

of work, or his family may be in great need of the money, but that does not matter. The city demands nevertheless its pound of flesh. And this barbarous law is being enforced. So far all the victims have been Negroes, but, as a resident of the city states, the poor whites will not be long unmolested. About the only example of mercy in enforcement reported was the case of a laborer with a sick wife, and six children. He was not excused, but was given a week's grace in which to pay. Like the other states, Florida taxes labor products, compelling workers to pay either directly or indirectly in taxes for all benefits derived from government although their landlords have already compelled them to pay in rent for the very same thing. Then it levies a poll tax for the right to vote. And now the street tax is levied for the right to stay out of jail. What is there left to tax?

S. D.

Premiums for Lying.

What chance have moralists to cultivate truth-telling habits among mankind, so long as the legislators continue to make it to the advantage of the individual to lie? The income tax, the personal property tax, the tariff tax, are as productive of lying as though that were their primary purpose. What American, man, woman, or child, ever returned from abroad without a secret purpose in the heart to evade as much of the import duties as was safe? What man or woman ever confessed to the tax assessor the literal truth about his or her hidden property? These laws, however, have the excuse of raising revenue for the Government; and so long as the people insist upon raising their revenue in the wrong way, the moralists will have to wage the uneven contest.

What shall be said, however, of the registration laws in operation in many cities that require the voter, upon pain of disfranchisement, to tell his or her age? There was a time when birth days could be celebrated, but times have changed. Jobs have become so scarce that employers fix a maximum age at which they will employ labor. Hence, it is as inexpedient for a job-hunting man, as for a husband-seeking woman, to betray his age. Some of the big corporations that have instituted pension systems will not hire a man after he has reached the age of thirty-five years. None cares to hire him after he is fifty. Gray hairs are tell-tales, but hair-dye may contradict them. A confessed age on the poll books, however, or elsewhere, is not easily disguised. Now that women

in many places are voters, the recording of the age might be a positive hardship. The only legitimate reason for requiring more than the statement that the person is of voting age is that it may serve for purposes of identification. But this is not a complete identification; and if the voter, feeling the necessity of concealing his age, lies about it even this service is lost. If a real and effective identification is needed, thumb prints will answer the purpose, and will at the same time relieve the voter from the embarrassment of confessing his or her age.

S. C.

Where the Disgrace Lies.

Some partisans of European belligerents show a curious kind of sensitiveness regarding news reports of that struggle. They consider it an affront to their side to report any suffering, loss or defeat which the war is said to have brought upon it. They ought to realize that no defeat can increase the disgrace due to entering a needless and avoidable war. No victory can lessen that disgrace. The question of which side is best able to manipulate its brute strength has nothing to do with honor. The true friend of a belligerent will feel shamed at every report of slaughter in which its forces were engaged, regardless of whether it won or lost.

S. D.

Another Scheme to Abolish Jury Trials.

The autocratic spirit that reluctantly yielded to democracy the right of trial by jury has never become quite reconciled to its loss. No age has passed from that day to this that has not seen some effort to modify or destroy the right. The most insidious attempt, perhaps, was that of the employers' use of the injunction to control labor organizations. When "friendly" judges enjoined strikers from doing what the law already forbade, the accused were as completely at the mercy of the judge as though trial by jury had never been. So plain and palpable was this subversion of common rights that a nation-wide protest has frightened Privilege into abandoning this particular form of usurpation, and compelled politicians to take steps to redress the wrong.

But no sooner is autocracy barred from the door than it tries to creep in at the window. The bills now pending in Congress, giving the Postmaster General power to exclude newspapers from the mails for certain offenses, are vicious not alone because they give new definitions to old offenses,

but because they suspend the right of trial by jury. Just as the offense of the injunction-governing judge lay in enjoining a striker from committing an offense already prohibited by law—thereby enabling him to punish the accused for contempt of court, instead of for breaking the law—so the proposed bills offend against democracy not by making acts unlawful that are morally wrong, but by putting their determination and punishment wholly in the hands of a department official. Even should there be a universal agreement as to the immorality of the acts, yet the determination of the fact itself would remain; and no citizen could be assured of even handed justice if placed at the mercy of a judge whose decisions were not subject to appeal or revision.



If there is a single political right that American democracy is agreed upon it is that a man accused of crime shall be tried by a jury in the place where the crime was committed. To permit a postal official at Washington to bar any newspaper from mailing privileges—which means to destroy it—because of an alleged offense is to place publishers at the entire mercy of the Postmaster General. Upon charges of an unknown accuser, that official may gather evidence with his own detectives, and condemn the accused without fear of an overruling by a higher court, thus denying both the right to a trial by jury, and the right to be tried where the offense was committed.



The claim that this authority would be exercised only for the suppression of acts universally condemned by a public sense of decency is entirely aside from the point, since it leaves the determination of the fact to a single human being, who may be subject to political bias, religious prejudice, or economic pressure, and who is fortified in his exercise of arbitrary authority by the knowledge that the Supreme Court has held the rulings of the postoffice department to be of the nature of the army and navy rulings which are not subject to revision by the courts. No more authority should be given the Postmaster General. Rather should some he now has be taken from him.

S. C.

A Significant Decision.

In annulling the Kansas law which prohibited an employer from compelling employes to renounce trade unionism, the United States Supreme Court has made clear that existing economic conditions nullify Constitutional guarantees of religious free-

dom, freedom of speech, or any other rights. If the Kansas law had forbidden coercion of employes in religious or political matters, it would have been just as unconstitutional under the Supreme Court's ruling. This does not mean that the court's reasoning was wrong, but it does mean that if the court is right then the laws must be wrong which make jobs so scarce that in order to get one a worker may be compelled to surrender his Constitutional rights. If it does not mean that then the United States Constitution is but a "scrap of paper."

S. D.



A Safety Valve.

Speaking at a meeting at the Chicago City Club regarding the disturbance at a meeting of the unemployed at Hull House, Jane Addams said she had noticed that young men from abroad were sometimes inclined to speak recklessly when they arrive in this country; but that they grow more conservative after they have become better acquainted with our institutions. It were better, she thinks, that the problem of the unemployed were not so much in the keeping of the young and less experienced; but that if they do wish to talk it will be well to let them. Talking relieves a stress of feeling that may otherwise find expression in violence. If only we had enough Jane Addamses to appoint one as the Chicago Chief of Police!

S. C.



Lawless Anti-Anarchists.

Considering what little respect Chicago's police heads have for law or Constitution, the horror, hate and fear they express concerning anarchy and anarchists seem a trifle inconsistent, if not hypocritical. And the same may be said of police heads in New York and other cities.

S. D.



A Politician's Ideal Mayor.

There are four candidates in Chicago for the Democratic and Republican mayoralty nominations. Each has had much to say about what he thinks an ideal mayor ought to do. According to the expressed views of these gentlemen they seem to feel unanimously as follows: An ideal mayor should not worry about the question of unemployment beyond encouraging charitable donations for the unemployed. He should have no opinion to express concerning an effort, which he must know is being made, to bunco the city out of its rights to a telephone system. He should ignore unprovoked attacks by policemen on peaceful