

better instance of this has come to our knowledge than the baccalaureate sermon of Dr. Raymond, Chancellor of Union College, at Schenectady, N. Y. Dr. Raymond had no diatribes for those men and women who have uncovered the awful corruption of our time. He made no "attempt to detract from the seriousness of the evils brought to light." To him, the facts justify "the general condemnation." But he saw, and this is the really important thing about it all, that "the evils now denounced have always existed," but their malignity was not appreciated, whereas they are now seen in a clearer light and as a result "a higher standard of honesty and honor has been raised." In other words, the exposure and condemnation to-day of evils that yesterday passed unnoticed or wore the mask of virtue, do not mean retrogression; they mean progress, a higher conception of righteousness, and consequently the prophecy of a still higher civilization. It is the old, old story: We must cease to do evil before we can learn to do well; and that we may cease to do evil, we must know our evils and acknowledge them—apply the "muck-rake," if you please.

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#### Private Property.

President Butler of Columbia University also had some sound things to say in his commencement address. He described the popular unrest as arising economically from "dissatisfaction with actual and possible rewards for industry," and politically from "a perception of easily demonstrated inequalities of power and influence, and of an equally easily demonstrated inequality of benefits from governmental policies." This is a clear and true explanation. In analyzing the conditions complained of and their genesis, Dr. Butler attributed the progress of civilization to three institutions: "Civil and industrial liberty, private property, and the inviolability of contract." It might not be difficult to point out ragged edges to this analysis. Industrial liberty, for instance, is hardly thinkable without the institution of private property, and the institution of private property would hardly be complete without acknowledgment of the inviolability of contracts—equitable contracts, that is, for unconscionable contracts ought not to be and in fact are not regarded as inviolable. Nevertheless, President Butler's analysis might in a broad way be accepted without criticism were he to define his idea of private property. Does he mean private ownership only of one's own? On the answer

to that question hangs the whole issue regarding private property as a foundation stone for civilization.

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#### San Francisco Site Values.

The effect upon San Francisco site values of the earthquake and fire, is indicated by Washington Dodge, an assessor who recently appeared before a legislative committee on taxation. Presenting a written statement concerning all property values in San Francisco, he explained that "last year's assessment roll was about \$525,000,000, the assessments on land amounting to \$304,000,000, on buildings to \$97,800,000, and on personal property to \$123,000,000, and that this year's roll will show a decrease of from \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000." Continuing, he said that much of the personal property, amounting to \$123,000,000, has been destroyed, that the larger part of the assessment on buildings has been lost through the destruction of many buildings, and that a revaluation of land holdings is imperative. In limited areas he found that land values had been enhanced, but on the whole that they showed "some net decrease." The important fact here is that the improvement and personal property interests, together with the insurance companies, lose nearly everything; whereas the site-owning interests, as a whole, lose but little, and some owners actually gain. And yet, instead of taxing these site-owning interests for the public needs, thereby making it easier to get sites for rebuilding, the taxing authorities are squaring themselves to tax improving interests as much ad valorem as the site-owning interests. If the rebuilding of San Francisco is an object, this is not a very promising way to go about it.

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San Franciscans ought to consider carefully the subjoined letter from John R. Waters to the New York Times. It was published in the Times of the 11th:

Does not the situation in San Francisco offer an excellent opportunity to make practical application of the Henry George proposition to restrict the assessment for taxation of real estate to so much of its value as inheres in the land only, exempting altogether the buildings and other improvements? Would not this exemption encourage and accelerate the rebuilding of that unfortunate city and be in large part a solution of the difficulties which seem to forbid its rehabilitation? If not, why not?

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#### San Francisco Insurance.

The efforts of some fire insurance companies to escape responsibility for 25 per cent. of their lia-

bilities for fire loss in the San Francisco disaster are not very creditable to the ethical sense of fire insurance men. Their policies exempt them from responsibility for earthquake loss; but this clause means from losses due to collapse, and not to losses due to a conflagration started or indirectly caused by earthquake. On a structure destroyed by earthquake there is no responsibility; on one destroyed by a fire which might not have occurred but for the earthquake there is no earthquake modification of responsibility. These companies owe the fire losses, and they do not owe the earthquake losses. Such was the sensible and fair view that was taken by the inter-insurers, who broke away from the companies in making adjustments and honestly paid their losses. But some regular companies are trying to force acceptance of 25 per cent. reduction on all their losses. They profess to base their claim on the fact that the conflagration was preceded by an earthquake, and that this fact should be considered in adjustment and fixed at 25 per cent. In fact, however, they feel that they need that 25 per cent. in their business. This policy may be "business," but it is not glorious.

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#### The Packing House Exposures.

Some have said that Ibsen's "Enemy of the People" has no moral. But the packinghouse disclosures suggest that it may have had a very pointed moral. Did not the good and thrifty neighbors of "the enemy of the people" vigorously protest against the exposure of the poison in the health-giving springs as destructive of public interests? And isn't that precisely what the packinghouse proprietors have been doing instead of purifying their establishments?

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It has been the constant cry of the proprietors of these filthy food-factories that reports of the "alleged" condition of the factories ought to have been suppressed and they given opportunity to clean up. They have had ample opportunity. When Gen. Miles brought to their attention the condition of the meat they had supplied the army in the West Indies eight years ago, they got so busy trying to ruin Miles that they forgot to make their factories clean and their products wholesome. So it was when Dr. De Bey warned them at the time of the strike. They settled the strike quickly enough to save exposure, but they made no improvement in conditions. And did not Upton Sinclair's "Jungle" give them warning

enough? Yet they expended all their energy in assailing and lying about him instead of cleaning up. Not until the Neill-Reynolds report came out did they try to do anything in the way of renovation and reform, and this appears to have had no other object than the temporary one of fooling visitors and providing a basis for white-washing reports by business committees.

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#### Mayor Dunne's Victories in the Council.

Mayor Dunne scored a double victory in the City Council on the 18th. He overcame one of the most troublesome obstacles in the way of his traction policy, and with a veto he headed off an electric lighting grab which exhibited many symptoms of crookedness. The electric lighting job may crawl into the Council again, but the traction adjustment (p. 250) has been put forward very distinctly. As we have expressly stated before (pp. 169, 243), we regard the Chicago traction question as virtually settled, and on the essential lines of Mayor Dunne's "contract plan" of a year ago. Only two things can disturb it: either an adverse court decision on the statute which underlies the whole subject, or manifest bad faith on the part of the traction interests. That our view in this respect is fully justified appears from Mayor Dunne's message approving the change from cable to trolley, which we publish this week in our news columns.

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#### THE POSTAL SUBSIDY FOR PERIODICALS.

Outside of publication circles the fact may not be generally known that periodicals are subsidized by Congress. This is what the Post Office Department calls it, at any rate, and in the discussions in Congress this is the manner in which it is treated. Our reference is to the reduction in postal rates that is allowed for mail matter of the so-called "second class."

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Mail matter of this class is admitted to the mails in bulk at the postage rate of one cent a pound. The publisher is required to sort the copies of his paper and deposit them in mail bags according to their destination. He then delivers them at the post office, where they are weighed, and at stated intervals he pays the bills which the postmaster renders. By this method, therefore, the publisher is saved the trouble of affixing a postage stamp to each paper, and the