

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 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