

be *satisfactorily* presented in another language than his own, if by *satisfaction* we mean the pleasure which a *perfect* equivalent affords a reader of critical taste? It will often happen that a particular rendering raises a misgiving, if it do not stir up a feeling akin to disgust, when the reader, on making the attempt to provide a substitute, has to give up the endeavor. The New Testament Revisers have a special claim to this kind of consideration, for they labor under another disadvantage greater than any of those we have enumerated, in comparison with the Old Testament company. The writings of the New Testament, especially the Epistles, are vastly more difficult to translate than the Hebrew Scriptures. The Old Testament company had no such obstacles to wrestle with as encountered the Revisers in the Epistles of Paul. If the Old Testament company are censured less, it is because their task was easier and because they have made hardly any attempt to improve the text. In truth, however, both groups of revisers are entitled to honor and gratitude for the measure of success which they have attained.

The fact that the Bible is a sacred book is attended by one incidental disadvantage. To a considerable extent, at least at the present day, it is taken out of literature. That is to say, the poems, the histories, etc., which compose it are massed in one volume instead of being separately published, and for this reason are less read by a numerous class who are not sufficiently alive

to their distinctively religious value. The book of Job is about the only one of the Scriptures which is ever published by itself in a form to attract literary readers. Whatever tends to freshen the pages of the Bible, to remind people that it is a composite collection, and not a single treatise, and that a treatise all in prose, is a benefit. The New Revision, it is possible to see, is not without an effect of this kind.

The revision of the early Protestant versions of the Bible in different countries, and the wide-spread interest felt in the work among all classes, are among the many signs that the Scriptures are not losing their hold upon the minds of men. The study of comparative religion does not operate to weaken, it rather tends to increase, the influence and authority of the Christian Bible. Let any one attempt to read the Koran, and he will rise from the effort with a profounder sense of the depth of power that belongs to the writings of the Prophets and Apostles. Editions of heathen scriptures and excerpts from heathen sages which have been sometimes put forth as rivals of the Bible bring no very large profit to editors or publishers. The Bible remains a well-spring of spiritual life. The conviction is not likely to be dislodged that within its hallowed pages life and immortality are in truth brought to light. The progress of culture and civilization in the lapse of ages does not lessen the worth of the treasure which they contain.

OPEN LETTERS.

What shall be Done with Our Ex-Presidents?

THIS question, which, though little discussed, has not a little exercised the minds of reflecting people in the United States of late years, was brought into special prominence at the last session of Congress by the introduction and passage of a bill extending special relief to ex-President Grant; though in this particular case it was, of course, the former military services and position of the general that enabled Congress to act effectively.

There are many who deem the present custom with regard to our ex-Presidents the most democratic—using the word in its general, and not in its partisan sense—and therefore the most fitting method. The President, they say, is taken from among the people to act as their chief servant for a brief period—the expiration of which he resumes his place in the popular ranks, as he should. There are, indeed, some who do not believe in anything that will tend to further exalt or *personalize* the Presidential office, preferring as they do to foster a tendency towards the abolition of the Presidency, or its conversion into something like the Swiss executive system.

But of the various suggestions having to do with the institution as it is, the one printed below seems to us of especial practical suggestiveness and value. It is from the pen of one who always speaks upon public questions with authority, but whose name we suppress from a desire that his recommendation should be considered and judged, as such a question always should be, entirely upon its merits.—EDITOR OF THE CENTURY.

We have now (June 15, 1885) three ex-Presidents. Since the retirement of President Washington in 1797 we have never been without one or more. We never had more than four except for a single year, in 1861–62, when we had five. The average number for the eighty-eight years since Washington became our first ex-President has been less than two and one-half per annum. But in the whole expanse of the United States there is no class of citizens so difficult to classify, none whose position is in so many respects awkward and embarrassing. But yesterday a king; to-day “none so poor to do him reverence,”—at once the most conspicuous and one of the most powerless private citizens of the Republic. Though representing not only the eminence of character which called him to the chief magistracy, but the accumulated distinction which the discharge of its duties for one or more terms necessarily begets, he is relegated to the comparative obscurity of private life, unsupported by a single expression of the nation’s gratitude or the slightest official recognition of the loss the public service sustains in parting with his unique experience and trained familiarity with public affairs. He takes with him into retirement no official rank, no title, not even a ribbon, nor a perquisite unless it be the franking privilege, to distinguish him from the obscurest and least deserving of his countrymen. More unfortunate even than a good household servant, he cannot command a certificate from his last place. Neither has he the privileges and exemptions which attach to political obscurity. Like an *aërolite*, the height from which he has descended makes him an object of perpetual and costly curiosity. If a man of moderate means, as most of our Presidents

