

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