

royal castle at Stuttgart, took possession of a vacant suite of rooms, bullied the servants and cut up mad antics generally. Yet it was not until he had had his way for nearly twenty-four hours, that the servants discovered he wasn't a royal personage. The incident suggests the kind of treatment that the servants of royal personages are accustomed to.

DEPARTMENT STORES.

In the city of Chicago and its suburbs, one of the burning issues of the late political campaign was the department store question. The great department stores of the city were denounced as giant monopolies, which had already driven thousands of small storekeepers out of business, and were steadily and surely concentrating in a few hands all the retail business of the community.

This indictment of department stores was supported by an enumeration of the vacant small stores of Chicago, made by one of the political parties, which revealed to an astonishing degree the havoc that department stores have caused in the business of small traders. Among small traders themselves, no enumeration of empty small stores was necessary to make an impression. That class had already felt the pinch. Some had felt it to the extent of being driven out of business, and all the rest had felt it in declining patronage and sinking profits. Probably every small retail dealer in Chicago, not even excepting liquor dealers, is painfully conscious of this pressure. The great body of that class, at any rate, dread further encroachments of the department stores.

Demands are urgent, therefore, among the small retailers of Chicago and their friends, for the obstruction, and if possible the suppression, of the business of department stores, by legislation. This was the sentiment that stirred up one of the political parties to adopting the question as an issue in the campaign. It is a sentiment that deserves candid and sympathetic consideration.

But to grasp this department store question, it is necessary first to understand what storekeeping is, especially the uses it serves. Before proceeding further, then, let us make that inquiry.

Evidently, storekeeping is not a primary occupation. If each man supplied all his own wants by the direct application of his own labor to his natural environment, he would have no use for a storekeeper. Storekeeping is one of the consequences of trading.

When men specialize their work, each making only part of the things he needs, trade is absolutely necessary. Thus, if one man, who wants food, clothing and shelter, devote himself wholly to food making, depending upon others for his clothing and shelter, the only way in which he can obtain clothing and shelter is by offering his surplus food for them in trade. Inasmuch, then, as in civilized countries all work is specialized, each man making only one—indeed, only a small part of one of the many things he wants, trade is necessarily a universal phenomenon of civilized life. We all live by trading.

But the natural conditions of trading do not permit each maker of one thing or part of one thing, to trade his product directly with the makers of the products he desires. This is prevented by a great number and wonderful variety of obstructions, not least effective among which is the impossibility of any one man's having a sufficiently extensive personal acquaintance. Various devices are therefore invented to facilitate trading, and among them is storekeeping.

The storekeeper makes a business of collecting at one point in a neighborhood, all the different kinds of things, wherever in the world they may be made, that are ordinarily required by the people of that neighborhood. He collects these things at that point, in the quantities and at the seasons that best enable him to accommodate local wants; and he trades them upon demand for the limited variety of things which the people of that neighborhood make. In form, he may take money instead of truck from his customers, leaving them to get the money by selling their truck elsewhere. This is the more usual method of the present time, though truck stores still survive. But form makes no difference. The essence of the matter is this, that the worldwide system of storekeeping enables the makers of particular things or parts of

particular things anywhere, to trade them everywhere for the things they want. It is a system, that is to say, which brings the whole civilized world together in trade. Such are the uses of storekeeping.

In the evolution of storekeeping, there has grown up, broadly speaking, two kinds of stores, the wholesale and the retail. Of each there are numerous grades, some of which assume distinctive names; but these are the two grand divisions of the business. Wholesale storekeeping consists in collecting for the accommodation of retailers, while retail storekeeping consists in collecting for the accommodation of consumers.

The compensation of storekeepers is estimated in what are called "profits." When a storekeeper has collected goods in his store for the accommodation of those who buy of him, he charges for the goods a higher price than he has paid for them. The difference is his "profit." But out of that profit he must pay all the expenses of his business, including compensation for his own work.

Further than this into the character of "profits" and the different grades of stores it is not necessary for the present purpose to go. But we shall find it helpful in apprehending the department store question to consider the principle that determines the distribution of retail stores over a country. To that point, therefore, let us for a moment turn our attention.

If we imagine a small community at some distance from a large trade center, a community without a store, we shall have no difficulty in understanding how the people there would do their trading. To some extent peddlers might serve them, but they would more or less often be obliged to go to the distant trade center for the purpose of selling products and buying supplies; for the purpose, that is, of trading the limited kinds of things which they had made, for the various things which the rest of the world had made and they wanted.

