

tion and stamping of various articles of merchandise. It seeks, as far as possible, apparently, to reduce the life of each individual citizen to a kind of safe mechanical routine. So soon, indeed, as a burden of responsibility begins to be felt in any quarter, some busy law-maker, moved by some interested party, offers to lighten the load by a special act of legislation.

What should not be lost sight of is, that there is always somebody who stands ready to make money out of each new law inscribed on the statute-book. Back of the whole body of oleomargarine legislation stands the farmer who does not want his butter-trade subjected to a trying competition. And so with all special laws of a protective kind. We hear of a demand made in one quarter for the incorporation of the music-teaching profession, so that henceforth no one may venture to inculcate the elements of music save in accordance with the views and theories of the incorporators. Of course, these public-spirited ladies and gentlemen, who are so anxious to protect the community from the injury which might be inflicted by ill-prepared music-teachers, have their own interests to serve in the business. Competition will be restricted, and all who want to teach will have to pass through the probation which it may please the incorporators to prescribe. People who want to earn an honest living by imparting the little they know will find their pathway blocked by a special law passed in the interest of the magnates of the profession.

Dr. Shaw, in the article above referred to, says that there is no use in trying to draw a distinction between functions that the State may properly undertake and those which it should abstain from assuming. The sooner, he holds, we come down to the position that every thing is a lawful subject of State interference, and that the question is never more than one of expediency, the better it will be in

every respect. We can not view the matter in the same light. We are quite prepared to apply the test of expediency; but we hold that, if it can be shown that there is a large class of subjects which it is not expedient for the State to touch, then it may be said that there is ground which it is not lawful for the State to enter. In applying the test of expediency, however, we would apply it in the broadest sense. We should be careful not to mistake a good intention for a good tendency; nor should we ever consent to overlook the probable effect of any given law upon the character of the community. We should claim to judge it not by its immediate and direct effects only, but by its remote and indirect ones as well, ever keeping in view the principle that the well-being of the community must in the last resort depend on the personal qualities of the men and women composing it. Let others aim, if they will, at the protection of everybody against everything, and the reducing to a minimum the energy, caution, judgment, and courage required for the conduct of life; we shall join in no such crusade. We believe that society possesses, and that individuals possess, powers of adaptation to varying contingencies which the protective spirit in contemporary legislation is greatly tending to obscure and overlay. We want to see individual character more and more brought into prominence as a condition of success, and public opinion developed and educated into a force that can act for good independently of legislative support. As things are going at present, it looks as if the "coming slavery," foretold by a great philosopher, might be hastened beyond the measure of his fears. It behooves all who believe in individual liberty and individual responsibility as conditions of social well-being to raise their voices against a tendency which certainly is hostile to both.