

518 South Carolina Avenue), and he authorizes me to say that his memory agrees with mine in every particular as regards the transactions above referred to, in which Colonel Bulkely had part.

Noah Brooks.

The Whipping-Post for Tramps.

BY THE MAYOR OF INDIANAPOLIS.

WHAT to do with tramps is a very serious question. The answer should be one of business, and not of sentiment, for the conditions are already alarming. Tramps have multiplied enormously during the last decade. Thousands of young men and boys are annually joining the ranks of the "sturdy beggars" rather than work. The time is ripe for some heroic action that will deter at least the youth of the land from launching upon a life of vagabondage. If the local authorities cannot stamp out this growing evil, then the National Government must come to the rescue. Every form of organized government owes it to the honest laboring classes to protect them and their families from these pests of society. Vagabondage has no right to claim an existence in this country. If it has no moral standing, then it should have no legal protection. The man of sound body who makes up his mind to sponge his way through life is an enemy to civilization and society.

As a punishment for trampism, Mr. Josiah Flynt, in his interesting letter published in your September number, suggests imprisonment in the workhouse and penitentiary. I cannot agree with him. Workhouses are comparatively few in most of the States. In many that do exist the authorities do not furnish the amount and kind of work to cure the average tramp of his mode of life. The penitentiary is intended for men of criminal instincts, who are dangerous to society — not for idlers. It is not a proper place to teach loafers habits of industry.

I would substitute the whipping-post for the prison. I know the sentimentalist will not agree with me, and I doubt whether very many persons of any class of society would at first approve a return to the lash as a punishment for crime of any kind. It has retained its place in one State for wife-beaters, however, and its preventive effect on that class of brutes is exceedingly efficacious. The tramp deserves no kindlier consideration than the wife-beater.

But will the States enact laws establishing the whipping-post for tramps? Perhaps few will do so at first. After observing the effect of a few practical tests, however, I do not believe the legislature of a single State would decline to sanction flogging as a punishment for cases of confirmed vagabondage. It cannot be said that public opinion has ever pronounced against the whipping-post as a punishment for trampism, for it was discarded long before the modern tramp was heard of. Besides, sentiment should not stand in the way of stamping out this growing evil. At the present rate of increase, the next generation will find trampism the greatest curse this country has ever known, with the possible exceptions of human slavery and alcoholism. To put an end to it by any method, therefore, will justify the means. The cat, well applied, will do it. I do not believe any other punishment that is likely to be adopted will.

We had a practical demonstration of the efficacy of the whip used upon the backs of roving bands of vaga-

bonds in this city (Indianapolis) a few years ago. At the time referred to the writer presided in the police court, that being one of the mayor's duties under the old law. It was winter. Tramps headed this way from all directions. The city was overrun with them. Many were arrested and sent to the workhouse. It became crowded with them and other classes of offenders. Very little work was provided for the prisoners, so that the workhouse was just what the average tramp was seeking. I stopped sending them there, and, when brought before me, took promises from them to leave the city. Few such promises were kept. The tramps would beg lodging at the station-house, and, if refused, would trespass upon private property, most of them sleeping in freight-cars. The situation became serious. Something had to be done. The police were ready for anything. I asked them to quit arresting known tramps, and to drive them out of town, using any force necessary. They obeyed, and the barrel-hoop was freely used for a time. It took only a few days to rid the city of every tramp. They did not return, and no new ones came for many months. Indeed, Indianapolis remained almost free of tramps for some years thereafter. A few other Indiana cities followed our example, with like beneficial results. They had the force of an enlightened public sentiment behind the movement, which, for all practical purposes, was worth as much as a public statute. In fact, public sentiment and approval took the place of law. There were no "white-cap" methods employed. The floggings were administered openly.

The average tramp would rather spend a year in a station-house or jail than take one good flogging. I believe it is the best remedy so far discovered. While it may not cure all the old, hardened tramps of their indolent habits, it will deter the boys from being coaxed "on the road" by them. That is the main thing to be accomplished. If every community had a public whipping-post for tramps, or if the industrious men and women in every city and town would back up the local constabulary in the free use of cowhides on these worthless vagabonds, I do not believe there would be left a tramp of the present American type at the ushering in of the twentieth century.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1894.

C. S. Denny.

P. S. Since the foregoing letter was written, the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has taken action looking to the enactment of a law providing for corporal punishment of wife-beaters and other like offenders. According to recent accounts in the New York press, such a bill is now in course of preparation. Some of the leading journals of the city have recently approved the general sentiment now taking form on that subject. I have not seen, so far, any specific reference to tramps in connection with the whipping-post discussion. A bill similar to the one being prepared in New York will likely be presented to the Indiana legislature at the present session. If so, an effort will be made to include trampism in the list of offenses thus to be punished.

INDIANAPOLIS, January 15, 1895.

C. S. D.

What has the United States done with Alaska?

ON October 18, 1867, all the Russian possessions in North America were formally transferred to the

United States. In the following July there was paid to the Czar \$7,200,000 for this vast territory, which Charles Sumner named Alaska. The coast was known and surveyed and occupied by a few trading-posts, but the interior was an unknown wilderness.