This journey, if infrequent, might be an excuse for a holiday. But if local needs made its frequent repetition necessary, it would become part of

the regular duty of each family; and so, instead of being a welcome excuse for a holiday, would be work. And not only would it be irksome work, but it would interfere with other work.

At that point, the natural desire for economy suggesting some improvement, it is easy to imagine that the different families might hire some one to make it his especial duty to "go to town" as a truckman for all the rest, delivering what they sent and buying what they ordered, they paying him wages. That is not an unusual arrangement in such circumstances. And it is an arrangement that could not continue long without the truckman's discovering, if he were bright, that by laying in a supply of staple articles, he might save himself an occasional trip to town. He could thus at times satisfy the requirements of his employers out of his own stock, which would fully serve them and yet enable him to economize his labor.

Furthermore, he might see the wisdom of proposing a modification of his arrangement. Instead of often driving back and forth to the distant town, carrying goods either way for wages as a hired man, he might offer to open a local store, where he would buy local products outright, and also keep on hand at all times a well selected supply of goods from which his neighbors could satisfy their wants. If he did this, he would be serving his neighbors in his capacity of storekeeper, precisely as he had served them before in his capacity of truckman. But they would now be better served, and he would get his pay no longer in wages but through the profit of buying in a cheaper and selling in a dearer market.

It is not to be understood that the foregoing example illustrates literally the origin of local stores. As a rule, stores are opened in new places not by direct evolution from trucking, but by men trained to storekeeping who believe that a store is needed and speculate upon their belief. The trucking example nevertheless illustrates the extension of storekeeping in principle. It directs attention to the fact, and this is a fact, that irrespective of the special circumstances that may lead to the opening of a store in

any particular place, the store is in principle an evolution from trucking. That is to say, the local storekeeper saves his neighbors the necessity of going or sending to a distant place to trade. Essentially he is their servant. They buy of him because it is more economical and satisfactory to allow him his profit than to do for themselves or through hired truckmen the work which he does for them.

It is for their accommodation, and not primarily for his own profit, that his store is there. Consequently, if another storekeeper undertakes to accommodate them just as well and they buy of him, the first storekeeper can offer no reasonable objection. His neighbors are not under any obligation to allow him a better income for doing their storekeeping, than some one else is willing to take for doing it.

The same principle would apply if some enterprising store in the distant city should offer to receive orders by mail and to deliver goods daily at lower prices than the local storekeeper demands. What objection could he urge to that, even if it drove him out of the storekeeping business? None. His store is a local convenience, nothing more; and when a greater local convenience supercedes it, it has no reason for being.

With the understanding then, that a storekeeper, in his capacity of storekeeper, is only a servant to his neighbors, and that when for any reason his service costs them more than equally good or better service can be had for, it is no longer a service but a burden—with that conception clear in our minds, let us advance from a consideration of the principle of storekeeping in general to the business of storekeeping in and about the region of department stores, and from imaginary to real conditions.

In Chicago and its suburbs a vast number of retail stores have sprung up and flourished. The particular circumstances of their origin are immaterial. They came because their projectors believed that the people in their respective localities needed them, and they flourished because they enabled those people to satisfy their store wants economically—more economically than in any other way.

But now come the department stores. These keep in store all kinds of goods, from testaments to playing cards, from soda water to whisky, from a paper of pins to a bicycle, a piano or a set of furniture. Almost anything you want you can get here, in any quantity, and at prices which are not only lower than ordinary retail prices, but lower than ordinary retailers themselves can buy the same goods for of the manufacturers. Inevitably the department store must be prejudicial to all ordinary retailers, and destructive to the business of many.

It is not remarkable, therefore, in these days when business is clamoring wildly for congressional and legislative protection, that the retailers of Chicago and vicinity should put forth a plea for protection by legislation from the encroachments of department stores.

But is legislative protection possible? Reflection should satisfy anyone of the contrary.

It is not the department stores, but retail buyers that are closing the small stores. All that the department stores do is to offer goods at low prices. Buyers do the rest. If department stores are really, all things considered, more economical and otherwise satisfactory than the small retail stores, the people will keep on buying of them; and no law that either is or ought to be constitutional can stop it. If they are really economical it would be as futile to attempt to legislate against department stores in the interest of small stores, as to legislate against railroads in the interest of canal boats or stage lines, against electric cars in the interest of hack drivers, against steamships in the interest of sail vessels, or against labor saving machinery in the interest of trade unions. The economical instinct is too potent a force for any legislation long to resist.

On the other hand, if department stores are not more economical than small stores, no legislation is necessary. They may last a little while as a fad; but unless they really do economical service for consumers, consumers will soon forsake them.

