

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### OBSERVING SACRED DAYS.

There are perversions of law and order which not only escape the inflictions in such case made and provided but are encouraged and upheld by those whose moral if not legal duty it should be to frown down if they cannot suppress. All violations of Sunday laws and ordinances belong in this category, but it was not the design to speak distinctively of them; they have become so common that denunciation or even mild criticism would be looked upon as an altogether old-fogylst piece of work. There are two other days in the year to which some degree of sacredness should attach and be recognized if not observed; these are Decoration and Thanksgiving days, one set apart as an occasion for remembering the dead who perished that the Union might survive, the other a time designated by the head of the government and reiterated by the heads of the states, in which the people without distinction of party or creed are called upon to give acknowledgement and praise to the Author of the blessings bestowed upon us.

This is the most thoroughly civilized and enlightened nation in the world. The basis of its wonderful growth and development has been spiritual reliance coupled with physical effort both intelligently directed and persistently maintained. While it is by no means a nation wholly consecrated to Christianity, while the fact is that there is an element who affect to or in reality have no belief in a Supreme Being or a continuous state of existence, it still remains that this class achieve their principal prominence by reason of not being very numerous and, paradoxical as it may appear, being kept in the background. Certain it is that none of them has ever attained to the Presidency of the United States and very few are ever chosen chief magistrates of states or cities. The reason for this is that deep down in the hearts of the great majority of the American people there is a distrust of those who repudiate the great first cause and make mockery of those things which by reason of their origin and the subject to which they relate are invested with more or less of sacredness, and the people do not care to have such men as political rulers or chiefs. We then find a religious sentiment pervading the masses and Christianly in one or another of its forms being the corner-stone of the great national fabric. This is manifested variously but in no way more strikingly than in the setting apart of the days spoken of and the unanimity with which they are observed everywhere throughout the land. It is not peculiar to any place but in almost every part of this free country that the perversions above spoken of crop out. These are due to those who are the disbelievers spoken of and the unwillingness of the other class to seem to be oppressive or bigoted and who prefer on all occasions to extend to all the rights of free agency and unrestricted action. It does not follow, however, that so much in the way of actual approval of improper deportment should obtain as is the case. Nor does it of necessity follow that all should seek a place of worship in order to escape censure, although such observance for a reasonable time would not only be altogether commendable from a religiously social standpoint but strictly in consonance with the recommendation of the President and the governor as well. It is the other extreme of conduct being practiced that occasions the animadversion called

forth. Those who do not care to listen to an address or hear singing befitting the day can at least refrain from excessive and harmful indulgences to be followed by bolsterous and unseemly hilarity; they, in fact, owe it to those who own as much of the streets and other public places as they themselves do to let serenely prevail therein and not take advantage of the tolerance shown to make the time hideous.

Memorial day is seldom an exemplification of its name and purpose, if at all. Except to a very few, it is taken advantage of by the pleasure-loving element, who constitute a visibly great majority of all who make any kind of observance whatever, to be less than usual an occasion for turning the mind gratefully to those of our countrymen who repose

"Under the sod and the dew,  
Waiting the judgment day."

It is not the cause of the holiday but the existence of a holiday that occupies the minds of those who make it a time for revelry, riotous pastimes and unrestrained indulgence. And being inappropriate and ill-timed on Decoration day, such things are sinful perversions of Thanksgiving day. It is, as stated, a recognized thing that each engage in his own preferred manner of observance, but no one has a right to carry such privilege to the point of being obnoxious to others. In plain terms, a certain degree of propriety should be enforced where it is not voluntarily practiced.

### SHIPS FOR UNCLE SAM.

Admiral Dewey, it seems, has quietly contracted with a Hongkong company for the raising and repairing of three Spanish ships, for the sum of \$500,000. Two of these, *Isla de Cuba* and *Isla de Luzon*, are now safely docked at Cavite, and the third, *Don Juan de Austria*, is probably also afloat.

