

ago, and it wasn't any easier to do business with that body then, I suppose, than at any time since.

"We wanted the council to grant us an ordinance to lay a spur track up alongside our yard from the railroad track in front. Right across from us was another lumber firm, and together we worked and argued to get our ordinance through. We failed twice consecutively and had decided not to try again, but to get along without the convenience of a spur track.

"One bright sunny morning a man on horseback rode up in front of the office and whistled for some of us to come out. I went out and he told me he had noticed our fruitless efforts to get that ordinance through the council.

"Yes," I said, "we became discouraged, and concluded to drop the scheme."

"What's it worth to you?" he asked, slapping the top of his boot with a riding whip.

"I told him it would help our business greatly.

"Is it worth \$500?" he asked.

"I answered that we would be willing to pay that for the spur, but that we were not going into any deal to buy votes.

"Never mind my name," he curtly replied when I asked him for it. "It's worth \$500, is it?"

"Yes," I said.

"The man rode away. I never went near the council chamber the next meeting night, but the morning after the meeting I saw by the papers that our ordinance had gone through like a whirlwind.

"It was perhaps a week afterward when this mysterious man rode up in front of the office door and whistled. I went out and he said he came for his pay. I understood what he wanted and asked who the check should be made payable to.

"Great Gods!" he exclaimed, "I want the currency. I don't take checks."

"I gave him the currency and he rode away. He never dismounted from the horse either time and all the conversation we had would occupy less than ten minutes' time. I never saw the man again. He went out of my existence as mysteriously as he came in, but we got our spur track."

On this little item our future antiquarian will proceed to analyze the statesmanship of the nineteenth century. He will show the beautiful morality of a Christian civilization, and the immaculate honesty of a Christian statesman, and the unstained honor of a Christian hickory merchant.

Proceeding further in his researches the antiquarian will fish out another item which will go to illustrate the superior financial enterprise of the age. Here is the item:

There was until recently a young bellboy employed at the Palmer House who possesses business qualities which, if they do not land him in the penitentiary, will send him on the top wave of success high and dry into the lap of fortune. His modus operandi of knocking out a dollar or two extra per week with one guest—how many more fell victims to his thirst for wealth is not known—was simple. The guest in mind was in the habit of sending him weekly to Kehoe's for a five-pound box of candy, giving him \$2 in pay for the sweet meats. For a time all went well, but gradually there was noticed a falling off in the quality of the goods. At first the guest attributed the fault to herself; but later upon careful investigation she learned that it was the candy which had deteriorated. She taxed Kehoe, who denied any inferiority in his goods. She insisted and when he asked in what kind of the candies she found fault named a kind which Kehoe does not sell.

"But the candy came in your box."

"Are you sure?"

"I am certain. Here it is." And the lady produced one of his boxes filled with an inferior grade. An inquiry was made and resulted in bringing to light the fact that the boy upon receiving the \$2 would go to Kehoe's, purchase one pound for fifty cents and have it as an accommodation put into a five pound box. Then to a cheap candy factory, where with fifty cents more he bought three pounds and filled the box, thus making \$1 dollar by the transaction. The boy is now searching for something for idle hands to do.

Of course it will be found that this boy developed into a prosperous business man, became a deacon in a

Presbyterian church, and a man of standing and reliability with bankers. In fact, he became the man mentioned in the following, whose education in spelling was neglected. Here is the item which illustrates this defective spelling:

There was a meeting of the wholesale paper dealers' association in Chicago last fall which closed its proceedings with unusual banquet. Lyman J. Gage, vice-president of the First National Bank, was present at the banquet as an invited guest.

After the customary toasts had been responded to Mr. Gage was called up and made a brief speech. As near as it could be recalled by one of the members of the association it was as follows: "We are in the paper business," he began, "but we aim to handle a different line of goods from wrapping paper. Our stock consists usually of the gilt-edged brand only, but occasionally we get a consignment of an inferior grade, and we work it off to the best advantage, sometimes letting it go below cost."

"About a year ago we got some papers from a concern up north that we did not know. It came to us, however, accompanied by a letter from one of our northern customers who stood high in our estimation, and who recommended the paper as gilt edged. On the strength of this recommendation we discounted a few thousands. It was not paid when due and I had my clerk fish out the letter from our reliable customer who had recommended it, thinking he could be held in the light of an endorser."