The question is wholly one of econ-

omy; wholly a question of labor saving. It is another form of the question of labor saving machinery. What small storekeepers now complain of is the same thing in essence that printers complained of when the type setting machine displaced 75 per cent. of their number. The cry of pain which the small storekeeper emits merely shows that the labor problem is now pinching him for a solution, and that the problem is by no means so funny nor its solution so simple as he thought when it only pinched "workingmen." Being a question of economy, like all other phases of the labor question this department store question must be settled not by legislative restrictions upon the economical instinct, but by giving to that instinct free play.

Not alone is it true that legislation cannot suppress department stores if they are a genuine advance in the direction of economy, but it is also true that legislation ought not to be used for that purpose if it could be effective. Such legislation would be in essence legislation against buyers, to prevent their economizing. That is a purpose for which legislation cannot be rightfully used. It would be legislation for the purpose of forcing the community to support men in a business which has ceased to be serviceable. And that is a purpose for which legislation cannot be rightfully used. No man, no class, has the moral right to invoke the lawmaking power to maintain them in a business which the people when left to themselves refuse to support. The lawmaking power that responds to such a call prostitutes its functions.

Would we, then, see men thrown out of all employment by the encroachments of economizing improvements? By no means. We would labor and plead, on the contrary, for a complete emancipation of the opportunities for employment, so that no one could possibly be idle against his own will.

There is no limit to the work that men want done. No machinery can lessen it, no possible extension of the department store system can lower the demand. The cheaper we get things the more things we want and

the more work we therefore require. Demand for work is always in excess of the supply.

If this demand were free to express itself, new machines would mean more work instead of less, and department stores would put greater life into trade instead of stagnating it. But the demand for work is held in check by monopoly of opportunities for work—monopoly created and maintained by law.

While this exists, every new labor saving machine threatens the livelihood of great masses of workingmen; and every extension of economies in trade, by means of department stores or other forms of concentration, becomes a growing menace to the business of small storekeepers. But if legalized monopoly were abolished, all economizing processes would be blessings alike to consumers and producers, to buyers and sellers.

The department store problem, like the labor problem, is at bottom only a phase of the problem of monopoly. It is to be solved not by further protective legislation, but by legislation destructive of the legislation upon which monopoly rests. When that truth once takes possession of men who feel the pinch of social conditions, and of those who sympathize with them, a new light will dawn. Then competition will be recognized as cooperation, and fostered until it is wholly free; then everything that saves labor will be welcomed by everyone who lives by labor.

NEWS

Elections were held in the United States on the 8th, in 42 states. In most of these, state officers as well as congressmen were voted for; but in some the contest was for congressmen only.

Of course the important vote throughout the country was the vote for congressmen, because upon that hinged the question of endorsement or condemnation of President McKinley's administration. It also involved in greater or less degree the financial issue of 1896. From the best reports at the present writing the following about indicates the complexion of the next congress:

SENATE.

Republicans	53
Democrats	27
Other parties.....	10
Total.....	90

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Republicans	185
Democrats	160
Other parties and doubtful.....	12
Total.....	357

In the present congress the republicans have 46 senators and 202 representatives. They therefore gain 7 in the senate and lose about 17 in the house. Their majority in the house will be from 13 to 18.

Among the defeated members of the present congress are Lewis, of Washington, and Jerry Simpson, of Kansas. Barry, editor of the San Francisco Star, who was nominated by the democrats in Maguire's district, was also defeated. But John J. Lentz, of the Twelfth Ohio district, whose former majority was about 100, and whose defeat was especially sought by Senator Hanna, has been reelected by almost 800 majority.

The general vote in the states indicates that they have taken on the political complexion attributed to them in the following table:

REPUBLICAN STATES.

California.	New Hampshire.
Connecticut.	New Jersey.
Delaware.	New York.
Illinois.	North Dakota.
Indiana.	Ohio.
Iowa.	Pennsylvania.
Kansas.	Rhode Island.
Massachusetts.	Wyoming.
Michigan.	Washington.
Maryland.	Wisconsin.
Nebraska.	

DEMOCRATIC STATES.

Alabama.	Montana.
Arkansas.	North Carolina.
Florida.	South Carolina.
Georgia.	Tennessee.
Kentucky.	Texas.
Louisiana.	Utah.
Minnesota.	Virginia.
Mississippi.	West Virginia.
Missouri.	

FUSION STATES.

Colorado.	South Dakota.
Idaho.	Nevada.

From the foregoing table it appears that there is a change of political complexion, as compared with two years ago, in several states. Minnesota changes from republican to democratic; Nebraska, from fusion to republican; Washington, from