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Capital Punishment.

For the crime of murder seven men were electrocuted Monday at Sing Sing. Immediately there began a renewal of the agitation against capital punishment. Regarding this agitation the New York World says:

Many worthy persons were inexpressibly shocked by the execution at Sing Sing Monday of seven men for murder. They spoke of it as an "outrage against society." The immediate effect of these seven executions in one day has been to renew the agitation against capital punishment.

Yet the July record of a murder a day in this city leaves the people unmoved. They accept calmly the appalling growth of crime and shudder only at its occasional punishment.

Perhaps if these thirty odd murders had been committed within twenty-four hours some of these good people would have felt a thrill of horror.

Capital punishment is a serious thing, but there have been so many shocking murders in this country of recent years that we believe the best opinion now is that there is no way to dispense with it. The feeling seems to be gaining ground that the only way to keep down crimes like those of Beattie and Richeson and others equally horrible if not altogether so much discussed is to make the death penalty the inevitable outcome. The execution of Beattie and Richeson cannot have failed to have a deterrent effect. In Virginia when any young degenerate feels inclined to take his wife to a lonely spot and murder her, the recollection of what happened to Beattie is tolerably apt to give him pause. In fact, such an execution is calculated to have an influence in the direction of deterring young men and boys from forming the habits which lead to the abnormal moral state which made Beattie's crime more or less a matter of course.

The horrible thing about capital punishment is that the criminal has to go to his death knowingly. Violent deaths are so numerous nowadays that they do not excite horror. But it will always be a fearful ordeal for a man to go to his doom consciously and with time to reflect on the awfulness of his predicament. It is a terrible thing to take a man's life as a penalty, but the punishment has to be made to fit the crime if it is to have the desired deterrent effect.

One Battleship.

The indications are that the present Congress will content itself with one battleship. There are some Congressmen who favor two and some who favor making appropriations at this time for none at all. So the one-battleship plan is a compromise between the opposing views. This country can well afford to take the lead in the direction of reduction of armament. The other nations are eager for an excuse to do the same thing and will promptly follow America's example.

The Comfort of Speech.

Kicking about the weather won't make it any cooler, aptly observes an exchange. Our contemporary doesn't want to make the mistake of concluding that every time a man says it's hot, he's kicking about the weather. Just as to grunt helps us to endure pain, so to say it's hot makes the heat more endurable. The average man isn't enough of a Spartan to be disposed to endure pain in silence.

The House of Representatives thinks as well of its opinion as it does of Mr. Taft's. It has passed another bill—the steel and iron measure—over his veto. The House is for tariff for revenue and Mr. Taft is of those who think "once an infant industry always an infant industry."

Editors Not Required to Do Detective Work.

Editor Parham, of the Fayetteville Index, having in his paper given voice to repeated rumors that Fayetteville had a number of disorderly and gambling houses, the Mayor of the city, who seems to be of the Gaynor type of chief executive, demanded that the editor submit proof.

In other words he wanted the editor to leave his regular work and go around and do the work that the Fayetteville police ought to be doing.

The editor should have refused without hesitation to do anything of the sort. But nettled by the defiant demeanor of the Mayor he said he would get the evidence, undertaking to do something which under the circumstances one of Burns' best men could not have accomplished. He soon saw that he was in a very unequal fight and gave it up.

But the failure of Parham to get the evidence to support the charge that there are gambling and disorderly houses in Fayetteville does not signify that there are no such houses in Fayetteville. The existence of such places is hard to prove, but human nature being what it is, every mature man in the average good-sized town who has had his eyes and ears open has sense enough to put two and two together has a conviction amounting to a certainty that these houses do exist. Still he would find it hard to prove their existence. He is not a detective. His information may have come from confidential sources. He realizes full well the difficulty, amounting to a practical impossibility, of getting the frequenters of such places to testify to their existence.

And it is no part of his duty to prove their existence. Neither does that fact, in case he is a newspaper man, estop him from directing attention to lawless conditions when he is practically certain of their existence.

To keep down vice requires the utmost vigilance of the police and when the police are not on their jobs or if they relax in their watchfulness vice will quickly gain a foothold and observant men will know that it exists though not prepared to assume the roles of detectives and get evidence such as is necessary to convince a jury.

Wherever there is a great deal of smoke there will usually be found some fire.

Montague Wins.

The sentiment of the people are decidedly against the standpatters. This was indicated in the Third Congressional District of Virginia Thursday when the Democrats of the district re-elected Capt. John Lamb in favor of former Governor Montague. Capt. Lamb's platform was in brief "Let well enough alone." Montague belongs to the anti-machine forces and maintained that there was considerable room for improvement in the party methods in Virginia and a strong demand for remedial legislation in Congress. The Progressives in the House of Representatives will have a very notable accession in the person of Governor Montague. This is his second victory over the machine in Virginia.

Wilson and the Farmers.

Governor Wilson is displaying praiseworthy interest in the farmers. In his first campaign speech, delivered Thursday at Gloucester, N. J., he asked at the very outset, "When did the farmers ever occupy the center of the stage of politics?" He added that he had seldom seen the interests of farmers regarded in legislation, particularly that touching the tariff.

