

of our citizens, the very marrow of the state, is hollow and rotten." During the Thirty Years' war it is no surprise to learn that "murder, highway robberies, bloody feuds and arson are defiling the country," but it is less known that at the time of the Reformation close observers found the people "blind to their own good with the lust of gain increasing." A picture of those times is given in the legislation enacted. An ordinance of the city of Magdeburg, 1505, begins thus:

"In consideration of the fact that the manners and the appearance of the people have, of a verity, changed much."

It is further gathered from this ordinance that the people indulge in "filthy habits, want of order, a desire to make a show, irreligiosity, violation of the Sunday laws, disregard of the sacredness of an oath, and disobedience generally to the authorities."

Similar conditions seem to have existed all through the dark age. As early as 430 A. D., Salvian writes:

"How the wealthy of our times rob the poor and ruin the country is best known to the Spanish provinces, of whom the name alone remains, and to the African provinces, which are ruined, and Gallia, which has been devastated."

Ancient history, too, abounds with testimony of a similar character. Imperial Rome soon found agriculture declining, superstition rampant and bad morals prevailing. Cato thundered against the immorality of his time. Polybius, the Grecian, complained of corruption and the waste of public funds, of poverty, of childless marriages, and the ruin of the country. Isocrates suggests that colonies be founded where tramps may be employed. Demosthenes declared that he would not believe a famous general even under oath, and Aristophanes charges his cotemporaries with greed, demagogism and immorality.

As far back as history goes, similar expressions are on record, proving that the "good old time" always existed as a conception of an ideal rather than as a reality, unless before the fall.

Different conclusions may no doubt be justified from these statements. They seem to imply that mankind remains morally pretty much at the same level, and that whenever a downward tendency becomes too apparent, moral forces are set in action to counteract it and restore the equilibrium. Our age is not worse probably, than former ages. There is some consolation in this, but it is not entirely satisfactory. The possibility of progress towards a higher plane is apparent to all and its realization has ever been the exalted theme of moralists, the aim of reformers, the vision of seers. The lesson of history, however, is that such an elevation of the race is possible only when educational efforts shall be directed towards the regeneration of the individual. By no other means is it possible to redeem the race from the conditions complained of in every age since the days of the hieroglyphics of ancient Egypt.

#### THE BEGINNING OF HISTORY.

About half a year ago a tomb was discovered near Thebes, and archeologists now believe that it has been identified as that of Menes, the founder of the first Egyptian dynasty. The remains unearthed are supposed to be those of that ancient ruler of the land of the Nile with whom the history of the country begins. Menes united the people, built the large city of Memphis, bent the river out of its course to obtain ground for his gigantic structures and carried on successful wars. In short, he has a place in the history

of the human race as one of the great empire builders.

The Independent commenting on this recent discovery in Egypt states the conclusions warranted by it and similar archeological finds somewhat as follows: We first know Egypt as inhabited by people living in the stone age. They had no metal tools and did not understand how to erect buildings of brick. Then down the Nile came a conquering race, probably from Babylonia. They were probably darker than the Semites of Arabia, from one of whose settlements in Ur of the Chaldees Abraham came to Canaan. They mixed with the first inhabitants of Egypt, were temple builders and carried their conquests back as far as the banks of the Euphrates. This carries us back to the beginning of history, which is the beginning of writing.

There has been some anxiety on the part of some that archeological research eventually would prove the unreliability of the Mosaic chronology and perhaps throw doubt upon the historical statements of Genesis. In this connection the subjoined remark of the Independent is important:

"Back of writing there is no history, only geological periods. How far back writing and history go we cannot yet measure, but new discoveries are every year helping us approximate to the time. The best we can now guess is that history may be traced back some four to five thousand years before Christ, not very different from the Mosaic chronology."

