

into his possession, for the payment of his fee; or the attorney might help himself, to the full extent of his fee, to any money belonging to his client, which he might be able to get hold of. The bill gives to an attorney, as security for his fee, a first mortgage on property belonging to his client, which might, and often would, be many times the value of the amount so secured. Thus a client, by the operation of this proposed law, might have property worth any amount, even a fortune, placed under mortgage, and consequently tied up and unavailable, until he should pay a lawyer's fee; and should such fee not be promptly paid, the client's property might be sold at any sacrifice in order to pay it.

Under existing laws, a plaintiff and defendant may settle a suit at any stage, before or after judgment, on terms to suit themselves. But this bill virtually creates a third party to every lawsuit without whose consent no compromise of any pending suit can be effected, nor can satisfaction of any judgment rendered be entered; for the attorney has a lien on the cause of action before judgment, and upon the judgment after it is entered.

The bill is class legislation of an odious type, and is open to all the objections that apply thereto. Without regard to a client's circumstances or necessities, nor his obligations to other creditors, it encumbers his property to any amount, and renders it liable to any sacrifice, in order to secure the payment of his attorney's fee. This measure comes about as near giving "the earth" to a class of professional men usually well enough able to take care of themselves, regardless of the welfare of the rest of its inhabitants, as any that could well be devised. It should be promptly killed.

ELECTRICITY ON STREET RAILWAYS.

The past year has been a heavy one all around on railroads, and several street car lines, as well as larger systems, have been placed in the hands of receivers. It is a notable fact that while a number of steam and cable street car lines have thus been taken hold of under direction of the courts, because the operating expenses were too heavy for the receipts, not a single electric car line has had to go that way from such a cause. Where lines were made to pay in flush times, the falling off in business has been met by a commensurate reduction in operating expenses, so that a call for judicial supervision has not been necessary. With the steam and cable lines, however, expenses could be cut only so far, and then the system, to be operated at all, had to be run at a loss.

These facts were elicited by an investigation by the receiver of the Piedmont cable road in California, and now that official is desirous of changing the motive power of his line. He states that to continue the operation of the cable is to run at a constant loss, and he asks the courts to permit electricity to be substituted. He claims that even with the expense of alterations the reduced cost of operating will be on a basis proportionate to the service required, so that the road can be made to pay.

If the situation as stated by Receiver Bishop should be borne out by the experience and investigation of others, as appears from the showing made to be the probable case, it will be only a matter of a few years until even cable systems, which at first were thought to be proof against the newly adopted motive power, will become a thing of the past except for very steep grades. When the change from the old mule car system was contemplated in Salt Lake, there was considerable discussion as to whether an electric or a cable system should go in. From the careful examination of Hon. Francis Armstrong and his associates, then in control of the local line, it was concluded to adopt the electric system, and as a result Salt Lake was given a street car service unexcelled anywhere in the country. There was considerable adverse comment in railway circles at the time over the new motive power, and the most was made of the inconveniences suffered through heavy snowstorms. These difficulties, however, are being overcome, and all in all there is much less inconvenience and delay on the electric lines here than on steam and cable systems elsewhere. It is interesting to note that the practical judgment of our townsmen in investigating and passing upon the claims of what was then a new and imperfectly developed competitor in railway service is being fully confirmed by the subsequent experience of others in different parts of the country.

AN ANCIENT RELIGION.

The school of theologians which at present enjoys a brief distinction of being fashionable in certain circles is the one that denies the high antiquity claimed for the sacred Scriptures. But its representatives generally accept the sacred books of the orientals as dating back beyond the limits of secular history. It now appears, however, that a species of "higher criticism" is being applied to other books than those of the Hebrews and Christians, and with similar results. Recently a French savant, M. Darmester, has startled oriental scholars by the assertion that the Zend-Avesta, the sacred scriptures of the Parsees, cannot be older than the first century of our era. The date of these books has formerly been supposed to be between 1200 and 1500 before Christ. It is claimed that the text as now extant contains well marked traces of new Platonism and that probably various other elements have found their way into it during the ages past since the time of Zoroaster. If by the methods of the "higher criticism" the Vedas, the ancient Sanscrit books of the Hindus, could be proved to belong to the time of the first century too, the absurdity of the method of reasoning might be apparent and a reaction towards the truth as to the origin of the religions of mankind might follow.

The books known as the Zend-Avesta are supposed to have been the work of Zoroaster originally. They treated on numerous subjects, both secular and religious, and were first written on 12,000 cowskins (parchments), if Arabic accounts are to be believed. Their

contents were regarded as divine revelations. In course of time much of this literature was lost. The Parsees accuse Alexander the Great of the destruction of their books. Later, the revival of interest in this ancient religion resulted in efforts to gather the fragments that still were left, and thus a volume was obtained, the one still extant.

But who was Zoroaster? Arabian writers accept the tradition that the author of these books was Abraham. It is held that the word Zoroaster is a title meaning chief or high priest and that several persons were so designated. The first Zoroaster is thus referred to in a Parsee prayer: "The first who thought good thoughts, who first spoke good words, who first performed good actions, who was the first priest, the first warrior, the first cultivator of the soil, the first prophet, the first who was inspired, the first who has given to mankind nature, and reality, and word and hearing of word, and wealth, and all good things created by Mazda, which embellished reality; who first caused the wheel to turn among gods and men, who first praised the purity of the living creation and destroyed idolatry, who confessed the Zarathustrian belief in Ahura—Mazda, the religion of the living God against the devils. * * * through whom the whole true and revealed word was heard, which is the life and guidance of the world."

Assuming that this reference to the first Zoroaster or high priest is based on a tradition held at the time this prayer was composed, or perhaps on historical documents then available, the description would seem to point to Noah, the chief and first among men after the flood. The religion as taught originally was clearly that of the ancient patriarchs. The errors later introduced do not belong to Zoroaster's age. They are the result of spurious interpretations, misunderstandings, changes and corruptions, due to influences of later years.

The subject is one of great interest and it is hoped the criticism of M. Darmester may tend to have more light thrown upon it from a truly scientific source.

WAR IN THE AIR.

One report from Brazil is to the effect that President Peixoto is but waiting for the completion of a dirigible balloon to annihilate the rebels, and that this machine of warfare will soon be ready. It is to be used, like the air ships in "Caesar's Column," to float over the rebel ships and drop dynamite bombs on their decks.

If the Brazilian president really is experimenting in this direction and is successful—something as yet highly doubtful—the monotonous conflict in the South American republic will mark an era in the art of warfare. If aeronautics have attained the perfection necessary to admit of the construction of ships moving in the air at the command of man, and if these are adapted to purposes of war, naval forces, land fortifications and armies are useless, for with a few of these implements of destruction raining dynamite bombs on an adversary, no protection would be efficient. The heaviest armored ships would be as helpless as the old wooden vessels were against the