have been, he is condemned by the very eminence from which he descends to expenses to which no private citizen is liable,—expenses for which the State makes no provision, and expenses from which there is no graceful or dignified escape. The Presidency is the only office in the country which to a considerable extent unfits its incumbent for returning to an active prosecution of the profession or calling in which he may have been trained. He is expected to sustain the dignity of the first citizen of the Republic for the remainder of his life, without any of the resources or privileges which such a rank implies. At the very time when his availability as a public servant is presumably greatest, and when he deserves to be regarded as one of the nation's most valuable assets, he is not only cast out like the peel of an orange as worthless, but virtually disqualified for subordinate positions.

Is this as it should be? Is it just to our chief magistrates? Is it just to ourselves? Is it good economy? Is it good politics?

The time seems to have arrived when these questions should be considered, and something should be done to secure for our ex-Presidents a rank and position which shall make due account not only of the services they may have rendered the country, but those which they more than other persons are still capable of rendering. Congress has occasionally allowed itself to make some temporary provision for necessitous ex-Presidents; but, besides being transient in their operation, these expressions of national sympathy involve invidious discriminations, and they humiliate the beneficiary by granting as a favor or a benevolence what should be conceded only for an equivalent.

Without any pretension to have found the only or the most proper remedy for this great wrong to our chief magistrates,—a wrong resulting from no deliberate purpose, but from an oversight of the framers of our Constitution,—we have one to propose which commends itself to our most deliberate judgment, and to which as yet we have found no serious objections. It is very simple and not entirely new, though we are not aware that it has ever been formally submitted to the public.

We would suggest, then, that when a President's term of office expires, he shall become a senator of the United States for life, with half the salary he received as President. The very day that he hands over the key of the White House to his successor, he should be qualified to step into the upper house of our Federal legislature, and be joined to the other seventy-six statesmen whose duty it is to review his successor's policies and measures. From being the elect of a party, he would become the counselor and protector, not of one party, but of all parties; not of any political sect, but of the whole nation.

With no political ambitions ungratified, his independence as complete as it can or ought to be in this world, he would then occupy that position in which it

would be least difficult to consecrate himself entirely and disinterestedly to the service of his country. Having no patronage to bestow, he would be under no obligation to meddle with its disposition by those who had. His social position being assured, his income would amply provide for all his wants, and leave him no pretext or excuse for resorting to any methods, dignified or otherwise, for increasing it. Whether at home or abroad, he and his ex-Presidential colleagues would have a well-defined official rank only lower than that of the President himself.*

As the mode of constituting our legislative bodies is determined by the Constitution, the following amendment to that instrument, or something substantially like it, would be required to accomplish the result at which we are aiming:

SEC. 3, ART. I. of the Constitution shall be amended so as to read as follows:

The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two senators from each State, chosen by the legislature thereof for six years, and of such persons as shall have served to the close of a term as President or acting President of the United States, and each senator shall have one vote.

SEC. 5 of ART. I. shall be amended to read as follows:

The senators and representatives shall receive a compensation for their services, to be ascertained by law and paid out of the Treasury of the United States. Each President-senator shall receive for his compensation a sum equal to one-half of the salary which has been allowed to him while President, to be paid also out of the Treasury of the United States.

The following table will show who were ex-Presidents at one and the same time, and who, had they been entitled to them, would have occupied seats in the Senate from the year 1797 to the 4th of March, 1885:

1797 to 1799, Washington	1
1801 " 1809, J. Adams	1
1809 " 1817, Adams and Jefferson	2
1817 " 1825, Adams, Jefferson, Madison	3
1825 " 1826, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe	4
1826 " 1829, Madison, Monroe	2
1829 " 1831, Madison, Monroe, J. Q. Adams	3
1831 " 1836, Madison, J. Q. Adams	2
1836 " 1837, J. Q. Adams	1
1837 " 1841, J. Q. Adams, Andrew Jackson	2
1841 " 1845, J. Q. Adams, A. Jackson, Martin Van Buren	3
1845 " 1849, Martin Van Buren, John Tyler	2
1849 " 1852, Martin Van Buren, John Tyler, James K. Polk	3
1852 " 1856, M. Van Buren, John Tyler, Millard Fillmore	3
1856 " 1861, M. Van Buren, J. Tyler, M. Fillmore, F. Pierce	4
1861 " 1862, Van Buren, Tyler, Fillmore, Pierce, Buchanan	5
1862 " 1868, M. Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, J. Buchanan	3
1868 " 1869, M. Fillmore, Franklin Pierce	2
1869 " 1874, M. Fillmore, Andrew Johnson	2
1874 " 1875, Andrew Johnson	1
1870 " 1880, U. S. Grant	1
1880 " 1885, U. S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes	2

