

Evening Public Ledger
PUBLIC LEDGER COMPANY
 CYRUS H. E. CURTIS, President
 Charles H. Ladd, Vice President
 John B. Williams, Treasurer
 John J. Spurgeon, Director
EDITORIAL BOARD:
 Cyrus H. E. Curtis, Chairman
 DAVID E. SHIPLEY, Editor
 JOHN C. MARTIN, General Business Manager
 Published daily at Public Ledger Building, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.
 Subscription Terms:
 One Year, \$10.00
 Six Months, \$6.00
 Three Months, \$3.50
 Single Copies, 10 Cents
 Advertising Rates:
 First Edition, 10 Cents per Line
 Second Edition, 7 Cents per Line
 Third Edition, 5 Cents per Line
 Fourth Edition, 3 Cents per Line
 Fifth Edition, 2 Cents per Line
 Sixth Edition, 1 Cent per Line
 Telephone: 2-1234
 Address: Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.

to be especially rich in gold and copper. Five thousand Texans, Arizonans and New Mexicans rushed in. The situation recalled the breakneck settlement of Oklahoma.

There has been an impression that such days had gone by and that once opulent Uncle Sam had disgraced virtually all of his treasures.

He has not. Thousands of federally owned acres are still promise-cramped. There are veritable empires within this republic still to be developed. The end of such scenes as were enacted in Tonopah some years ago and in the hinterland of Holbrook and Gallup the other day is not yet.

When they recur they are enough to make the most fulsome platform orator register himself as a conservative.

PUBLIC BUSINESS AS A PRIVATE AFFAIR

City Sinking Fund Commission Persists in Its Policy of Ignoring Requests for Information

THE last paragraph of the letter by Director Gruenberg, of the Bureau of Municipal Research, to the Sinking Fund Commissioners challenges the commissioners to take the public into their confidence. Their attitude in the past has been that what they did was none of the public's business. Here is what Director Gruenberg wrote:

It is a well known fact that no one has the right to inform the public of the steps taken and the steps contemplated by your body in this matter until you have made a public statement to the effect that you are doing so. It is a well known fact that no one has the right to inform the public of the steps taken and the steps contemplated by your body in this matter until you have made a public statement to the effect that you are doing so.

After reading the letter and conferring with Mayor Smith, Controller Walton announced that the commissioners would have nothing to say on the subject.

This has been their consistent attitude for years. They have made their annual estimates of the amounts required to meet the annual needs of the sinking fund, but those estimates have been too large. The taxpayers have been burdened with charges not properly levied upon them. It has been said that these excess charges have amounted in some years to as much as ten cents in the tax rate.

In 1916 it was discovered that the commissioners had accumulated a large surplus. This was disclosed in its report. It was compelled to use that surplus for the relief of the taxpayers. It did so reluctantly.

Then the commissioners at once changed the form of their report, so that since then it has been difficult to learn the exact status of the funds in their control. Councils in 1917 asked for definite information on various matters, but the commissioners have ignored that request to the present day and have not deemed to supply the body to which by law it is directed to make reports with the facts which it sought.

There is reason to believe that out of the payments to the sinking fund in excess of the annual requirements there is now in the hands of the commissioners at least \$4,000,000. Its existence is said to have been concealed by bookkeeping methods and the commissioners are dumb when they are questioned about it. Their announced intention to ignore the communication from the Bureau of Municipal Research is characteristic.

The new charter contains provisions intended to reform the processes of the commissioners and ultimately to abolish the sinking fund entirely. This fund, as every one knows, is accumulated for the purpose of paying city bonds as they mature. The moneys in it are used to buy the bonds. The money appropriated by the city to meet the interest on the debt is paid over to the commissioners. They in turn hand it over to the city's fiscal agent, who distributes it among the bondholders, including the Sinking Fund Commission.

The commission now holds nearly \$30,000,000 of city bonds, paid for out of the tax levy, on which the city continues to pay interest to itself. Under a proper system of financing about two-thirds of this amount could be canceled at once, relieving the city of the interest charges and easing the tax burdens on every one.