That is business.

The three gunboats are said to be admirably suited for the purpose of protecting the interests of the United States in the Philippines and along the Asiatic coast. The two are sister ships of 1,040 tons, 200 feet long 30 feet beam and 11 feet 6 inches draft. They are described as made of steel, with twin screws, good protective decks and a battery of twelve guns and three torpedo tubes. Their speed under forced draft is 15.8 knots.

Admiral Dewey has proved himself a man of action and not of words, ever since the memorable day on which he entered the Manila bay on important business, and he has added one more proof of this characteristic. Uncle Sam has by his prompt action received a valuable addition to the navy in a place where ships will be much needed.

### LIFE A MYSTERY.

An address by Professor Japp, in which he endeavors to show that organic nature is fundamentally distinct from inorganic nature, has stirred up biologists considerably, says the *Literary Digest*. The question is an important one, for if it is proved that inorganic matter cannot "spontaneously" assume the forms of living beings, the evolution theory finds a chasm which it cannot bridge. Professor Japp takes the ground that in living matter we always have one kind of one-sided molecular structure, while in dead matter we have either symmetrical structure or a mixture of oppositely one-sided

molecules. He believes the molecules in this mixture cannot be separated by any force, except life.

This statement has called out a reply by the venerable philosopher Herbert Spencer, who refutes the argument of Professor Japp, but also expresses his belief that life is in its ultimate nature incomprehensible. After stating his objections to the arguments advanced he says:

"I do not draw attention to this truth for the purpose of showing the adequacy of the physico-chemical interpretation of life, but for the purpose of showing the inadequacy of Professor Japp's argument against it. My own belief is that neither interpretation is adequate. A recently issued, revised and enlarged edition of the first volume of the 'Principles of Biology' contains a chapter on 'The Dynamical Element in Life,' in which I have contended that the theory of a vital principle falls and that the physico-chemical theory also fails; the corollary being that in its ultimate nature life is incomprehensible."

This conclusion of the eminent philosopher is recommended to the careful attention of those who are under the impression that "evolution" is a sesame opening wide the doors of the great mystery of creation. In the *Mosaic* account the transition from inorganic creation to the springing into existence of vegetation and animal life is ascribed to a divine creative act. The appearance of man on earth is similarly accounted for. Science has not been able to furnish any better explanation of these stages of creation. To the best of her exponents the mystery remains incomprehensible. There is no other satisfactory explanation than that furnished by the inspired author of Genesis.

### AN IMPERIAL PLEASANTRY.

If there is one man more than any other in all this big, broad world who occupies greater space and attracts more attention than any other, that person is William III, emperor of Germany. A correspondent of the *Chicago Chronicle* had an unrestricted view of his majesty on board the royal yacht *Hohenzollern* at Venice, while the vessel was on the way to the Holy Land. William was on the promenade deck and was in what is known as one of his frisky moods, when all at once and without warning he launched out his right arm and landed squarely on the solar plexus of his brother-in-law, Prince Albert of Schleswig-Holstein. The correspondent describes the event as having been startling and ludicrous; if the feelings of the younger prince were incorporated into the description, doubtless the element of painfulness would also figure.

A portion of the narrative is as follows:

"Through the crowd the Empress Augusta Victoria, a kindly faced woman garbed in black and Queen Margherita, who had an equally pleasant countenance and who wore a Mac colored toilette, circulated arm in arm, graciously acknowledging the salutations of the gallants about them. I've seen 'lady stenographers' who assumed more airs. The two regal dames paused in their promenade to talk to a tall young galliard in dazzling helmet and plumes who was trying to 'brace up' under the adulations of a bevy of young women of the court. The youth was Albert of Schleswig-Holstein, brother of Augusta Victoria, who had preceded the imperial suite to Venice. Presently the emperor, followed by the king, stepped jauntily out upon the deck. Instantly there was a sort of a 'Hello, Bill! Hello, Al!' greeting between the young war