* When ex-President Grant arrived in England, he was invited by the Duke of Wellington to dinner. The diplomatic corps were also invited. The American minister insisted that the ex-President should take precedence and occupy the seat of honor. The ambassadors, who represent their sovereigns and claim the rights which would be accorded to their sovereigns if present, declined to attend the dinner if the precedence was given to Mr. Grant; taking the not unreasonable ground that Mr. Grant was not an officer of any government, that he had no rank but that of a private gentleman, that his country had given the world no evi-

dence that it expected him to be distinguished from any of its other citizens, and therefore that they would be derelict in allowing him to take precedence of their sovereigns, represented in their persons. The matter was finally compromised by the intervention of the Earl of Derby, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, by so distributing the guests that neither the ex-President nor the ambassadors could be said to have precedence nor to have surrendered it. There has been no other epoch in our history, probably, when even such a concession would have been made to any other ex-President of the United States.

The cost of these supplementary senators to the nation would have been a fraction less than fifty-two thousand dollars a year, considerably less than the cost of a President alone to-day.

For this sum of fifty-two thousand dollars yearly, the Senate and the nation would have profited by the counsel, experience, and example of Washington for more than two years longer; of John Adams for more than a quarter of a century; of Jefferson for more than seventeen years; of Madison for more than nineteen years; of John Quincy Adams for more than eighteen years; of Jackson for more than eight years; of Van Buren for more than twenty-one years; and of Grant for at least fifteen years.

However diverse may be the estimates which this generation would be disposed to place upon the services which the ex-Presidents of the United States would have rendered respectively as President-senators, it is difficult to suppose that any one of them could have failed to prove a very substantial acquisition to the legislative department of our government, or that the prospect of such a dignified termination of their public career would not have made most if not all of them better Presidents. What could contribute more than such a prospect to discourage any disposition to misuse the influence and patronage of the Executive for personal ends? The President would have every inducement to give the people as acceptable an administration as possible, for the purpose of strengthening his influence in the more enduring position of senator towards which he would be gravitating.* This would be a larger and more effectual contribution to the reformation and perfection of our civil service than any laws that Congress can enact, however faithfully executed. Then the people could not only safely but wisely restore to the President the power which he needs for the proper discharge of his constitutional duties, but of which of late years there has been a growing disposition to deprive him, because of the enormous temptations under our present system to abuse it. Till some provision like this is made for retiring Presidents, it is idle to expect them to be as indifferent about a reelection as it is desirable they should be, or that any system of civil-service reform will result in anything more or better than a succession of transient and disappointing expedients.

A.

Recent Fiction.^f

QUITE a number of anonymous novels have lately appeared, perhaps not without some influence from the success which befell "The Bread-winners." The pleasure of guessing who wrote a book carried the No Name Series along for several years, and "The Bread-winners" called public attention to the anonymous novel for the first time on a very large scale. "The Buntling Ball," a nonsense-book with a satirical aim, written in verse, has gained much by the mystery as to its authorship. While unreasonably long, it has very clever things in it,

on secondary lines. The workmanship is careful, and the humorous parody on the chorus of the old Greek tragedies, first made popular here by Robert Grant, could not be better. In reading these, the writer has felt what an Ass (not to put too fine a point on it) is the Greek chorus in the bald light of the workaday world. In the same frame of mind, taking the unconventional view, we can look at the opera-singer, and find fun in his strutting and unnatural proceedings generally. This aspect of the opera-singer was once caught by Mr. Mitchell, the editor of "Life," in an early etching. On the large lines, as a satire on New York society, it must be confessed that "The Buntling Ball" is a failure.

