

to-day we have more orders than we can handle. Now we should like to get that 100,000,000 plunks, but we feel that the American people ought to pay us for going after it. You, gentlemen, can't expect us to earn \$100,000,000 a year without being paid for our trouble. You are intelligent men, and it is not necessary for us to tell you what a good thing this is for the peepul.'

"If you didn't have an impediment of the intellect, Mr. Shoe Clerk, you could see the mule sense of the ship men's argument. They want to do what they can to reestablish the American merchant marine and keep those hundred millions from dropping into the pockets of the degraded and pauper ship owners of Europe. Now, if labor is worthy of its hire, packing freight across the raging main ought to be worthy of its subsidy. Think of the perils of the American ship owner declaring dividends while his good ship is far away on the bounding wave! He doesn't know what minute she may get in a storm and the passengers adopt resolutions thanking the captain for his gallant conduct in saving a bag of American potatoes from being washed overboard. Think of the danger he runs as he tacks into the treasury and draws his hard-earned subsidy, kicking himself because he didn't ask congress for a bigger one.

"Shipbuilding in this country has been going on only a hundred years, and, therefore, is an infant industry. It is in the nature of an experiment. If it is fed a little subsidy food it may pull through. It takes two or three thousand years for shipbuilding to pass through the measles and mump age, and then it has to have the croup and typhoid fever. If it survives these there is hope. Right now is the critical time and the application of a hot subsidy may bring the bed-ridden kid through all right.

"You never will be a captain of industry, Mr. Shoe Clerk, for there is too much of the lobster in your makeup. If you were out of a job and heard of one paying \$12 a week you would not apply for it. If you were not two-thirds lobster you would see the wonderful possibilities within your reach. Instead of grabbing at the job as if you hadn't had a meal ticket in a year, you would go to Washington and ride in a cab up to the capitol. Then you would hand some three-for-a-halves to the members of the committee and get busy.

"Gentlemen,' you'd say, 'I have been offered a job at \$12 a week. I

have been out of work for 54 years and I am stopping with my wife's folks till I can get something to do. I need work like the dickens, but I can't afford to take the job. I came here to make you a proposition. If you will subsidize me I will take the position. It is needless for me to point out the incalculable benefits the American peepul would derive from my going to work. But you can see I can't afford to work for a salary unless I am paid from taking it from the cashier.'

"Talk that way and you will be breveted a captain of industry, with the promise of promotion at the first vacancy. Don't touch that \$12-a-week job, or you will be deranked for actions unbecoming an officer. You will notice that the ship companies are not rushing after that hundred-million freight business till they know what congress is going to do with the subsidy bill.

"The American peepul are cheerful givers. Just let them get the notion that something or other is for the benefit of an industry in the foundling home and they begin to dig in their jeans. It is a noble spirit and is easily worked. A few years ago the southern sugar planters said all they needed to make life an endless round of pleasure was a subsidy. Did the national government have one it wasn't using? If so, send it down prepaid. Congress looked over its stock of subsidies and found one not in use. It was a small one for \$8,000,000.

"It is the best we have at present,' said congress, 'but you are welcome to it if it will be of any use to you.'

"It will help a little,' said the planters. 'We are raising the best sugar in the world and our forefathers did before us, too, but we thought that a subsidy or two would liven things up a little. Please send the subsidy by certified check and as often as possible.'

"We are a great peepul, Mr. Shoe Clerk, and we hand a punch on the jaw to the man who says we are not. We are ready to protect ourselves at any stage in the road and we will go out of our way to protect our industries, infant or otherwise. 'Have a subsidy or a protection with us,' we yell. 'What do we care for money; brother's rich and father draws a pension. Fill 'em up again, them on us.' Some day we will vote a subsidy for every man, woman and child on earth. What are subsidies for, anyway, if not to use?'—Chicago News of Dec. 8.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

The following account of the recent meeting in New York of the New York State Conference of Religion, was written for The Public by the Rev. W. B. Allis, of Plymouth church, Brooklyn.

Quietly following the imposing Fifth avenue parade of the recent political campaign, there gathered in New York city a convention which has an interest reaching outside state lines. This was the meeting of the New York state conference of religion. Rarely does a gathering call out a stronger list of speakers, but as the addresses are to be published they are here passed over. The significance of the meeting is in the gathering itself even more than in its utterances.

Less ambitious than the world's parliament of religions in range, it yet was a force where the parliament was simply a comparison. This was a conference of religion, not of religions. It began with a frank recognition of differences in worship and religious belief. Yet there was no hysterical appeal for a basis of agreement. It declared quietly but positively: We are agreed. One felt that this was no attempt at picking out distinctive features of each form of faith represented and building them into a Nebuchadnezzar's image which would have after all the weakness of the clay. Nothing was said about theology, religions or sects. There was complete agreement that to dwell on these at such a time would be mere quibbling. It would be just as sensible to collect a dozen leaves from as many trees and try to discover a single basis of unity in them. The unity is in the earth, mother of them all. And so this conference went back to religion, declaring that it alone, because common to the life of all men, can be made the basis of unity. Church, state, schools, politics, business, all unorganized religious forces—these are the channels in which religion runs and not religion itself. Any attempt to create one church, or to save the world by one idea, or to unite men in one credal worship is the attempt to build a dam across the river of God and make of all humanity one great lake. Even if it could be done it would simply mean stagnation.

