News, to push the vice of thrift to its extreme, is refreshing:

A few minutes' thought will convince anyone that the industrious man who "lives up to his income" and saves nothing is at least as large a factor in the accumulation of capital as the man who saves. Suppose, for instance, that we would all start in to-morrow and narrow down our expenses to the last notch, "cut off everything except oatmeal gruel, and make it thin at that," with the idea of saving ourselves rich, how long would it be before we should find that instead of being on the highroad to greater wealth and higher civilization, we should be on the back track to poverty and barbarism? There would be no demand for anything except oatmeal, and as no one could sell anything else that he happened to possess, he could not acquire the wherewith to buy oatmeal and would have to produce it himself or steal it or starve. There would be no trade, no use for all our fine business blocks, nor for the railroads, nor steamboats, nor factories, nor any of the arts of civilization. The labor-saving principle of the "division of labor" could not be utilized except on the smallest scale in cooperative oatmeal production. Altogether, we should be in a very bad way—a good deal worse off than the Indians were, for they had elbow-room and a game preserve at their back.

One of the peculiarities of the philosophy of thrift as a virtue is the exemption its students allow the rich from its obligations. While they admonish the poor to save, they advise the rich to spend, not only lavishly but frivolously and even foolishly. For this is supposed to promote prosperity. What is a vice in the poor is thus made a virtue in the rich. These inconsistent philosophers might find profit in thinking upon Mr. Gibson's suggestive analysis of the doctrine of saving.

JAMES E. MILLS.

This name has no familiar associations to the mere newspaper reader. Whether its bearer lives or dies is not to that great mob-like public of the least concern. His fate would interest them more if he had been a horse jockey or a prize fighter. But there are circles into which the news of Mr. Mills's death will come with something of a shock. He died on the 25th of July, in Mexico, where he had been located for several years in the service, as a mining expert, of a large American silver mining interest. In years he had almost lived out the allotted three score and ten.

James E. Mills was a native of New England. His scientific studies were pursued at Harvard college under Agassiz. He afterwards became an assistant of that distinguished naturalist, with whom he remained always upon terms of intimate friendship. Mr. Mills and Prof. Burt G. Wilder were accounted the greatest pupils Agassiz ever had.

Like his fellow student, Mr. Mills was a disciple of Swedenborg; and like their preceptor, he was a Christian evolutionist. In the latter respect he agreed also with his professional and personal friend, the eminent Joseph Le Conte, whose death preceded that of Mr. Mills by less than a month.

As a Swedenborgian, and for a time a minister of that faith, Mr. Mills was distinctly and decidedly averse to all ecclesiastical tendencies, but especially to those of organized Swedenborgianism. His religion was a philosophy rather than a creed, an adjustment of spiritual principles rather than a set of ritualistic observances. The effort of his adult life was to help strip Christianity of its human accretions.

This religious faith commended to his acceptance the economic principles popularized by Henry George. He consequently became a devoted disciple and valued friend of that "prophet of San Francisco."

A close thinker, Mr. Mills was also a fluent writer; but the productions of his pen are limited to essays and pamphlets. These, however, are profound and durable contributions to the subjects of which they treat.

Those subjects are scientific, religious and economic. In the first category is an essay on the building of a sierra. On religious questions strictly Mr. Mills's principal paper is intended to show that repentance is not remorse, but a development of character away from wrong and in the direction of right. All his writings on economic subjects are a blend of the economic and the religious. To him economic righteousness was an external or outward expression of spiritual righteousness. One of his valuable papers along this line is a plea for service instead of sacrifice. Self-sacrifice, as usually taught, he held to be morbid, and at the bottom of all the excuses for enslavement and impoverishment. Equilibrium of service was his ideal.

In Boston, New York, San Francisco and other American centers of scientific, religious and economic thought, Mr. Mills was long a familiar and respected character. Having made changeless principle, as distinguished from shifting expediency, the standard of all his thinking, he has contributed to the progressive impulses of his period.

PUBLIC WATERWAYS OR PUBLIC RAILWAYS.

The idea of solving the transportation problem by maintaining canals to compete with railways is as antiquated as the school geographies which teach so little about railways and so much about water courses. Railway routes constitute a more important branch of geographical learning, of the practical sort, than the sources and trend and basins of rivers; and for commercial uses, railroad transportation is infinitely superior to river and canal transportation. In these days of electric haste, business cannot afford to waste time on water routes. Their only utility now is as competitive agencies to keep down excessive railway rates. If they are popular for this purpose, it is because a superstitious reverence for vested interests blinds the people to the truth regarding transportation.

Take the Erie canal question for illustration. Efforts are making to enlarge this artificial waterway so as to make it a ship canal. Two independent commissions, appointed by Vice President Roosevelt, when he was governor of New York, have reported with substantial agreement in favor of the principle of enlargement, differing only in details and estimates of cost. A previous commission had recommended the expenditure of $9,000,000 to bring the canal up to requirements. This sum was appropriated and scandalously wasted; yet the Roosevelt commissions recommend still further and greater expenditure rather than make

recommendations or suggestions that might disturb the vested interests of railway rings.