Another surprise which has been sprung on us, instead of hanging fire like the last mentioned, was the authorship of "Where the Battle was Fought," by Mr. Charles Egbert Craddock. That young gentleman gave Boston what is very dear to it, a literary sensation, by appearing like a modern Rosalind from the depths of the Southern forests, no longer a male, but a woman genius! "Where the Battle was Fought" may not be equal in all its parts to several short stories of the Tennessee Mountains contributed by Miss Murfree to "The Atlantic," but it has very delightful chapters, and establishes her right to membership in that Society of Authoresses which has been urged as a necessity for New York and Boston. It places her beside Miss Woolson, Mrs. Mary Hallock Foote, and Mrs. Helen Hunt Jackson.

The last mentioned has appeared in her double character of romantic novelist and redresser of Indian wrongs. In the same romance she has more or less successfully welded together the aims of the novelist and of the reformer. It would be untrue to say that the place of juncture is invisible, or that parts of the book have not suffered as a romance from the holy zeal of the reformer. But when the cause is so good and the work itself so satisfactory, one must not pick flaws. "Ramona" is a book to read all day and far into the night; it is full of a youthful idealism; it has a charming warm love-story; certain characters, like that of the old priest and the business-like Mexican lady, are novel, well thought out, delightful.

Mr. Marion Crawford's "American Politician" is the reverse of this. Intended to belong to the carefully observant school of Messrs. Howells and James, it is only externally that there is a resemblance. To "make copy," as the journalists say, was Mr. Crawford's apparent aim. The society he represents is true to neither England nor America, Boston nor New York. The politics are as impossible for London as Washington; his hero is not merely a prig—he could not exist here. Mr. Crawford has been writing from a large fund of ignorance, and has been moreover possessed, unfortunately possessed, with the desire of saying amiable things about everybody. It is a mournful come-down from "The Roman Singer," his first, though not first-published, book; and from "Mr.

* It might be worth considering whether it would not be good policy to make a reelection to the Presidency, and even a candidature for reelection, work a forfeiture of all rights to a seat in the Senate. No President would be likely to accept a renomination on such conditions.

^f The Bread-winners. New York: Harper & Bros.—The Buntling Ball. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.—Where the Battle was Fought, by Charles Egbert Craddock. Boston: James R. Osgood

& Co.—Ramona, by H. H. (Helen Jackson). Boston: Roberts Bros.—An American Politician, by F. Marion Crawford. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.—Zoroaster, by F. Marion Crawford. London and New York: Macmillan & Co.—Donald and Dorothy, by Mary Mapes Dodge. Boston: Roberts Bros.—Archibald Malmaison, by Julian Hawthorne. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.—Trajan, by Henry F. Keenan. New York: Cassell & Co.—The Mystery of the Locks, by E. W. Howe. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.

of many libraries. Other lists of a similar character, more or less judiciously made up, have been offered to the public. All this indicates a quickened sense of the importance of this matter, and promises a general improvement in Sunday-school literature. The most ambitious project of this nature is a recent proposition to form an association of Sunday-school librarians and others interested in the support and improvement of church and Sunday-school libraries, which shall have annual meetings, with reports and discussions of the best methods of selection and management. The secular librarians, though far less numerous, have such an association and are greatly helped by their conferences; it is urged that similar coöperation among Sunday-school librarians would be equally useful.

There is one other department of Sunday-school literature in which the censor should at once be let loose. The quarterlies, the leaflets, and the various lesson-helps call aloud for his judgment. Whatever may be said about the theology or the religion of these contrivances, it is certain that good literature is a heavy loser by the quiet revolution which has practically banished the Bible from the Sunday-school, and substituted for it the lesson-helps. It is true that bits of the Bible are printed upon these scrappy commentaries, but it is only a small part of it that the average Sunday-school scholar ever sees; and the habit of handling and reading the sacred Book seems to be much less common now than it was twenty years ago. Such familiarity with its contents as John Ruskin gained and Matthew Arnold commends was by no means uncommon when these two were boys; and the loss to the children of this generation of this noble instrument of literary culture cannot be computed. "The pure and the noble, the graceful and dignified simplicity of language," said Alexander Pope, "is nowhere in such perfection as in the Scriptures and in Homer." What Carlyle says of the Book of Job is hardly less true of many other parts of the Bible: "A noble book! All men's book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny and God's ways with him here on earth; and all in such free, flowing outlines, grand in its sincerity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart, so true every way; true eyesight and vision for all things, material things no less than spiritual." The practical banishment of this book from the Sunday-school can hardly be a gain to religion; certainly it is a loss to literature. Daily familiarity with the noble simplicity of the Bible would prove an excellent corrective of vitiated taste, and a healthy stimulant of pure imagination.

