears and dangers lie, and prepare the engineering plans for such a structure as the builders who may come after them may find it wise and possible to erect.

## Vare's Victory

**E**ITHER the Republican Senatorial primary in Pennsylvania was a contest over prohibition or it was not. Nobody can have it both ways.

Those who want to relax the Prohibition Act and those who would like to see the Prohibition Amendment nullified point out that Mr. Vare, the successful candidate, was the only one of the three who was openly wet. They therefore argue that the result shows that Pennsylvania, so far as the Republican Party, the dominant party in the State, is concerned, is against prohibition. But what the wets fail to note is that Mr. Vare is a minority nominee. The votes against him were many thousands more than the votes for him. If the issue was prohibition, therefore, the Republican Party of Pennsylvania has recorded itself as overwhelmingly dry.

To this it may be answered that the vote cast against Mr. Vare was a vote against the Philadelphia machine, and that the vote against Pepper was a vote against the Pittsburgh machine. If that is true, it is equally true that the vote against Pinchot was a vote against what his opponents regarded as his political vagaries. In that case, the issue was not clearly prohibition.

In either case—whether the contest is regarded as one chiefly over prohibition or not—Mr. Vare's victory cannot be regarded as a popular indorsement of the wet cause.

For a further analysis of the issues in this primary election and the effect of the vote we refer our readers to Mr. Waldo's special correspondence on another page. It is clear that Pennsylvania has permitted a fine public servant to be dismissed from the Senate and has substituted for him one whose record clearly demonstrates his incompetence for service in any important public position. When

zeal outruns discretion, as it appears to have done in the case of Mr. Pinchot and his supporters, the effect may be as harmful as if it were caused by selfishness and corruption.

## First Aid to the Farmer

**T**HREE agricultural bills are before Congress—the Haugen Bill, the Tincher Bill, and the Aswell Bill. The Haugen Bill has been defeated in the House of Representatives, and is still to go before the Senate. The other bills have not yet come to vote.

All three bills are aimed at the problem of securing for the farmer a fair price for the staple products of agriculture. The Tincher Bill and the Haugen Bill both create an agricultural council, which in turn nominates an agricultural board, which is also created by this bill. In the Tincher Bill the duties of the agricultural board are practically confined to loaning money to co-operative farm organizations, whereas in the Haugen Bill it is provided that the agricultural board shall actively work for the marketing of farm products. The Aswell Bill provides that the agricultural board shall be created by three farmers' organizations.

These three bills represent attempts to solve the economic problems of the farmer and to settle political unrest. Was it not Mark Twain who said that "Every one is always complaining about the weather, but nobody ever does anything about it"? These bills are an attempt to do something with a question which is almost as difficult to handle as the weather itself.

Throughout the Middle West there is undoubtedly a feeling that industry and labor benefit greatly by Governmental assistance. It has been phrased in substance as follows:

Industry is on stilts through the aid of the tariff; labor, through the aid of restricted immigration.

The farmer must get stilts of his own or take away those of industry and labor, so that all three shall be upon the same footing.

Of course the analogy is not wholly sound—very few analogies are. The stilts given to industry and labor are to a certain extent also stilts for the farmer. For the prosperity of labor and the prosperity of industry aid greatly in maintaining prices for farm products.

In so far as the economic situation of the farmers is essentially unsound no

Governmental help of any kind can accomplish a real amelioration of present conditions. Where the cost of production is higher on American farms than elsewhere in the world and where land values are inflated beyond their true productive worth, it will not help, in the long run, to extend Governmental aid any more than it helped the British miners to subsidize uneconomic mining.