That New York city is fast losing its preeminence as a commercial center, because of differential freight rates instituted by New York's railways in favor of other points, is conceded. It is to check this tendency that New York officials propose to rebuild the Erie canal. They profess to hope thereby to bring into competition a cheaper service that will compel the railroads, in self defense, to lower their charges and thus redirect the movement of freight to the port of New York. In the execution of this purpose the scheme of canal improvement mentioned above is outlined. It requires an initial expenditure of about $100,000,000 of state money.

The need for cheap transportation is insistent, and $100,000,000, if necessary, is not too much to secure it. But success should be assured, to justify a proposition so colossal; and the proposition does not give assurance of success. The mode proposed is not only inefficient, but it would aggravate the condition complained of.

Maintenance, interest charges, and amortization of the principal will necessitate an annual burden of from $10,000,000 to $12,000,000. If the traffic on the canals is doubled, about 8,000,000 tons of freight will be accommodated, consisting mainly of lumber, cereals, iron and coal—bulky and slow-moving freight. Each ton moved will cost the state $1.25 or more, on a highway extending only part of the distance. Added to this indirect burden will be the direct charge for freightage paid by the shippers. Persons and perishable freight cannot be carried in barges, no matter how moderate the charges, and therefore improved canals cannot be of benefit in this most important regard.

Paradoxical as it sounds, canals to succeed must fail. Their utilization indicates excessive railroad rates. It is certain that the railroads will meet the competition of the canals, else the canal scheme is chimerical. But they will reduce rates only on that portion of the business which canal service is capable of dividing with them, recouping their loss by increased charges for services in which they are unopposed. During the open season they may carry bulky freight at a loss, and by thus forcing the canals to cost more than the service they render is worth, arouse a public clamor for the abandonment of state management of our canals, and eventually throw the canals into the hands of the very interest they are intended to compete with.

An independent right of way, open to all transporters, is the essential purpose of the canal promoters. But a plan more certain and less expensive than canals is possible. The distance from New York to Buffalo, about 450 miles, can be spanned by a railroad highway at a cost of about $50,000 per mile. Estimating construction at the extravagant cost of $100,000 per mile, the railed highway could be built for less than half the cost of enlarging the canal.

The state could upon a public highway supply the motive power, permitting any shipper or company of shippers to use the service under proper regulations, as at present with barge owners over a waterway. Transportation companies would then be compelled to do business at competitive rates. There would thus be established an effective competition—without the intervention of state authority arbitrarily fixing rates—that would reduce the cost of service to a business basis of profit. It would place all operators and shippers on an equality of opportunity, and wreck a nest of monopolies now supported by railroad favoritism.

BENJAMIN DOBLIN.

New York.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

New York, Aug. 4.—On the subject of improvements in railway travel, there is something suggestive about the changes that have been made between Chicago and New York.

A score or so of years ago, the best accommodations were such only as the ordinary sleeping car afforded. The nearest approach to the convenience, comfort and luxury now enjoyable was the sleeping car state room; and that was only an approximate approach—approximating present possibilities of comfort about as a journey to New York would approximate in point of distance a trip around the world.

Now, however, the accommodations of first-class hotel life, combined with great speed, are offered by the leading roads. On the Lake Shore, for instance, the limited express makes the journey in 24 hours to the minute. Its stops are few and only at the most important points.

It does not stop at all between Albany and New York, but rolls along the perennially picturesque Hudson at the unbroken pace of nearly 50 miles an hour. One of its cars is half observation and half compartment; and, like the rest of the train, all luxurious. In the observation room a stenographer and type writer serves passengers free of charge. A maid attends upon lady passengers, and a cheerful porter is always in evidence at the touch of an electric bell. In the compartments one can buy a berth as in a sleeping car, though at a slightly higher price—higher than the price on western roads. This is almost as great an improvement upon berths as berths were upon seats. The compartment is sacred to its sole occupant, unless heavy travel necessitates the sale of upper berths. In that event two passengers instead of one are assigned to a room. But be the occupants one or two, privacy is preserved and neither need leave the room from one end of the journey to the other, so complete are its appointments. The chief advantage of these compartments, however, is the opportunity they afford for dressing in privacy and without discomfort. One must have had experience in the gymnastics necessary to prepare for bed or for breakfast in a sleeping car berth, with toilet facilities 20 berths away, more or less, in order fully to appreciate the comfort of making those preparations in a sleeping chamber where all facilities are at hand and no gymnastical contortions are needed.

But that is not all. The whole train (the appropriated seats and compartments alone excepted), is at the service of every passenger. Besides the observation room, a delightful lounging place—all window—from which the panorama of scenery may be observed as it slips by, a buffet car makes an attractive smoking-room. Both are well supplied with reading matter, including periodicals and a library of books, and the whole train is brilliantly lighted at night with electric lamps. This sumptuous hotel on wheels includes a dining car, where meals are served at regular hours for the uniform price of one