But the lesson-helps become a detriment to literature, not only by discouraging the familiar handling of the Bible, but also, in many cases, by the extravagances of their own composition. Especially is this true of the illustrations by which they seek to "explain" the lesson. A pile of these absurdities lies before us from which it would be easy to cull many delectable instances. Most of them occur in connection with the object lesson, presented on the blackboard or otherwise, so that pictorial as well as literary art suffers from their dabbling. Thus in one of these "helps" the topics of the lessons for the quarter are so phrased that each one begins with the letter B, and the following instruction is given: "At the opening of the first lesson, ask the class if they would like you (*sic*) to show them a picture of a whole hive of pretty bees. . . . Tell them you are now going to put your first *bee* on the board—a bee with a pretty sharp sting, too, may be, for some of them, and write out the teaching." The propriety of training the present generation in the arts of the punster may well be called in question. After a parable of two climbing vines, the teacher is admonished to "draw a red heart with a few curly green tendrils running out from it," and then enforce the lesson of personal attachments, harmful and helpful. To show "that anything can be made an idol by being loved more than God and his service," the teacher is instructed to "draw a fishing-pole and line in a heart." To illustrate fidelity to God the following object lesson is suggested: "Cut *two hearts* just alike, and mucilage them; then in class stick them together and notice how they cling together, how they have become as *one*; so *stick* to God." The italics are not ours. To teach children what an abomination to the Lord is, "first offer a child a bottle of cologne to smell, and immediately afterward a piece of asafetida or gamboge."

It is scarcely necessary to particularize further. Many of these illustrations are so gross and ludicrous that we shall not repeat the sacrilege by quoting them. It is enough to say that in the craze for illustration with which these lesson-helps are afflicted, that wise law of literary art which forbids the linking of sacred and sublime themes with trifling or disgusting similitudes is constantly set at naught. How much mental injury may result from this straining after sensational representations of spiritual facts no one could easily estimate. The effect must be most unhappy both upon the teachers and the pupils, and it is clear that judicious criticism has a great work to do in correcting the extravagances of these hebdomadal commentaries. Is not the age we live in sufficiently earthly and sensual without permitting our Sunday-schools to be virtually used for the teaching of a new form of materialism?

OPEN LETTERS.

"What shall be Done with our Ex-Presidents?"

THE open letter, "What shall be Done with our Ex-Presidents?" which appeared in the August number of THE CENTURY, has called out many interesting and suggestive contributions on the subject,

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some criticising favorably and others unfavorably the plan there proposed. At the request of the editor, Mr. Francis Wharton, Solicitor of the Department of State, Judge Thomas M. Cooley, and Senator George F. Edmunds have given expression to the following opinions on the subject:

OPINION OF SENATOR EDMUNDS.

I HAVE yours of the 18th instant, asking my opinion on the subject of "What shall be Done with our Ex-Presidents?" The suggestions in the open letter you sent have been sometimes discussed at Washington, and I do not think they meet with favor. There are many considerations against disturbing the present autonomy of the Senate, which I have not time to go into. There is nothing that I know of in the nature of republican government which makes it necessary that an ex-President should have any other station or title than that of an eminent private citizen who has done his country important service in the most trying and difficult of all its public employments.

Whether suitable pecuniary provision for the maintenance of a retiring President might not well be made, is a question worthy of serious consideration.

George F. Edmunds.

BURLINGTON, VT., Aug. 28, 1885.

OPINION OF JUDGE COOLEY.

THE open letter in *THE CENTURY* for August to which you direct my attention, brings before the public a supposed wrong, done alike to our ex-Presidents and to the country, by allowing the head of the government to retire immediately to private life on the expiration of his term of office. The remedy proposed is to make him life senator with a large salary.

The wrong to the man is forcibly depicted. "But yesterday a king; to-day 'none so poor to do him reverence.'" Strangely inconsistent with this is the further remark, that he is "an object of perpetual and costly curiosity," condemned thereby, at great expense, "to sustain the dignity of the first citizen of the republic for the remainder of his life." Surely this does not indicate a want of regard, nor that he is cast aside "like the peel of an orange as worthless." Indeed, it is only the reverence of the people that makes him in the public mind, as the writer says, "disqualified for subordinate positions."

