

THE RATE OF HUMAN PROGRESS.

The great scientists, Haeckel and Wallace, have given especial emphasis to the difference in the rate of progress between the natural sciences and their application to life, on the one hand, and the political and social sciences and their application to life, on the other. The physical aspects of our civilization have been revolutionized in a few generations; and now the discovery of a new truth in the scientific or technical field finds almost immediate acceptance thruout the world and its benefits are spread as widely as the social order allows. In view of this it is often almost discouraging for those who are working unselfishly for the common good to note how slowly each step in the application of well-founded social truths is made, in the face of caste and privilege. For instance, the slightest pretence to honesty of purpose would seem to demand immediate action, when the fact is published that the post-office is compelled to pay, as yearly rent for a mail car, practically the entire cost of the car.

But the rate of progress in the scientific and technical field has not, even in the nineteenth century, been advanced without a struggle. A document has recently been published in the German journal *Prometheus*, which should be of interest in this connection. It is an article against street illumination, appearing in the *Koelnische Zeitung* of March 28, 1819, in which street illumination of any sort was opposed in all earnestness: (1) from *theological* reasons, since it would mean an interfering with the divine order, an attempt to alter the plan of the universe, of which the darkness of night is a part; (2) from *legal* reasons, since it would be unjust that the cost of such illumination, raised by taxes, should be borne by those who have not the slightest interest in such an arrangement, whose interests rather oppose it; (3) from *medical* reasons, since the fumes of the gas are detrimental to health, and since, furthermore, the tarrying on the streets in the night air, which would be furthered by illumination, would favor taking colds; (4) from *moral* reasons, since illumination would drive away the fear of darkness, which keeps the weak from many a sin, and since drunkenness and immorality would be furthered by the lighted streets; (5) from *police* reasons, since the light would make thieves bold and horses shy; (6) from *economic* reasons, since great sums would yearly go to foreign countries for the illuminating materials; and finally, (7) from *national* reasons, since the impression of festive illuminations

which have the purpose of arousing and raising patriotism would be weakened by the regular evening "quasi-illuminations." These ridiculous arguments, which a great newspaper in Cologne as late as the year 1819 deemed worthy of printing, are no more ridiculous than a great part of the objections daily raised in conservative journals against social and political reforms, which are only the application of demonstrated truths.

The restrictions which well-meaning conservative men think necessary in the introduction of the referendum, for example, remind one forcibly of the provision in the charter of the first German railway, that a high fence must be erected on both sides of the track to avoid the mental disorders which would be caused by the sight of a rapidly moving train.

Altho the rate of progress towards social justice has undoubtedly been much accelerated in the last two decades, it still has some similarity with the rate of progress in anatomy, when it was considered impious to dissect the human body, which must remain intact for the resurrection of the last day (other disturbing influences, of course, not considered). The science of the anatomy and physiology of the body politic has made enormous strides, partly from dissecting the cadavers of nations, but the sick patients of today still distrust the new knowledge.

C. J. K.

NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Wednesday, Feb. 20, 1907.

The Chicago Election.

Democratic primaries for the April election in Chicago (p. 1087) will be held on February 21, and the nominating convention on February 23. These primaries are under the political bosses' primary law, and fears are expressed that by means of chicanery the strong popular sentiment which all concede to be for the renomination of Mayor Dunne may be baffled by ward bosses. The indications are, however, that Dunne's renomination cannot be prevented.

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Since our last report, the Hearst papers have come to the support of Mayor Dunne. The attitude of Roger Sullivan, more important at the primaries than