The city is in the condition of a business man who has floated negotiable notes and finds himself with money with which to buy them in the open market. But when the business man buys his note he tears it up and stops paying interest on it. The city, however, buys its own bonds and continues paying interest to itself on them till their maturity.

The abuses from which the city is now suffering have grown up under the sinking fund system, a system necessary when long-term bonds are issued. Certain sums have been appropriated each year to provide money with which to pay the bonds when they fell due, so that in ten or fifteen or twenty years the bonds could be retired without putting an enormous sum in the annual budget. The finance sections of the new charter have been drafted in accordance with the theory that serial bonds are better than long-term bonds.

Now, serial bonds are like installment mortgages, payable a little at a time. For example, if the city wishes to borrow \$30,000,000 for thirty years, under the serial plan it would issue the bonds in thirty series of \$1,000,000 for each series, the first of the series to run for one year, the second for two years and so on until the thirtieth, which would run for thirty years. An annual appropriation of \$1,000,000 a year, plus the constantly decreasing interest charge, would wipe out the debt by the time the last installment fell due and it would save to the taxpayers a large sum in interest.

The new charter does not directly command this system to be adopted, but its provisions, for the disposal of the bonds held by the sinking fund commissioners, are such that it would be so much more expedient to adopt it than to continue the present system that reasonable men cannot well refrain from accepting it.

It would simplify municipal bookkeeping; it would make it impossible to juggle with the accounts in a way to conceal from the public the real state of affairs. It would make it impossible for the city to sell to bankers a new issue of bonds and then for the Sinking Fund Commis-

sioners to pay a commission to brokers to buy from the successful bidder the very bonds which had been issued a few days earlier. And, above all, it would be in the interest of economy.

If the Sinking Fund Commissioners persist in their determination to ignore Director Gruenberg's pertinent communication it is likely that the director will address the same letter to the new commission which will be in charge after the inauguration of the new Mayor in January. The Mayor is an ex-officio member of the commission.

Congressman Moore has announced that he will enforce the provisions of the new charter in the spirit in which they were written. He cannot keep this promise and ignore the sections of that document to which Director Gruenberg has called attention. If he finds the other two members of the commission determined to continue their old policy, and if he has a new Council in sympathy with him, the new Mayor can find a way to get a Sinking Fund Commission that will respect the charter.

DEATH-TRAP CROSSINGS

NEIGHBORHOOD ties are strong in Philadelphia and by reason of them the Clarkisboro tragedy takes on a peculiar poignancy. The disaster is a cruel and shocking blow, which will leave for many a year its dark impress on the particular community in Kensington whence all the victims were drawn.

The inquest will set forth the conventional succession of bitter "ifs." They will not repair wrong hearts, but they will be worth proclamation if they prompt action against the venerable but still potent perils of grade crossings.

It is a prevalent impression that the abolition of such death traps in New Jersey would be particularly costly and would in this level region necessitate virtually the reconstruction of most of the railroads. If viaducts or tunnels furnished the sole solution of the problem the obligation would indeed assume formidable proportions. But relaying the surface lines is not the only remedy.

Much may be accomplished by the right sort of picketing at the danger areas and by the use of safety gates so designed as to be something more than mere theoretical barriers. Continental Europe is well supplied with grade-crossing safeguards which really do halt the highway traffic when it should be stopped.

The elaborate fence-like gates employed in hill-less Flanders are unremittently tended. They protect the rashest individuals almost as well as would a bridge over a cut or a drive through an embankment. The topography of South Jersey does not, therefore, render the situation incapable of reform, save at prodigious cost. If we cannot yet, in all parts of the country, imitate England, where level crossings are reduced to an inconsiderable minimum, we can at least follow the wise example set on so many of the flat stretches of land on the Continent.

It is vain repetition to point to the Clarkisboro shambles simply as a "warning." The inevitable "ifs" will some day be brought again into tragic play unless tangible reforms are adopted. Crossings of the Clarkisboro type, with no gates whatever, are murderous archaisms.

FINISH THE JOB!

THERE is one way in which the voters who nominated Mr. Moore may yet see most of their efforts and hopes wasted. They can permit the capture of the new Council by men who still aim to tie the hands of the new Mayor, to frustrate his plans and to defeat the city's hope for clean and modern government. The job is only half done.

