

but little trouble vegetation can be developed. The rivers, which in spring are full of water, are from three to ten miles wide. When the water retreats the beds of the rivers are changed into rich meadows. The date seeds planted by Flatters at El-Biod have grown without the least care into fine trees, and the same is the fact also of the seeds planted near the cisterns of Tebalbelet, in spite of the inconsiderate manner in which the Tuaregs get in the harvest. Trees are quite frequent, but the caravan guides always choose the most difficult and desolate routes. Soon, however, traveling will become more frequent and then the secrets of the desert will be revealed. The writer states:

Oscar Lenz crossed the Sahara and reached Timbuctoo without seeing anything but desert land, and yet he mentions that behind a chain of hills which he passed there was a place called by the natives "The Head of the Waters." Dr. Borth, who was for months in Taurég camps, and was the guest and friend of the Sheikh El Bakoy, was told innumerable facts about the traditions and manners of the land; but its geography was hidden from him. When Lieutenant Hourst and Lieutenant Bluyet explored the region and an arm of the Niger, they found a lake nearly 100 miles long. And when the officers of the Timbuctoo garrisons extended their excursions they found that not only one but more than twenty lakes existed, all very large, and stretching far to the north into the very heart of the supposed arid Sahara.

These facts indicate the possibilities of what has always been considered an immense desert. And it is so nearly everywhere. When the earth becomes known, she is found to extend to her children a friendly hand, ever willing to aid them in the fulfilment of their brief mission in this life. There is a good deal less real cause for contention than some of the great men imagine.

COFFEE AND BLINDNESS.

In the Word of Wisdom, as understood by those familiar with the spirit in which it was written, a warning is given, as is well known, against the use of coffee, among other injurious beverages. From time to time science has joined in this warning and now comes a celebrated French physician and says that coffee drinking is sure to destroy the eyesight. He says:

Do you want to be blind? Drink coffee. Drink lots of it. Drink it with breakfast, lunch and dinner, and drink it between meals. Drink it when you get up in the morning and drink it before you go to bed at night. Drink it long and strong, and keep it up, and by and by you will be sightless as the proverbial bat.

Everyone who has traveled in oriental countries has noticed two facts. One is that the people there, as a rule, are inveterate coffee drinkers. In their bazars or their coffee houses they divide their spare time between the water pipe and their tiny coffee cups. The other is that there is perhaps no other part of the globe where sore eyes and blindness are so common. This affection of the eyes has often been ascribed to the bright sunlight against which the fez and the turban

afford no shade, but it seems that physicians now commence to seek the cause in the steaming drink. Better leave it alone than to pay for it with the loss of one of the most precious gifts bestowed upon man!

NO MASKED CANDIDATES.

This paper has had occasion in the past to criticize the action of certain public officials who, having accepted nomination to office and having gone through the campaign successfully and been elected, have then turned round and resigned, because, as they claim, their personal business or profit required that they be freed from the obligations of public office. It is not necessary here to go over the ground previously traversed in discussing this proceeding; enough will be said when we assert that not one word of that criticism is intended now to be withdrawn or is believed to have been a bit too severe.

But a certain phase of a very similar question may properly receive consideration and comment at this time, when nominations to office have just been or are about to be presented before the people. We take it that no man will be knowingly given a nomination whom the conventions or the people have reason to expect contemplating sending to his resignation before the term of his office expires. We imagine the party managers as well as the voters have had about as much of that kind of treatment as they are anxious to receive. If so, they ought to go a step still further and demand, not only that each nominee shall not resign, but also that if elected he shall perform the duties of the office. In other words, they should insist that he agree to be something more than a figure-head. Deputies and assistants he may necessarily have to appoint; but his constituents have a right to ask that he give to the office to which he seeks election, his own time, attention and direct personal supervision.

We make these remarks because of expressions frequently heard to the effect that such and such a candidate is willing to help his party ticket along by permitting the use of his influential name, but that his own business is so important and profitable that he could never think of giving it up to attend to the public duties suggested—that if elected he will turn over all the latter to some certain friend or understudy. Sometimes this friend is comparatively unknown or without influence, hence would be unsuitable as a candidate before the people. Sometimes he is a cheaper man and is willing to do the work for less than the nominal incumbent of the office is entitled to draw, in which event the latter gets a share of the pay for doing nothing except having permitted the use of his mighty name. In either or any case, however, we submit that the people have been imposed upon and deceived—not because the work may not be done just as well and perhaps better than expected, but because the one who performs it was not chosen by them to do it but is the private appointee of the man of their choice who on his own part does nothing for them.

We have said that the extensive duties laid upon many of the public officers require that they should have assistants or deputies. This is all perfectly understood. But it is a good time now to refuse to support, and indeed to strike off from the ticket, the name of any man, no matter how high his qualifications or how great his popularity, who announces in advance that if elected he does not expect to occupy the position more than nominally. A candidate who announces that he has already selected the actual incumbent of his office is one who ought to be defeated, if only by the substitution of the proposed incumbent on the ticket which the people are to vote. Men are generally named for office, and in independent voting communities generally elected, for no other reason than that they are known to have fitness and ability. It is not only unfair to their supporters but a piece of gross impertinence, as well as a serious risk of injustice to themselves, to trade upon this reputation and capacity by holding some one else into a place to which he was not regularly elected. In the important county and state elections now coming on it is only right that the people should know whether in voting their regular ballots they are supporting men who will assume and perform the duties required, or whether, in supporting some parts of the ticket, they are really voting into office masked and unknown place-holders whose names neither the nominating conventions nor they have been asked to consider.

IMPORTANT AS TO SCHOOL LANDS.

A friend who is interested in land matters from the standpoint of those who have acquired rights in equity, if not in fact, to the possession of a small slice of the world's surface—a gentleman, in other words, who has always been on the side of the legitimate land-owner as against the land shark—invites our attention to a matter which is of great interest to occupants of school sections in this State. The information is given forth from the office of the board of land commissioners and has probably been already published, though if so it has escaped the notice of many who are directly interested; at any rate it is important enough to deserve all the further publicity that can be given.

It is to the following effect: Occupants of school lands prior to January 1st, 1894, are to have the preference right to purchase said lands at the appraised valuation. Occupants of school lands before the government surveys were extended over them, or who hold successive title (that is, "squatters") title from such occupants shall have the right to purchase said lands at one-fourth the appraised valuation, provided said one-fourth of appraisement does not fall below \$1.25 per acre. Applications for purchase and title must be made by occupants of the lands by the 20th of December, 1896.

WHAT DO the Bryan people think of the claim, figured out on the basis of the returns from Vermont and Maine, that McKinley will carry New York by 700,000 plurality?