

ing the unrighteous privileges which are the cause of such offenses.

Powerful interests, misleading phrases, and forms of law too often serve to blind us to the real immorality of privilege. But when we shall have thoroughly realized what I believe to be a final truth—that involuntary poverty is the most menacing fact in modern society, and almost the sole cause of vice and crime, and that involuntary poverty itself is but the logical and necessary result of law-made privilege, all good men will unite in attacking it. When privilege has disappeared, the problems which you gentlemen present will in large measure be solved.

It too often happens, when genuine efforts at fundamentally remedying such conditions are made, that the more superficial are emphasized for the purpose of dividing those of us who at such a time should be united. This usually results in frustrating honest effort in both directions. In such emergencies it behooves men with the responsibilities that you and I have to bear, to be upon our guard. I shall not allow myself to be tempted into any of the weak promises that are sometimes made in these circumstances by men in my position, and which enemies of the policy of this administration would welcome. Confident of the integrity of my own purpose, and appreciating as I do the spirit animating you gentlemen in your work, I will not bid for your co-operation by easily-made and glittering but futile promises. I will not be diverted from the solution of these problems of our city life which I think lie at the core of municipal evils.

I trust you will consider these suggestions in the fraternal spirit in which I assure you they are made. And while I will not bid with insincere promise for your co-operation, I most cordially invite it. In your philosophy of life there is the idea of the Fatherhood of God. So there is in mine. In yours, as in mine, therefore, there must also be the idea of the brotherhood of man. I appeal to you, then, to give me your encouragement and support, not only in enforcing as best we can such laws of our statute books as are provided for the maintenance of order and decency in our community, but also in bringing as near to an end as in our power it lies, the unbrotherly legal conditions, which, by giving valuable privileges under the law to some, thereby deny just natural rights to so many others, and consequently make so much

of the poverty and misery from which indecency and disorder proceed. To whom can I look with confidence for sympathy, encouragement and support in the faithful execution of this purpose, if not to the good men of your profession?

Perhaps I should explain before closing that I have had no intention of being dogmatic in enumerating three and only three possible courses for enforcing the laws and ordinances you cite. If, however, there are other alternatives, I shall be glad to be advised of them and to confer with you frankly and cordially with a view to their possible adoption. But as at present advised I am obliged to approve the policy which the administration has pursued, and my hope is that its continued application will steadily produce better results as time goes on.

Meanwhile, I shall lend my effort to improving the environment of our people by the creation of better and healthier places of recreation, by the establishment of better and more socialized public comforts and conveniences, by the more scientific and humane treatment of delinquent classes in our penal institutions, by setting an example of efficient self-government and home rule, and last and most important of all, by promoting the restoration of individual opportunity and hope to the submerged classes of our city, and establishing a condition of equal legal rights, with no legal privileges, to all its inhabitants.

Permit me to remain, with great respect,

Very sincerely yours,
TOM L. JOHNSON, Mayor.

During a recent cold period in Switzerland thousands of swallows fell exhausted and half frozen. At Lucerne and Zurich the birds were collected and taken care of by the people. When they had sufficiently recovered they were shipped by train to Italy and there set at liberty to continue the migration southward.—N. Y. Tribune.

Our contemporary, the Warsaw Zapadnyjoolos, has been suspended. We have no particular interest in the Zapadnyjoolos, but we want to see whether the linotype man can set up Zapadnyjoolos three times without piecing the type.—Later. He can.—N. Y. Mail.

"There's only one way to get anything nowadays, and that's to work for it," said the first citizen.

"I guess that's right," admitted the grafter, gloomily. "I wouldn't have agreed with you a few days ago, but

times have changed."—Detroit Free Press.

More than a year ago the leading railroad officials declared that they had ceased to grant rebates, which is surely consistent with their present declaration that they are perfectly willing to abolish rebates.—Philadelphia Record.

BOOKS

THE HOUSE OF MIRTH.

The House of Mirth. By Edith Wharton. Scribner's. New York. \$1.50.

This novel has been much talked about, and has received more than the perfunctory notice of the critics. One leader in the world of letters has written of it in terms of highest praise, both for its intellectual power and for its artistic qualities. It seems to be generally regarded as the most important work of fiction brought out in America during the year.

That such a book should be so widely heralded and so highly praised seems to me an evidence of the low condition of our imaginative literature. The great books of imaginative literature hold forth some ideal, set to work in us some aspiration, so that we rise from the reading of them to some finer outlook, to some firmer standpoint in the uphill ways of life. There is nothing of this in the present novel. It holds us in the mud from start to finish.

In doing this Mrs. Wharton is but following the literary spirit of the time, which is manifested not only in America, but Europe. A recent critic has called attention to the absence of the ideal in modern literature by making a contrast between Dante and Ibsen. Dante had an awful hell, but he also had a paradise. Ibsen shows us the hell on earth, but he has no paradise anywhere. Modern literature has abolished paradise, and in doing so has also abolished, perhaps unconsciously, the ideals and aspirations of character which, whether necessarily or not—this is another question—have been, up to most recent days, associated with the idea of religion. At any rate, it is easy to see that the modern trend, for the past quarter of a century, has been away from idealism.

The criticism is not that imaginative literature has been realistic, that is, that it has been analytical and true to life. The criticism is that the trend of modern fiction has been materialistic, that is, that it has confined its view too exclusively to conventional shams and meannesses, and to conventional lusts and ambitions. It may be that it has painted these in dark colors, that it has made the mud look dirty. So far, so good; but it has kept us looking at the mud.