The president judge of the Municipal Court advocates the establishment of a poor man's court, where justice may be dispensed, like salvation, free. This is in line with the suggestion recently made in a bulletin issued by the Carnegie Foundation, and the idea should not be permitted to languish.

Hats off to Mr. Feelan! He had the nerve to stand up for the United States Government against the council of the Reds that dominated the Pittsburgh meeting of the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor. And sooner or later the rank and file will have the nerve to back him up.

"Fostering Bolshevick architecture" is the way Philadelphia's skyline was described by a speaker at a recent meeting of the T-Square Club. By which we may judge, taking into account the temperament of the artist, that he considers it not exactly as it should be.

Senator Jones urges the establishment of a new merchant marine corporation with headquarters in Philadelphia. The senator shows appreciation of the prophecy of Prof. Luigi Luiggi that this city is destined to be the principal port of the country.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul becomes simple arithmetic compared to the municipal custom of causing Peter to draw on Peter to pay Peter and then allowing Peter to remain unpaid.

Governor Sproul shows wisdom in apparently ignoring the state-wide-strike threat. But he'll doubtless be ready to cross that bridge if it is ever reached.

What the government is fighting is not labor unionism but radicalism. It is a fight between democracy and revolution.

The action of Bethlehem steel workmen in demanding a ten-hour day instead of eight shines like a good deed in a naughty world.

THE HABIT OF BROWSING

Writer Finds It Commendable and Helpful and a College Library Makes Excellent Pasture

By JOSEPH M. BEATTY, JR.

I REMEMBER very distinctly what I delight I used to spend hours in the college library during my undergraduate days, with no other object in view than that of making chance acquaintances with books. That was the period before my zest in the discovery of an ancient leather-bound volume with gilt letters had been dilled by the so-called critical point of view, a development not undesirable in itself, but one that takes away the pristine glory of a vast collection of miscellaneous writings. Now that I have returned to the world, I have often thought that the Baconians have not an understanding of the fine art of browsing which Shakespeare must have had to such perfection. Imagine, dear cynic, with what eager eyes the player-poet must have turned for the first time the pages of North and Holme's "Honeycomb" with what discernment his mind caught the significant detail. No scholar he, with thick-lensed spectacles unseeing in the world, and no mere memorizer either but a fine brave fellow who skimmed his books and let his imagination make them live. Keats, too, must have been a prince of browsers, else had he never looked into Chapman's Homer, and the world had been the poorer. And surely the model for all the craft must be forever the beloved R. L. S. with his love of romance and his omnipresent notebook.

ONE of my chief avocations in my college days was the study of genealogy, in which I was aided and abetted by two aged aunts. It was not strange, therefore, that occasionally I turned to certain collections of lives of eminent Americans and Englishmen in the hope of preening my plumes of vanity by glancing over the famous deeds of some long-deceased ancestor. There was one man in particular who fired my imagination, a distinguished soldier and statesman of six hundred years ago, who stood at the top of one ancestral line. I would read of his exploits, and muse half-pitifully upon the fate of those less fortunate men who did not have as an ancestor a friend and counselor of Chaucer's king. My roommate continually boasted that his ancestors had come over on the Mayflower; since none of mine had had to leave England at that time, I was forced to depend for my repartee upon my ancestor of Edward's reign, beside whom my passenger in 1224 was a mere paragon. Unfortunately, I decided in an evil moment to write a complete life of my noted forebear. The first fact that I discovered was that he did not leave any descendants!

I HAVE always found the winter the best season for browsing, because, unless one is in just the proper prose between physical laziness and mental alertness, and unless the atmosphere outside urges one to remain within doors, it is difficult to enjoy this gentle art to the full. In the fall we were busy getting under way and had the stress of new courses, the deluge of new friends, the rush of the thousand duties that mark the beginning of a college year. But by December, the football season had ended, Thanksgiving had passed, and the first snow had sifted lightly across the soccer field.