It needs no prophet to see that this conference has put the whole question of religious unity on a new and permanent basis—on religion rather than any expression of religion. More than that it proved unity to be possible. Here taking part in a single session were a Congregationalist as president, a Baptist as secretary, a Methodist as chairman, a Unitarian, Episcopalian,

Hebrew, Baptist, Socialist and Presbyterian as speakers. And these men were there not to declare the goodness of each particular house of faith (the Baptist found fault with his denomination as being too narrow), but to speak in brave, strong words for those who while religious at heart are outside the organized religious life, for the outcast of the world, and for the social righteousness which shall mark the coming of the kingdom of God upon the earth. Equally remarkable was the devotional service of each session. It was not a side issue, as so often, attended by a few conscientious souls and meeting before the real business of the convention, but a part of each session after people had gathered. A book of common worship had been prepared by a Hebrew, an Episcopalian and a Unitarian. No one claims that this book is a finality. It served its purpose, however, in voicing the common spirit of reverence which so pervaded the whole gathering that it could be felt. The conference was inspired with a faith that God meets with men—all men. It realized its faith.

But, after all, it was the message of the conference which lingers as marking the turn of the tide. There was here no romancing of social dreamers or coldness of mere ethical philosophy. Social and ethical believers were there with the rest. Yet every plea for a purer ethics and real brotherhood was made to glow with the spirit which was in Christ himself. Although on a broad basis which some are disposed to call only natural religion, this conference measured up to the highest that revealed religion can teach. Hebrew and Christian alike spoke and listened with a passionate eagerness, and both echoed the same amen. Neither in social congresses nor in ethical schools have I listened to such fearless, positive application of religion to life. Men realized here, some for the first time, that not only is religion common to all men, but that there is no thorough-going cure for human ills except the religious. A social Elijah coming here from his cave heard the still small voice. An ethical John the Baptist would have listened to a message which would have taught him beyond all questioning that men are preaching a gospel to the poor and outcast which will be marked by increasing wisdom and effectiveness. The old-type individualist would have gone away sobered and thoughtful over the note which will be heard again and again—the single rather than the double standard of ethics in business, in society, and in private life. A corpora-

tion building itself on brutal methods of stifling competition and buying special privileges, would have been startled at hearing such methods denounced in fearless words as unbusiness-like, unethical and un-Christian. The very fact that this note was struck so forcibly in the conservative commercial center of the country is a proof that the tide is beginning to flow from speculative toward applied religion. Neither pulpit, nor press, nor school, nor office can any longer escape a like fearless dealing with these questions of human life. They are no longer the burden of this ism or that reformer. Henceforth they are the burden of religion in whatever form.

This conference has left a high optimism. It has shed not only light but sweetness. In place of the sense of jarring discord in religion it has shown the web of a common faith already uniting men. It has taught us not to waste any more time in seeking a common ground, but to begin work on the ground which is even now common. Men are seeing that unity is not in religious expression, but in religious men. This tide of which this conference is only a wave, setting so strongly toward applied religion, is not of men but of God. There is no longer a social or political or business problem as such. At heart they all are religious, for men are God's humanity.

Brooklyn, N. Y., Nov. 30, 1900.

THE INJUSTICE OF OUR PATENT LAWS.

For The Public.

When the question of amending or doing something else with our patent laws comes up—as it doubtless will shortly — for discussion, the professors and presidents of our colleges and universities and their satellites, the consolidated aggregation of "business men" and wise boys generally, who know almost nothing about the question, will in all probability have more advice to deal out than you could spread over a ten-acre lot. It is because of the fear of being lost in the shuffle later on, that I desire now to say a few words on the subject from the standpoint of an inventor, who has been "up against" what appears like a brace game.

The theory of the patent law resembles that of a contract between the public and the inventor. The public agrees, in consideration of the inventor's telling all about his invention instead of keeping it secret, to hand him a vested right or monopoly for a certain time in what is

new and useful in his invention. Hence patents are not valid if any essential part of them is withheld, and if a patent should have been granted for anything already belonging to the public, it will be inoperative. The purpose of the law is to encourage invention, by the stimulus of the large reward which a monopoly of any useful instrument must yield.

The patent office is a branch of the interior department, and has a commissioner with a large staff and three examiners in chief.

Patent laws are of comparatively recent origin. Nothing like them was known to the ancients. In England the idea is but little more than 200 years old, and the patent law in France bears date of 1791. The patent laws in the United States rest on a statute of 1790 and others made subsequently. The latest amendment was made in 1861.

In a nut shell, the law as it now stands provides for a patent being granted the original inventor of anything new and useful, provided application for patent be made within two years of the time the idea was first employed. If, for instance, an inventor be employed for more than two years before an application is filed with the patent office at Washington, it is public property, according to the law, and no patent will be granted if the facts are known to the commissioner.

If the fact of the invention having been employed, as above set forth, is withheld from the commissioner, and he, in his ignorance of the true state of affairs, grants a patent, anyone can make complaint, and the court will, upon proof being furnished, vacate the grant, and the patent will be worthless.

With this preliminary statement, I wish to call attention to the fact that there are two sorts of things that ideas may be employed in.

First, things that need never be sold and that are used solely for the purpose of making other things; such as machinery for making boots, cloth or pins. The inventor of this sort of thing could keep his invention secret, and enjoy all the accruing advantages that any patent monopoly could assist him to.

Second, things that must be sold if any pecuniary benefit is to be derived from the idea employed. This includes such things as engines, bicycles and automobiles, and things to keep doors closed. The inventor