Mrs. Wharton's mud is the gilded society of New York. She writes with artistic restraint, and makes us feel that her pictures are not overdrawn. All is quite natural in its unnaturalness. You have a society built on enormous, unearned fortunes, where the people have no idea beyond a continuation of gambling and a constant effort to find amusement. The tragedy of the book is the collapse of the heroine, who lacked money enough to keep up with the procession, and had no idea of the possibility of a life worth living outside of the procession. One feels that if the poor girl had had any sort of religion, even Fijilism, it might have saved her. Or if she had had any good adviser, some man or woman of sincere principles, strong enough to give her a different view of life, she might have been saved. But there was no one. The only man who gave her a negative discontent with her way of life was not strong enough to give her or himself a positive stand in a better way. And yet there was in her a good basis of character, which makes the tragedy all the darker.

J. H. DILLARD.

GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF RAILWAY RATES.

Government Regulation of Railway Rates. A study of the experience of the United States, Germany, France, Australia, Hungary, Russia and Austria. By Hugo Richard Meyer, assistant professor of political economy in the University of Chicago. New York and London: The Macmillans. Price, \$1.50 net.

This "book appears at the present time," writes the author in his preface, "because of the possibility that Congress, influenced by the discontent that exists in some sections of the country because of the friction necessarily incident to the transaction of the complicated business of transportation, may be led to enact ill-considered laws granting dangerously enlarged powers to the Interstate Commerce Commission." The explanation was unnecessary. From preface to conclusion the book testifies steadily to this purpose in publishing it "at the present time" notwithstanding that the author has not yet "been able to carry out his plans for securing additional information, for bringing all statistics down to date and for a more careful arrangement of the materials already at hand." It is plainly a partisan brief for the corporation side of the railway rate controversy.

Yet a partisan brief is not necessarily either dishonest or otherwise useless. That this book is an honest production there are no reasons to doubt and many reasons for believing. That the material it contains constitutes a useful collection of facts, as far

as they go, like the citations on a lawyer's brief, is also doubtless true. But readers must draw their own conclusions, and from other facts as well as those this author gives. They would be extremely unwise to allow the author to draw conclusions for them, or to confine their attention to the facts he presents. As to conclusions there is, indeed, little temptation, for the author hardly ventures upon any other conclusion than his principal one that the railroad monopolies ought to be let alone, just as they want to be. He calls this let-alone policy "the regime of individualism and industrial freedom under which the United States has attained its crowning position," etc., etc. But if this is individualism, no wonder the masses of the people feel that they have had enough of individualism.

Apparently the author has been one of that university type of socialists, who, with no principle to guide them with reference to the difference between public and private franchises, but struggling empirically with a milky way of economic facts, relieve the hopeless confusions of their task by cultivating a bias in favor of state ownership regardless of normal state functions. This would account for his having begun his railroad studies in Australia "with a strong bias in favor of state intervention in industry." Between industries that normally belong to the state and in the nature of things can be conducted by no private interest without a state grant, such as highway control, and those that normally belong to the individual because no state grant is necessary in the nature of things, as making clothes, he appears to have made no discrimination. Upon that supposition it is easy to understand why his inquiries in Australia caused him to "become firmly convinced of the unwisdom of government regulation of railways or their rates." Just as the confusions of private ownership appear to have given his empiricism an ill-considered slant toward government ownership, so the confusions of government ownership appear to have given it an ill-considered slant back to what he very crudely calls "individualism." At any rate the "overwhelming proofs" of the evils of government railways in Australia, by which the author was converted, are not sufficiently palpable in this book to convert anybody else.

Prof. Meyer proceeds upon the assumption that his case is made out for the railroad corporations if he can raise a doubt as to the case for government rate-making. He does raise serious doubts as to the case for government rate-making. He does make the proposal to authorize a government bureau to control railroad man-

agers look absurd. But he ignores the greater absurdity of allowing private corporations to control public highways. From his plea for competition in a business where genuine competition is in the nature of things impossible, one might suppose either that he knows little about railroading or nothing about competition.

RAILWAY LEGISLATION...

Restrictive Railway Legislation. By Henry S. Haines. Published by the Macmillans, New York and London. Price \$1.25 net.

When it is noted that the author was formerly vice president and general manager of the "Plant System" of railroad and steamship lines, and ex-president of the American Railway Association, the tenor of this book may be surmised. In so far as it deals with public questions relative to highways, it does so with the railroad corporation bias. To look for indications of public spirit is to be disappointed. Public spirited words sometimes occur, but public spirit itself is absent. Yet there is no marked unfairness, and some very wholesome truths are told. For instance, upon examining the Congressional hearings on proposed amendments to the inter-State commerce act, Mr. Haines observes that "the voice of selfishness alone is heard." All the arguments "are directed to the prevention or to the expedition of the same purpose; and that is, the transfer of profits from the treasuries of corporations engaged in the service of transportation into the treasuries of other corporations engaged respectively in the services of distribution or production, or of their intermediaries." The much talked-of "rate question" could not be better summarized in so few words.

The book depends for its usefulness mainly upon the history of the development of railroad organization, including the history of legislative and judicial interference, and in this respect it excels.

COPYRIGHT DECISIONS.

Copyright Cases. Compiled by Arthur S. Hamlin. Published for The American Publishers Copyright League by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

This is a summary of leading decisions on the law of literary property, from the enactment of the international copyright law in 1891 down to 1903.

Ah interesting distinction to be noticed in these decisions, though the principle is much older than any of them, is that which places books within the protection of copyright, while excluding their subjects. That is to say, a copyright gives a monopoly of the particular arrangement of the words of a book, but not of the ideas, however original these may be. Another