United States troops replaced the Russian garrisons, and a first bill to provide a form of government for the new territory was presented to Congress. Thirty other bills were presented before this object was accomplished sixteen years later. It was Secretary Seward's idea to divide Alaska into six separate territories, and to offer unusual inducements to settlers. In 1877 the War Department withdrew all troops from Alaska, and the country existed only as a customs district: whereupon the natives of the Sitka region, who had so long been held in check by severest measures, indulged in the wildest license. For two years Sitka was at their mercy, and no appeal to Washington secured any attention. The citizens finally sought protection from the British authorities at Victoria, and H. B. M. S. *Osprey* reached Sitka in time to prevent a general massacre of the whites, and to frighten off the war canoes that were assembling there. The grateful citizens drew up a petition for a British protectorate over the abandoned country, and were raising the British flag on the parade-ground when Michael Travers, an ex-soldier, prevented the act. After this incident, a naval ship was ordered to guard-duty in the Sitka region, and for several years the commander of the man-of-war at Sitka was virtually naval governor of Alaska.

This anomalous and un-American situation was resented by the citizens, and only the establishment of civil government in 1884 prevented the Russian-born citizens petitioning the Czar to call the United States to account for violation of the treaty in which it promised these people "all the rights, advantages, and immunities of citizens of the United States," and to "maintain and protect them in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion."

During the period of no-government succeeding military abandonment, it was suggested to attach Alaska as a county of Washington Territory, and to make it a penal colony—an American Siberia. The Secretary of the Treasury recommended that it be discontinued as a customs district, and General McDowell, commanding the Department of the Pacific, recommended that it be given away, or thrown away. Yet during a discussion in the Canadian Parliament at this very time, one member said: "Let the House see what a mistake Canada made during the Crimean war in not laying hold of the country. It [Alaska] was the best investment the United States ever made."

In 1871 gold was discovered near Sitka, and in 1880 richer deposits were uncovered near Juneau, and the latter camp soon became an El Dorado for renegades from all the upper coast. The common report of "no law in Alaska" gathered such a community that a local vigilance committee was organized to assert and maintain order. The direct efforts of influential Juneau mine-owners, in 1884, induced Congress to pass the bill which gave a skeleton form of civil government to "the district of Alaska," extending the mining laws, but distinctly withholding the general land laws; giving it a governor, courts, and commissioners, but not providing for any representation at Washington, nor any popular assemblage elected by its own citizens. The general laws

of the State of Oregon were imposed "so far as applicable, and *not in conflict with* . . . the laws of the United States."

No geological or topographical survey of the country has been made by the government, but, independently, miners and scientists have now explored and exploited every part of Alaska. At this moment hundreds of miners are encamped along the Yukon River, free from all restraints or protection. There is not a military post in the territory, no telegraphic communication with the rest of the world, and only one light-house on the whole coast. As land can neither be bought nor preëmpted, immigration is virtually prohibited, and the population is kept down; and as no lumber can be exported, mining and fishing are the only industries permitted. Yet Alaska stands alone among our "bloodless acquisitions" in having yielded a revenue from the beginning. The lease of the tiny Seal Islands has yielded four per cent. interest on the sum originally paid for the whole territory, which in the end has returned an equal sum to the treasury. For more than ten years the gold mines have been adding an average of \$1,000,000 a year to the wealth of the world; and for six years—1884-90—the salmon canneries and other fisheries yielded an annual product valued at another \$1,000,000.

The salmon fisheries have not been leased, or taxed, or protected by laws or regulations, as in British Columbia, and many streams have been exhausted. The reckless and unhindered seining destroys more fish than the canners use, and has seriously threatened the natives' food-supplies; but their protests against such invasions and seizures of tribal and hereditary fishing-grounds were not regarded, and the civil authorities threatened the natives with punishment if they interfered with the canners. Thus this important industry drains the country of its natural wealth without making any return to general or territorial government; and contract-labor methods and alien landlordism have here their fullest play—the canners taking all their workmen and supplies from "below"—either Puget Sound or San Francisco—in the spring, and sending them back in September.

Alaska has virtually no voice at Washington. Its sketchy outline of a government is administered by alien office-holders, who too often echo in their hearts the sentiment of the court chamberlain Resanof in 1805: "We live in Sitka only with the hope of leaving it." Alaska citizens are earnest for home rule, resenting this importation of stranger officials every four years. They bitterly denounce Congress for its hostility, ignorance, or neglect; for denying them the rights and citizenship enjoyed in all the other territories. Beyond granting the incomplete and inadequate form of civil government in 1884, nothing has been done for Alaska in this quarter-century of United States ownership.

The Tlinkit, the Aleut, and the Esquimaux, the salmon, the seal, and the reindeer, of Alaska have been considered, and legislated for: the white citizen patiently awaits his turn. The seating of the Alaska delegates at the Chicago and Minneapolis conventions of 1892 is the only ray of light that has pierced his despair.

Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore.

WASHINGTON, D. C.