The peculiarity of the wrong to the man is, that it is incidental to conferring upon him for a time an office which crowns his ambition; an office which the ablest men long and labor for, and receive, when they attain it, with the liveliest satisfaction. The crowning glory and the incidental wrong are accepted together; the one merely qualifies the other, making it a little less complete and perfect. No one has ever yet declined the imperfect gift, and it may be safely predicted no one ever will. The question on this branch of the case, however, is rather one of pensions than of life senators, and I do not care to pursue it.

The wrong to the country consists in our being deprived of the services of the first citizen of the republic "at the very time when his availability as a public servant is presumably greatest, and when he deserves to be regarded as one of the nation's most valuable assets." This naturally suggests the query whether the nation has probably lost anything by not having the like senatorial services hitherto.

Washington in his retirement, disconnected from party politics, was an object of profound reverence and respect. The people idealized him somewhat, and it

is well that they did so, for their reverence for him tended to elevate the national character, and was thus a public benefaction. Had he entered Congress, something of this would have been lost; and possibly he might have come down to us more as a party leader than as the Father of his Country. This would have been a great national misfortune. Unwillingly, perhaps, but inevitably, he would have been head of the Federal party, and would be held responsible for its mistakes during the next four years, to the serious impairment of a reputation which now in its grandeur is to the country "one of its most valuable assets."

John Adams, descending from the Presidency to the Senate, could scarcely have been useful. He was for the time discredited with both parties, and without the influence justly belonging to his abilities and patriotism. He would have been the target for abuse, and subjected to the mortification of seeing himself subordinated in the public counsels to mere party hacks and tricksters. It was happier for him that he was not subjected to such a trial,—and as well for the country.

It would not have been well for Jefferson to enter the Senate. He was a partisan at his retirement as much as ever; he had thereafter his full share of influence on public affairs; and the regret is that he had so much to do with them, rather than that he participated so little. His domestic life, as we have it portrayed to us by his family, was beautiful, and we love to dwell upon it, and are the better for it; but we must ever regret that his uncharitable views of his political antagonists, which he kept putting on paper, were left where biographers and editors could pounce upon them.

I cannot follow down the list. There was good senatorial timber among the Presidents, but there was an obvious want of the senatorial quality in some cases, and I do not believe that so far the losses have been greater than the gains in the ex-Presidents retiring to private life. It is a great mistake to assume that a man would be less partisan after four years of party abuse in the Presidency than before; the experience of the country disproves the assumption. Think of Jackson, Van Buren, Polk, or Johnson — to name no others — as non-partisan senators!

But there is one case in which we ought to be thankful every day of our lives that an ex-President was not made senator on the plan proposed; for we should then have missed the most resplendent portion of his career, and the country the most important part of his life-service. That was the case of John Quincy Adams: the Old Man Eloquent; the triumphant champion of free speech in Congress. In the Senate he would have failed of his true destiny: his true place was in the House as the chosen representative of a great State; he needed the inspiration and the antagonism of numbers, and he needed also the backing of a constituency.

And right here is one of the weaknesses of the proposed plan: the senator would have no constituency. Chester A. Arthur, as senator for New York and with New York behind him, would be a man of power; but Chester A. Arthur, offered the senatorship from sympathy and to save his dignity, might well decline the doubtful honor. He would not in influence be a

peer among equals, and small minds would be likely often to remind him that he only lingered superfluous on the stage.

Important sentimental considerations are against the plan. It is a great and blessed thing for a country when it has among its citizens those who hold no office, but who stand before the public mind disconnected from the exciting questions of the day, as representatives of an honorable national history. If among them are men who have attained the first station, it might possibly be thought beneath their dignity to accept election to a lower; but how much more should it be so thought if the lower were offered as a mere favor, irrespective of the public choice, and might be held on to until perhaps the senility of old age should make the attempt to perform public duty a public mortification!

The answer, then, to the question, "What shall be Done with our Ex-Presidents?" is this: Allow them gracefully and with dignity — if they will — to enjoy the proud position of "first citizen of the republic." Their lives in retirement, if they be such as belong to an illustrious career, will be a continuous and priceless public benefaction. If they bore themselves worthily in office, party asperities will begin immediately to wear off; their virtues will be exalted in public estimation, and their homes will become the pilgrim shrines of patriotism. If they have been incompetent or otherwise unworthy, the shortest dismission to oblivion is best for them and best for the country.

Thomas M. Cooley.

ANN ARBOR, August 31, 1885.

OPINION OF THE HONORABLE FRANCIS WHARTON.