"I sent for my lawyer and showed him the letter. He read it over carefully—more carefully than I perhaps—and informed me that we had no recourse on him."

"Why not?" I queried, astonished at the report.

"Because," the lawyer answered, "this man is a poor speller. Just notice the kind of gilt edged paper he refers to."

"I took the paper and read it again. The writer had spelled the word gilt with a u, making it read 'guilt-edged' paper." We let the matter drop."

Lyman J. Gage is now president of our World's Fair Association. He is one of our most prominent bankers, and considered a sharp business man, but as a critic in spelling his education also had been neglected.

But our antiquarian will find that all hotel boys do not develop into deacons and preachers, as the following item will show:

After clearing up the odds and ends left by his predecessor the night clerk of the Sherman House, glancing into the reading-room last night, spied there a man fast asleep. Going up to him the night clerk touched him but he retired not. Then he shook him but still he did not stir. The night clerk took hold with both hands and yanked him back and forth, but the man stirred not. But for the fog-horn blast that with each breath came from the man's mouth he might have been supposed dead. He was not dead, though. He was merely dreaming beneath the soothing influences of a mid-spring jag. When the night clerk had tired himself without rousing the man, he called the porter to assist him. The porter, who had learned from a policeman the most effective way of waking a heavy sleeper, secured a chair leg which, with a smile of confidence and a swing, he brought down with a resounding whack upon the sole of the sleeper's right foot, which rested in a chair. But the sleeper did not stir. With both hands the porter grasped the chair leg and struck the foot with such force as to break the chair leg in two. Still the sleeper stirred not. Thunderstruck at the failure of his heretofore unflinching remedy for sleepiness, the porter flared savagely at the crowd which had gathered and was gnawing him and next at the sleeper. Then snatching a heavy cane he struck the foot a tremendous blow. It seemed as if it would telescope the sleeper's leg. The sleeper opened one eye, glanced warily at the porter and muttered: "Hit the other leg; that leg's (die) wooden." Mid the yells of the crowd the porter departed and the sleeper was permitted to sleep out his jag."

The sleeper had a wooden leg, or rather a cork one, although he was not a G. A. R. man. G. A. R. did not get shot in the legs. The "rebs" usually fired high, and that is the

reason one hears of so many patriots tell of the whizzing bullets and the mysterious little holes in the crowns of their hats. The antiquarian will be puzzled to know what the "jag" meant. He will hunt through all the dictionaries and cyclopedias, but he will find no sensible solution of what the "jag" means in the case of this wooden-legged patriot. It would be useless to tell him that in Chicago English a "jag" means six inches of Cincinnati whiskey piled up in the interior department of a Chicago citizen. And when one speaks of a G. A. R. man with a "jag on," it does not mean a knapsack on his back, but a canteen full of firewater inside his ribs. Language as well as society has its mysteries.

DARIUS.

CHICAGO, May, 1890.

THE WATER WE DRINK.

Among the most generally useful and practical of the results of chemical investigation are the analyses and tests on food materials. Adulterations in manufactured products are today almost the universal rule, and poisonous additions to the staple articles of diet are by no means uncommon. Chemical analysis has, with its mystic sceptre, pointed to many of these, and ill-principled manufacturers find it necessary to move with great caution in their injurious practices.

Scarcely, if at all less general, are the cases of vitiation of the natural articles of human consumption. Many modern homes, embellished perhaps with all the accessories that luxury can suggest and wealth afford, are woefully lacking in means of securing even moderate access of pure air—that indispensable agent of cleanliness and that essential of life. Next to the purity of the air we breathe, in order of importance to the human family, is that of the water we drink. Physicians and chemists are united in the knowledge that a contaminated water supply is an infallible agent of a long train of contagious and terribly fatal diseases.

Absolutely pure water, it should be remembered, is not to be found in Nature, and is scarcely known even to chemists. The reason for this fact is that water is so universal a solvent that it dissolves much of the material of the soil through which it percolates, and indeed washes away something from almost every substance with which it comes in contact. Mineral matters, such as the compounds of lime and the like, which exist in almost every soil, are of but little if any detriment to drinking water unless present in excessive quantities. Magnesium salts are more injurious, but they are seldom present in large amounts in natural water.

Such matters will impart hardness to the water, seriously affecting it for laundry purposes, but even twenty-five or thirty grains of lime compounds to the gallon of water will seldom produce any serious derangements of health. The impurities most to be dreaded in potable waters are organic matters resulting