#### THE POSTAL SERVICE.

A variety of comment has been elicited by the deficit of nearly eleven and a half million dollars in the postal department for 1897. The general tenor of utterances by prominent newspapers upon one phase of the subject, the cost of carrying the mails in sparsely settled regions, is to the effect that the country can afford to be reasonably generous towards those regions.

Recently First Assistant Postmaster General Heath, in answer to a New York newspaper as to how the postal service can be best extended, replied as follows:

"1. By a liberal development of the free delivery service, so as to include, as far as possible, all classes of the community, whether living in towns, villages, mining settlements, lumber camps or on farms.

"2. By the extension and cheapening of the money order and registration systems.

"3. By the adoption of a parcels post to at least a limited extent; and

"4. By a continuance of the plan of consolidating contiguous postoffices so as to abolish useless offices and concentrate supervision and responsibility."

Mr. Heath is a great believer in enlarging the free delivery system, and shows that this country is far behind portions of Europe in this regard, though the United States carries a letter farther for the cost than does any other government in the world. A letter may be sent 6,849 miles, from Key West, Florida, to Circle City, Alaska, for two cents.

Many papers are complaining of the fact that publishing houses are allowed to send books through the mails for one cent per pound, on condition that the books are issued as and are called numbers of some periodical. The mails are burdened with enormous quantities of such matter, and the actual cost to the government for transporting it is far in excess of the rate charged.

The low rate of one cent per pound

was made on newspapers, magazines, etc., on the theory that these vehicles of intelligence should be furnished to the people as cheaply as possible; but it was not contemplated that books, which are such in every sense of the word, should be carried at this rate. The subterfuge of calling them numbers of a serial does not alter the equities of the case. Repeated attempts to correct this abuse have failed because of the influence in Congress which publishing houses have been able to exert.

Another source of expense to the government is the carriage at the cent rate of vast quantities of advertising matter which purports to be regular issues of continuous publications, but the sole object of which is to give advertisements as wide a circulation as possible. Congressman Loud of California, in a bill bearing his name, and which provoked wide discussion throughout the country in 1896, attempted to purge the postal service of the abuse named and other abuses; but the opposition to his bill was too strong and it failed.

It is, however, only a matter of time when something will have to be done to correct the abuses from which the postal service is suffering, because the deficits in it are annually increasing while statistics show that if flagrant evils to which it is subjected were remedied it would be nearly if not wholly self-sustaining.

#### UTAH'S BIRTHDAY.

Perhaps it was because of uncertainty as to the day which ought to be signalized as the anniversary of Utah's birth as a State that no notice was taken of it. In the forenoon of Jan. 4, 1896, President Cleveland signed the proclamation declaring Utah a State in the Union, and on Jan. 6, two days later, the general officers of the State were inaugurated and the machinery of its government was set in motion.

The signing of the proclamation was the official act that made Utah a member of the sisterhood of states, and not the inauguration of her officers; hence Jan. 4 was the anniversary of her birth into the Union, and is the date on which that event should always be commemorated.

#### LEITER'S WHEAT DEAL.

Soon after harvest Joseph Leiter, a young millionaire stock and grain speculator of Chicago, began to buy December wheat heavily. His purchases bulled the market until he claims that the farmers of the Mississippi valley received fifteen cents a bushel more for their wheat than they would have done had he not entered it. His contracts were so heavy that it was confidently predicted that all the wheat he had bought for December delivery could not be delivered.

But the sellers proved equal to their obligations, and on the last day of the year Mr. Leiter found himself the owner of about nine million bushels, actually in storage in the elevators in Chicago, and on that day he published an announcement to the effect that he had plenty of wheat to sell to the miller or exporter, and that it was of the highest quality. He says:

"The demand for consumption before the next crop year will fix the selling price, I am waiting for this to meet my expectations. If I am wrong I may have to pocket my loss later. If statistics are half right my expectations will be realized."

The war clouds that are now overshadowing so large a part of the habitable globe give promise of a great advance in the price of wheat before very long.