"It is a long time," the Governor continued, "since tariffs were made by men who even supposed that they were seeking to serve the general interest, because tariffs are not made by the general body of members of either house of Congress. They have in the past been made by small groups of individuals in certain committees of those houses who ever refused information to their fellow members as to the basis upon which they had acted in framing the schedules."

Of course a tariff which was made in secret after the fashion described by Governor Wilson could not be expected to be one that would safeguard the interests of the farmer. Such tariff-making as that lends itself to the purposes of the interests which have expensive counsel to see that they are taken care of and not to the purposes or needs of the farmers, who do not give the tariff very much attention because their interest as individuals has not generally been supposed to be vital enough to justify any great concern on their part as to the framing of schedules. Governor Wilson has taken up the

Battleships.

That the United States must continue to build battleships so long as the other Great Powers keep on adding to their war fleets is one of those questions which we have never considered debatable.

It seems to us that there is no argument to the contrary which is worth consideration and we have never heard of one being advanced which seemed to have any substance.—Norfolk Ledger Dispatch.

Some one of the powers has got to take the initiative and get out of the mad race. Some one of the powers will do it sooner or later. The United States has been first in so many worthy undertakings that it would seem that it could well afford to be first in this reform. As it is now, every one of the powers is afraid to quit building warships. But the one with courage and vision is going to take a decisive step in that direction and then all the rest will follow suit. Every one of the world powers is groaning under the strain under which the war craze has placed them.

Mad Dog Problem.

The biting of cows at Maysville by mad dogs calls attention to the ever present mad dog problem. A timely article on the subject appears in the Clinch Medical Journal for August. It is written by Dr. C. A. Shore, of the State Laboratory of Hygiene, who says tersely that a State-wide law prohibiting the running at large of unmuzzled dogs is the only way of handling the problem. Says he: "Our faithful friend, the dog, is directly or indirectly responsible for its dissemination," referring to hydrophobia. To quote him further:

The suffering, distress and loss caused by this disease cannot be realized except by those who see it daily.

We get almost daily information about the death of horses, cattle and hogs in various parts of the State, and the total loss would be astonishing.

Without committing one's self to the policy of uniformly muzzled dogs, one can at least be excused for saying that the opinion of an expert like Dr. Shore is more apt to be the sensible view of the problem than the view of some person whose horizon is bounded by the satisfaction he gets out of a coon hunt.

La Follette vs. Roosevelt.

Senator La Follette in an impassioned speech in the Senate Friday declared that when Mr. Roosevelt became President there were 149 trusts and combinations in the United States and that when he turned over the government to Mr. Taft there were 10,020 plants in combinations.

That is not altogether explicit. To get a fair comparison it would be necessary to know how many trusts the 10,020 plants formed. Either that, or how many plants were in the 149 trusts with which Mr. Roosevelt started business.

Nevertheless we believe it is generally conceded by well posted individuals that the trusts multiplied tremendously under the Roosevelt regime. It is known too, that he holds that the country cannot make satisfactory commercial and industrial progress unless the trust-makers are given a free hand.

So it doesn't matter so much about Mr. La Follette's bill of particulars after all. His accusation in general is amply justified by the facts. The Colonel claims to be the original Progressive in the Republican ranks, but the judgment of those who are not blinded by a foolish prejudice in favor of the Oyster Bay man will give the palm to Mr. La Follette rather than to the former President.

The Senator's speech on Friday would certainly make a fine campaign document for the Wilson forces and we are not sure that it couldn't be used to considerable advantage by Mr. Taft though his own record as regards the tariff connections of the trusts is not by any means clean.

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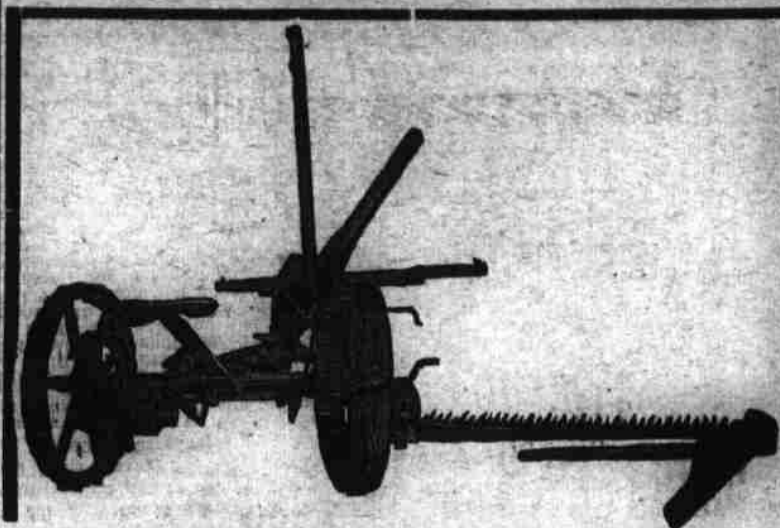
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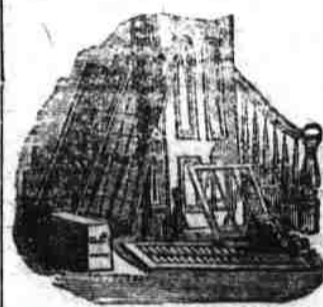
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