It has been lately proposed in the columns of THE CENTURY that ex-Presidents of the United States should be *ex-officio* senators, and should have a pension for life of half the presidential salary. To the first branch of this proposition I think there are serious objections.

1. Our legislative structure is exclusively electoral; and the possession of a permanent seat in the Senate would be an anomaly to which public opinion could with difficulty be reconciled.

2. There would be no prospect of obtaining a constitutional amendment for such a purpose; and the adoption of such an amendment, even if it were possible, might be a dangerous precedent. It is not safe to amend a constitution, unless for reasons far stronger than those given for the proposed alteration.

3. Composed as the Senate is, such an addition would often so far determine its character as to give it a bias in opposition to what may be a salutary popular tendency. Supposing, for instance, that the interests of the country would be best subserved by the Administration of President Cleveland receiving the hearty support of the Senate, and supposing that the Senate, in Mr. Cleveland's third year, should be equally divided, it will be at once seen that the control of the body, if ex-Presidents were admitted to seats, would be in the hands of ex-Presidents Hayes and Arthur. Or let us take the period between 1849 and 1868, embracing the eras of slavery agitation, of civil war, and of reconstruction, and let us see how the proposed addition to the Senate would have affected the course of events by which the burden of slavery

was ultimately removed. From 1849 to 1852 the President-senators, according to your correspondent, would have been Messrs. Van Buren, Tyler, and Polk; from 1852 to 1856, Messrs. Van Buren, Tyler, and Fillmore; from 1856 to 1861, Messrs. Van Buren, Tyler, Fillmore, and Pierce; from 1861 to 1862, Messrs. Van Buren, Tyler, Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan; from 1862 to 1868, Messrs. Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan. Of all these ex-Presidents, Mr. Van Buren was the only one who had any sympathy with anti-slavery agitation; and even Mr. Van Buren declared that the fugitive-slave law should be retained on the statute-book, and that there should be no compulsory abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. At the most critical period of the civil war, there would have been five ex-presidential votes which, on disputed issues, would have been blocks in the way of getting rid of slavery. As it was in the past, so it would be likely to be in the future. Men who have possessed power, especially those who have controlled the destinies of a nation, are generally unwilling to see pulled down the system they helped to build up; yet there is no country which has been in the advance line of civilization whose history has not been marked by a pulling down of old systems and a building up of new. To such an advance the amendment proposed would be a serious obstruction. Mr. Jefferson's policy of peace and of progress, beneficial as it was, could never, at least in the earlier years of his administration, have been carried out, if there had been in the Senate a platoon of Federalist ex-Presidents who would have made up a majority to veto his nominations and defeat his reforms; and the same fate might have befallen Mr. Lincoln's policy of limiting slavery and then abolishing it when incompatible with the maintenance of the Union; had the then living ex-Presidents been in the Senate taking an active part in politics.

It may be said that by giving ex-Presidents seats in the Senate without votes, the political equilibrium of the Senate would not be disturbed, while the ex-Presidents would be elevated to a post at once innocuous and dignified. I do not think that the conferring on ex-Presidents of such an office would be an elevation. When Napoleon went to Egypt, he took with him some French scientists. They were captured by an Arab chief, who asked them what their occupation was, thinking that at least they might accompany his cavalcade as mounted interpreters. They answered, so it was related, that their habits were sedentary. Now to the Arab there was then only one industry that was exclusively sedentary, and that was sitting on eggs, to which some of the fatter of the philosophic captives were condemned. Not much more practically useful would be the seats without votes which the project before us in this view would assign to ex-Presidents. The right to address the Senate would add nothing to their influence, since they could at any time address the Senate through the press. But depriving them of a vote, while giving them a seat, would impress on them, what no other human power could have impressed — the character of ciphers.

The objections just stated do not apply to the proposition to give to ex-Presidents a pension amounting to half the presidential salary. Such a measure would not be unconstitutional. We have had precedents of

granting thanks to ex-Presidents, and of allowances to Presidents' widows. If such provisions are constitutional, then unconstitutionality could not be predicated of pensions to ex-Presidents. But a stronger argument can be given for such a provision. The President is commander-in-chief of the army and navy, and as such is as much entitled to a retiring pension as is any officer in the service he commands.