If such a measure as the Haugen Bill were to be passed, it could only tend to create a larger surplus of farm products, which in turn would require increased appropriations to process and market. Where there is a surplus of farm products, it will not help to artificially subsidize the creation of that surplus. The resulting cycle of operations is a vicious one. What American agriculture needs is, first of all, an understanding that

over-production or too costly production acts inevitably for the destruction of profit and capital. It needs also a chance to dispose of such products as it can create economically in a sellers' market. The farmer has been tremendously handicapped because all too often he has had little or nothing to say as to the proportion that he should receive of the ultimate price of his products. He has been like the lumberman and the miner who have to trade at a company store. The price of what he has to sell as well as of what he has to buy has been fixed by agencies outside his control. To change this condition without adding unnecessary burdens or creating a new bureaucracy should be the object of agricultural legislation. It is on their ability to do this that the bills now before Congress should be judged.

## Book-Collecting

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I HAVE in my lifetime collected perhaps two thousand books, but I have never been a "book-collector." That is to say, I have never sought, nor, for that matter, have I ever been able to buy, rare books and first editions. Until recently I have been perfectly contented with my situation in this respect. The bibliophile who hunts a book because it is a rare first edition, or because of some peculiarity in its typography or imprimatur, or because it has been owned and thumbed by some great figure in literary history, has in the past commanded my admiration but never excited my envy. I have been inclined to agree with Dr. Johnson that, while first editions are great ornaments to any library, the most useful editions for a reading man are often apt to be the last.

But all that is changed. I do not mean to say that I am any more envious of book-collectors than I ever was, but two recent experiences have taught me to set a very much higher value upon their services as promoters of a love of literature. The prime function of books is not to serve as beautiful and interesting curios, but to enable their owners to make some progress in knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world. The two recent experiences to which I have just referred have given me a new glimpse of how potently the real book-collector furthers this desirable end.

The first was an opportunity which I have had within a month of examining some of the rare books and manuscripts that were bequeathed by a New York collector, who died fifty years ago last April, to a well-known club of that city among whose most loyal members he was numbered. These books were recently put on exhibition at the suggestion of a member of the club who has the instinct of a bibliophile for ferreting out rare and interesting instances of literary history. I will mention only one example in this unusual exhibition. It is a first edition of some of the poems and tales of Edgar Allan Poe, which includes "The Raven" and "The Gold Bug." The margins of this particular copy contain corrections and annotations which Poe himself made in lead-pencil. Some of the corrections are purely typographical, but some are radical changes in the style and phraseology. Here one may see some of Poe's criticisms of his own work. He has, for example, stricken out one entire stanza of "The Raven" and written in a new one. He has changed his adjectives in some places and in others altered his fancies or images. Whether these corrections have ever been incorporated in subsequent editions I do not know. I am not enough of a bibliophile for that. But this annotated copy is a striking illustration of the fact that the creative artist

never attains what he himself regards as a perfect or final effect.

Perhaps the most extraordinary instance of persistent striving for perfection is found in the translation or paraphrase of the "Rubáiyat" of Omar Khayyám by Edward FitzGerald. This retiring, sensitive, and super-conscientious man of letters published four editions of his "Rubáiyat," with many variations, before he was satisfied. Some of his variations are improvements, some are not, but they go far to show that the best poets are not merely born but are made by the hardest kind of labor. For example, FitzGerald made four versions of the noble first stanza of the "Rubáiyat." In the first edition he wrote:

Awake! For Morning in the Bowl of Night  
Has flung the Stone that put the Stars to Flight.

In the second edition he changed this to read:

Wake! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height  
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night.

In the first but unpublished draft of the third edition he framed the passage thus:

Wake! For the Sun before him into Night  
A Signal flung that put the Stars to flight!

And the final form of the third edition reads as follows:

Wake! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight  
The Stars before him from the Field of Night, . . .

Most critics agree that, however admirable FitzGerald's striving for perfection may be, he did not succeed by these modifications in bettering his first inspiration.

But I have left myself too little space to record my second lesson in the fine art of book-collecting. A month ago I had the pleasure and benefit of spending an hour or two in the library of one of the most accomplished of contemporary American collectors, Mr. A. Edward Newton, of Philadelphia. A host of readers know him as the author of many delightful essays about his art, especially of the volume entitled "The Amenities of Book Collecting," which is so entrancing and enticing to amateurs of letters who are not fortunate enough to be