THEN the library found its own. I used to sit through the long winter afternoons in one of the small alcoves, on the one side a window looking out over the campus; behind me and in front were book shelves reaching up to a height of eight feet or more. Here I needed scarcely to move in order to reach the treasures that were mine for the morning of an arm of Chaucer, Wilson—that beloved vagabond whose rimes were wrought of gold—Kit Marlowe and Tom Nash with his marvelous refrain:

I am sick, I must die,
 Lord have mercy on us.
 There, too, I discovered Herrick and wrote lyrics in which I tried to catch his magic, but in vain. Keats and Shelley, Browning and Swinburne were in the poetry corner, and as I plunged from there further and further into the domain of new friends, I became in turn hero-worshippers and articulate poet. I think it was in my sophomore year that I reveled in Omar Khayyam, and decided that Christian optimism was largely a pleasing delusion. I was reading ravenously and uncritically; I tried to assimilate William Wordsworth, and did not know whether to be a disciple of the great Gray Poet or of the transcendental Brahmin. This was the golden age of impressionism.

IT WAS on a late afternoon when I was a freshman that I had my first long talk with the great scholar whose magic had lured me to follow in his path back to the golden land of high romance, the paradise of the singer of songs. I had sat spell-bound in his classes, listening to his wealth of learning, carried away by his stalwart viking personality. But until then I had worshiped afar.

I was curled up in my favorite place that afternoon, reading of Robin Hood and Little John, when the great man, in search of a book, came into my alcove. I can see him still, with his steely mustache whitened still more by the snow, and his bushy brows under which his keen eyes gleamed. He spoke to me and my friend as I was, I summoned up courage to ask him a question on the ballads I was reading—I forgot the question—it was probably some simple query such as a fledgling would ask, yet the great man sat down, and before me he was pouring out to him all the hopes and dreams he had inspired in me. I forget much of his advice, but some of it dealt with wide reading and this very subject of browsing which he considered one of the most essential elements in the training of a lover of literature. I have never known a man who combined so well the characteristics of a scholar and a literateur which he portended to me that afternoon—the need for accuracy, for wide reading, and for a sympathy with the great minds of all time. Front that afternoon dated a friendship that has only recently ceased to be.

For those library walls will never again resound to his quick tread, and his former students can never again have the benefit of his words of counsel which had never failed them. I visited the college last June just after the great man had been laid away in the quiet graveyard near the old meeting-house, and so deeply had he built himself into the very building that the institutions of the place that sitting in the library I could not help looking out half-expectant across the greensward, to see his stalwart form appear beneath the elms.

"LET'S HAVE NO SLACKERS TODAY!"



THE SAUCEPAN

At Sixth and Chestnut

AT SIXTH and Chestnut when the day Grinds out its many duties, And work forbids the mind to stray In search of Nature's beauties Romance seems far enough away From Sixth and Chestnut.

And yet upon a certain morn When all the world was youthful, A glorious band, a hope forlorn, Spake words courageous, truthful, And straightway Liberty was born At Sixth and Chestnut.

At Sixth and Chestnut there's no dearth Of sweet romance, 'Tis coming In guise of glory, grief or mirth With news the wires are humming From all four corners of the earth To Sixth and Chestnut!

HINTS FOR YELLOW JOURNALISTS

How to write an Editorial. First get your facts confined and heard, Then bury and forget 'em. Give the people what they want. Give 'em JAZZ. Play up patriotism. When people enquire they forget to think. Wave the starchy flag. No one who agrees what is going on behind it. Remember always that those who sue with you are saints; and those who disagree with you are cutthroats, thieves and WORSE.

And whenever you have anything to say that is particularly commonplace and banal PLAY IT UP IN LARGE CAPS. (Example) SPEED.

THE WORLD HATES A SLOW POKE.

The slow poke is usually a counterfeiter and a wife-beater. Better be a RABBIT than a CLOTH. Work fast, eat fast, live fast, speak fast and be ready to say the thing that seems to be in what you call your mind. Don't wait to have something to say before talking or writing. Such a rule may condemn you to silence or rob you of the joys of writers' cramp. Say something! Be something! Have pep! ZIPPY!