There is reason, in fact, for such a provision far greater than exists in respect to the officers of the army and navy. An officer on service is not required to give expensive official entertainments; nor after his retirement is he likely to be overborne with visitors who exact from him hospitalities which he cannot without breach of courtesy avoid. It is notorious that few of our older Presidents were able to live within their official income, and that some of them were greatly embarrassed after their retirement by the expenses which their political distinction brought on them. General Washington and Mr. John Adams may be put out of consideration, since the former possessed a large fortune, and the latter's frugal if not unsocial habits relieved him from many expenses now considered inseparable from the office. Mr. Jefferson, whose hospitality though simple was genial and profuse, found that what properly remained to him after his expenditures as President was swept away by expenses in keeping up an establishment made in a large measure incumbent on him by the fame which, as President, he obtained. Mr. Madison, having no family, was able, by severe economy, to preserve a part of his modest patrimony to the end; but Mr. Monroe died insolvent, and General Jackson's estate was so impoverished by his Presidency as to make it necessary for him, childless as he was, to borrow largely, when returning to private life, to be able to re-stock his farm. It is true that since then the President's salary has been doubled; but his expenses have *pari passu* increased, and in the same proportion has increased the feeling of the unfit-ness of an ex-President engaging in business or in professional life.

Two concluding observations may be made:

1. Such a pension would take away the excuse for undue and disreputable economy at the White House.

2. Giving a suitable pension to an ex-President is more kind, more just, and more constitutional than withholding help from him when he is in poverty, and then, after he is dead and has suffered all the distress of believing that he is leaving his family without provision, buying his manuscripts or library and erecting to him a tomb.

Francis Wharton.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2, 1885.

[From an interesting letter by Allen G. Bigelow we quote the argument given below.—EDITOR.]

EVERY United States senator represents a State. It could hardly be hoped that a President-senator should do otherwise. Hence, if Presidents became senators, now one State and now another would have one, perhaps two, even possibly three more senators in Congress than the constitution now permits, doing violence to our ideas of representation. Could it be expected that Mr. Arthur, were he now in the Senate, would be much more or less than a senator from New York? But New York is not entitled to another senator, and

no sister State would consent to such an arrangement. By the proposed plan New York and Ohio would now each have three senators; while in 1888, should Messrs. Cleveland, Arthur, and Hayes survive, New York would have twice as many senators as every other State in the Union except Ohio, which would still have three. In 1825 Virginia would have had five senators, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe being her life-senators, in addition to the two regularly elected from that State.

Allen G. Bigelow.

The Poetic Outlook.*

FROM the coal-fields and the oil-regions the reports are reassuring. There seems to be no doubt that the supply is ample for the wants of the world yet these many years. Whatever comfort there may be in physical light and heat we may have without scrimping. But what of poetry? Is the supply of that running short?

Of verses there is no lack. Never before was there a time when so many people of both sexes had the knack of garnishing some sort of measure with some sort of rhymes. But is not the dearth of poetry somewhat alarming? Of our own leading poets (Bryant and Longfellow and Emerson and Whittier and Lowell and Holmes), three have gone over to the majority, and although the voices of the others are yet heard among us, and will be, we trust, for many days, the youngest of them is above three-score. In England the names that stand out with like distinctness are those of Tennyson and the Brownings; of these, one has been silent now for twenty-four years, and the others are gray-haired men, to whom the solemn chant, "*Morituri Salutamus*," is already familiar. Who are rising up to take the places of these poets of the people on both sides of the sea? It is a strange but not a singular fact that they have no successors by natural descent. What great English poet was the son or daughter of a great poet? Great engineers, great lawyers, great statesmen, transmit their power to their children; but poetry seems to defy the laws of heredity. In other paths of mental activity the children of poets are often eminent, but not in the path by which their parents climbed to glory.

The biologists say that traits often skip a generation, appearing in the third and fourth, though wanting in the second. The commandment of the decalogue which threatens calamities upon "the third and fourth generation," and says nothing about the second, is thus sometimes supposed to follow a physiological law. That notion is probably more curious than scientific. But even on this theory poetical genius does not appear to be hereditary. A glance over a chronological list of English poets shows that the great names do not reappear. Neither Chaucer, nor Spenser, nor Ben Jonson, nor Shakspeare, nor Milton, nor Dryden, nor Pope, nor Wordsworth, nor Scott, nor Byron, nor Shelley left any near progeny who have been distinguished as poets. Mental power can be transmitted, but poetical genius seems to be an individual possession, not subject to physiological laws.

But not only is it true that the sons of the poets do

* It should be stated that this paper was written before the publication of Mr. Stedman's essay in the September CENTURY, on "The Twilight of the Poets."—EDITOR.