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Friday, February 23, 1917.

Lent.

This week the Church enters upon another observance of the Holy Season of Lent.

The years move on swiftly. Year after year, the Church begins her ecclesiastical annual with Advent. Then follows Christmas, New Years, Ash Wednesday, the Lenten fast followed by the great feast of Easter, Pentecost and another Advent.

Before a feast, a fast. Before Easter the Lenten fast of forty days and Holy Week. It is well, physically and spiritually, that we observe a season of fasting and penance. Physically, because we rest our bodies and our minds. Spiritually because we take inventory of our soul's needs and assets. We find that the liabilities outweigh the assets and that if we do not mend our ways spiritual bankruptcy will be the inevitable result.

Let the Lenten fast of 1917 be a real and beneficial one that the Easter feast of 1917 will be a glorious one for us all!

Health Insurance.

While the object sought to be attained in the so-called "health insurance bill" introduced by Senator Ogden L. Mills is eminently praiseworthy, nevertheless, the measure itself should be scrutinized very carefully lest we place another half-baked statute upon the books which will plague on enforcing officers to the last extreme.

Another thing: Perhaps it might be easier to secure universal health insurance or insurance which would insure weekly compensation while ill, either from ordinary ailment or from accidental injury, by another means than the one presented by Senator Mills with its expensive State health commission, its complicated machinery of organization and distribution of responsibility.

Again:—It is quite possible that the amount to be paid over to the sick worker as laid down in the Mills Bill may be too high or the period during which payments are to continue may be too long or too short.

Really, the subject is too big to be written into the statutes upon the mere ipse dixit of the thousand or less members of the American Society for Labor Legislation. While these men and women are very estimable persons, it must not be conceded that they hold a monopoly of the brains and intelligence of the United States. There are some things like 89,000,900 other persons in the country and they have a right to be heard as well.

Half Baked.

To judge from the reports, there is a veritable flood of proposed legislative measures pouring into the pools of the Senate and Assembly at Albany.

Probably, many of these proposals are good in themselves. Very likely many of them are aimed at curing dangerous diseases of the body politic. But the great majority are simply trash and nonsense which serve no good purpose unless swelling the receipts of the official state printer be considered of some good and should never see the light of day. Nevertheless, there are civic organizations which insist that each and every one of the 3,000 or 4,000 bills—good, bad and indifferent which are dropped into the legislative bill boxes in the course of a winter should be reported from Committee and voted upon in the Legislature. These persons are so generous of the taxpayers' money that they would compel something like 4,000 roll calls of the 201 senators and assemblymen, to say nothing of the committee roll calls to satisfy the curiosity or malice of some busybody who wants to see what the legislators think of some crazy-quilt proposition which he is fathering either as principal or presagent.

New York state and every other State in the Union would be far better off if there were some way to reduce, rather than increase, the number of laws enacted at each session of the Legislature. Enforce a fewer number of laws and stop enacting new ones is a safe rule to lay down.

Is It The Phone?

Is the telephone responsible for trusts and monopoly? George W. Perkins, the noted multi-party millionaire thinks it is. In a recent interview in "Collier's Weekly" he says:—

The telephone, not the tariff, has made the trusts. We have had the tariff in this country for a hundred years or more, but the trusts are barely more than a quarter of a century old. And if you will look into the question you will find that the last 25 years about marks the development of the long-distance telephone. It was that development that made it possible for a man to sit in his office in New York or Chicago or San Francisco, gauge instantly business conditions across the country, and give his orders on the moment to his lieutenants. And I firmly believe that if the age of electricity should cease tomorrow—at the crack of a finger, as it were—within 24 hours every one of our big trusts would begin to disintegrate. Big business does not merely thrive on communications. It is vital to its very existence.

Bulwer-Disraeli.

Writing in "America", Cecil Chesterton makes these comparisons between two noted figures in the Victorian era—Sir Bulwer Lytton and Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield:—

"But Lytton was unquestionably a man of genius; one feels that in his worst novels and in his most affected private letter. What kind of genius he was is a much more difficult matter to determine. The close friendship which developed between him and Disraeli inevitably suggests a comparison between the two men, and, indeed, they had not a little in common. The one is remembered primarily as a politician; the other, more faintly, as a novelist. Yet there seems at first no particular reason why an accident should not have resulted in their changing parts. Disraeli's novels, if not better novels, are at least more permanent, valuable contributions to literature than most of Lytton's; and there are speeches of Lytton's, those on the Crimean War in particular, which seem, to me at least, fully equal to the best of Disraeli's. Deadly as was much of Disraeli's irony and powerful as was his best invective, it was not in him to say anything a good as: (Destroy your Government and save your army.)"

"Had Disraeli been disappointed in his political ambitions he would probably have devoted himself to literature; his novels, written for the popular market, aimed at curing dangerous diseases of the body politic. But the great majority are simply trash and nonsense which serve no good purpose unless swelling the receipts of the official state printer be considered of some good and should never see the light of day. Nevertheless, there are civic organizations which insist that each and every one of the 3,000 or 4,000 bills—good, bad and indifferent which are dropped into the legislative bill boxes in the course of a winter should be reported from Committee and voted upon in the Legislature. These persons are so generous of the taxpayers' money that they would compel something like 4,000 roll calls of the 201 senators and assemblymen, to say nothing of the committee roll calls to satisfy the curiosity or malice of some busybody who wants to see what the legislators think of some crazy-quilt proposition which he is fathering either as principal or presagent.

Old King Winter reigned long if not merrily in the season of 1916-1917.

Could the coal man get a little more coal to sell he'd be happy these days.

President Wilson is calm and deliberate. Would that all journalists and agitators were in the same frame of mind.

Which is wiser: To search out new sources of revenue and increase the state's expenditures or curtail state expenditures and thereby lower the tax levy? This applies equally to State, city and county governments.

These are the days when Rochester automobilists are in the limelight, the front of the stage and the van in the parade. John J. McInerney is not in the rear, either.

A Catholic paper should make good Lenten reading for 1917. If you have not already subscribed to one now is a good time to do so.

Will that proposed new State Department with its high sounding title do any more to reduce the price of foods than the present State departments have done?

If a rural police is necessary and a good thing, why not confine its operations—to the rural districts and compel the police forces of the cities to perform the duties for which they are sworn and paid?

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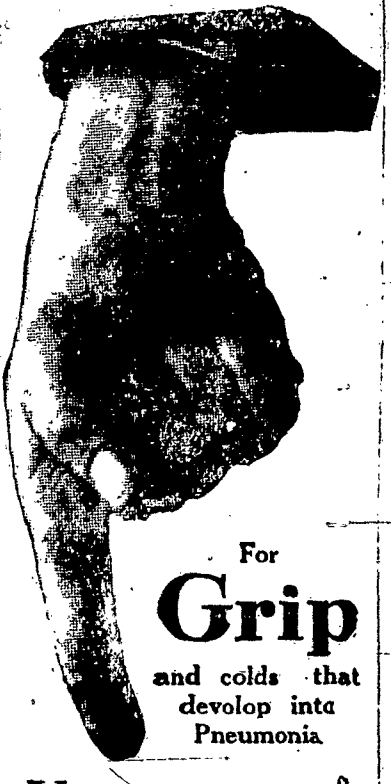
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