Entries in a Frayed Notebook

It strikes us as being very delightful that the gentleman from whom we buy grapes in the same gentleman from whom we buy in the evening an orange at Ninth and Chestnut. It is charming to realize that he moves north with the same regularity that the sun moves west and that at some point in their journey they cross each other's path. The two wheeled vehicle on which he displays his wares is topped with a riot of color. There is a mountain of bright red apples of apple red; orange-colored oranges, pear-colored pears and grape-colored grapes, and the copper-colored copper kettle that houses the roasting peanuts sings songs through a thin whistle and, well, really, if we ever get through the mail that clutters our desk, we must perpetrate a little pastele on this subject. We are sure it will be very well worth while.

We acknowledge with shame that we have not yet answered a pressing invitation of the king of Siam to visit Bangkok—or is it Manayunk?—to go fishing on the Tonle-Sap (or, maybe, the Schuyllkill). We admit our remissness is all the more reprehensible because his majesty on the last occasion he was in Siam was pleased to express his riotous appreciation of a harmless little quip of ours when invited to a court function. "Will I be required to wear my soap and fish," we demanded, "or will you take me just as I am?" Oh, well, we Japanese must be merry once in a while.

Our wife is sometimes filled with foreboding when she realizes that the time will

GRAND OPERA

THE fiddles are twanging, the kettledrums banging. The gifted soprano is shooting top-notes; The solemn contralto, Maria Rialto, Is urging the chorus to crack their white throats; The tenor and basso, compatriots of Tasso, Are having a row with the fierce baritone. They're making it willing and soon there'll be killing With bloodthirsty snorts from the Prussian trombone.

The maids are capricious, the men's tempers vicious, The costumes are quaint and the manners are bad; No visible copper, silent and proper, Keeps watch, and knives glimm in the belt of each lad; So trouble, bad trouble, arrives at the double, And some one goes down with a last ringing shout.

And some one goes to glory. But please read the story— Once in you will never guess what it's about. It's rather a tax on the calm Anglo-Saxon To beat the Italians at this funny game; With gestures erratic and movements rheumatic The Aussies get through, but there's rarely a flame.

But Swell, and Bell, and Orbatayelli Behave as they would in a sea-ka-doo-ops! Beneath that proud banner the grand-opera manner Is practiced all day round the cook's kitchen hoist. —Sydney Bulletin.

What Do You Know?

QUIZ

1. How many voyages did Columbus make to the New World?
2. What are incunabula?
3. When did soft coal mining become a recognized industry in Pennsylvania?
4. What is the last book in the Old Testament?
5. When did the Sepoy Rebellion break out?
6. Name an article of food (especially characteristic of Philadelphia)?
7. What is a "Fidus Achates"?
8. Define majority and plurality?
9. What are the colors of the flag of Sweden?
10. How did the Roman wife die?

Answers to Yesterday's Quiz

1. A significant event in American history, which is to be honored with a tercentenary celebration next year, is the landing of the Pilgrims.
2. Brand Whitlock, American ambassador to Belgium, accompanied King Albert back home.
3. Serendipity is the gift of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for. The word was coined by Horace Walpole in allusion to the tale of the "Three Princes of Serendip."
4. Shakespeare's vocabulary was about 24,000 words.
5. This is about 19,000 more than are used in the King James Bible.
6. Daniel Defoe wrote "Moll Flanders."
7. Dr. Karl Döcker is at present back in Berlin.
8. Two works by Gustave Flaubert are "Salammbô" and "Madame Bovary."
9. A federal district court in Indianapolis granted the injunction against the coal strikers.
10. The colors of the Danish flag are red and white.

ABOUT A STICK

"About a stick," the printers say, Will fill my space. Alackaday No thought will come to give me ease; No quip, no quirk, no joke, no wheeze To brighten up my weary way.

No stick can make me grumble! Nay! Though Fate belabor me each day There's naught to bring me to my knees About a stick!

A stick of type! Two inches! Pray What's there to hurt? Of matter gray Just half a spoonful, if you please; Stir gently; set where fancies tease.— 'Tis thus one drives out a fancy About a stick.

DEMOSTHENES MCGINNIS