

near the head waters of the principal streams which draw the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. From these reservoirs, some of which are to be the mountain cañons, water is to be drawn into canals and led through the arid plains which are now useful only for grazing purposes. Mayor Powell estimates that an area exceeding one-half the land now cultivated in the United States may thus be made fit for agriculture. There are, it is calculated, 150,000 square miles of this land, and its ultimate value, if successfully cultivated, is reckoned at nearly three billions of dollars. The *Christian Union*, which deals with the scheme in no incredulous vein, points out that an important sociological question would be raised by its success. To whom should this vast area of land, reclaimed at immense national cost, belong? Apart from any reference to the Henry George theories, it thinks that "it would be difficult for any one to frame an agreement to justify a policy which would require fifty millions of people to make the expenditures necessary to reclaim bad lands, and then give the lands, when reclaimed, to a few thousand private land owners. If the United States convert, at great expense, this now worthless tract into one worth three billions of dollars, the nation must, it argues, retain the land which it will thus have virtually created, becoming the landlord and collecting the rentals. This would be trying the George theory upon a pretty large scale. The hard headed sceptic may, however, suggest that it will be time enough when valuable chickens have been actually hatched, or at least in process of successful incubation, to settle the question of their disposal.

In view of the rapid transformation that is taking place in Bible lands, the American School of Biblical Antiquities and Languages has been projected by the authorities of the Syrian Protestant College at Beirut. The proposal, as described by Mr. Hulbert, is to establish at Beirut, as the most available point in the East, a complete Oriental library, and to open a museum of antiquities which will gather into its collections everything that will illustrate the East, and especially the Bible. This school, when properly endowed and regularly opened, may be the centre for the work of American scholars in Western Asia, a constant encouragement to Oriental studies in American universities and seminaries, and a helpful means to enable students of the East, and especially the Bible, to carry on, more advantageously and more completely than they otherwise could, their investigations on the spot. This plan has, it is said, met a cordial reception from every side, and has especially enlisted the enthusiasm of all the Americans in Syria, as well as the warm sympathy of Oriental scholars in America. An endowment of \$100,000 is asked for by the promoters of the movement. The enterprise is one which commends itself not only to Biblical scholars, but to students of history and antiquities generally. The English Palestine Exploration Society is working in the same field and with the same object, but has no such comprehensive scheme on foot for carrying out its objects. There is evidently no time to lose. A little breathing spell is given to explorers by the delay in the prosecution of railway enterprises, caused by the obstinacy of the Turkish Government, but means of overcoming this opposition will probably soon be found, and, in the not distant future, Gaza and Jerusalem and Damascus will resound with the scream of the engine whistle. Meanwhile, good carriage roads are multiplying fast. The Damascus road running from Beirut was the pioneer in 1861. Since then Tripoli has been connected with Hums and Hamath, Jaffa with Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Haifa with Nazareth and Acre, Beirut with Dêr-el-Kanar and B'teddin. Mr. Hulbert has "seen carriages in every important city in Syria and Palestine, with the exception of Gaza and Nablus. Tripoli boasts of its horse-cars, and the traveller goes from Mersina to Tarsus and Adanaon by a regular railway finished a year ago. A camel with two telegraph poles strapped on his back is a true type of the present aspect of affairs in Syria."

THE recent action of the American Sugar Trust in closing the Bay State Refinery at Boston strikingly illustrates the radical principle underlying the operation of the "trust" in its relation to the law of supply and demand. The President of the Bay State Company euphemistically explains the actions of the "Sugar Trust" as simply an "economic business arrangement." There is a falling off in the consumption of sugar during the fall months, consequent on the close of the canning season. "We reduce the proportion of the sugar to the consumption." As the *Philadelphia Record* points out, the falling off in consumption is not wholly due to the season. It is, in part, the result of enforced economy in the use of sugar caused by the increase of the price of the granulated article over 30 per cent. since the first of July. Under the ordinary operation of the law of supply and demand, the falling off in consumption would have been checked and counteracted by a reduction in prices, leading to the freer use

of sugar for ordinary household purposes, and among the poorer classes. The "Trust" finds that it suits their purposes, in other words, pays better to keep the price up to the highest practicable notch and diminish the production, to suit the reduced consumption caused by the high price. The result to the labourers is the throwing of 300 men out of employment; to the public labourers included, an increased outlay for sugar, or a restricted use of this indispensable article.

A WRITER in the New York *Independent* gives some interesting illustrations of the rapid changes that are taking place in Syria and Palestine. The old is everywhere giving place to the new. "Western ideas and methods are coming in with resistless push." Customs which have doubtless clung to those historic lands for 2,000 years are one after another dropping out of sight forever. The writer in question, Mr. Henry W. Hulbert, thinks it a moderate statement to say that the last twenty-five years have seen more transformations in this part of the East than the many centuries which have gone before, and urges that something should soon be done to photograph, for the benefit of future generations, the old life and ways which will soon exist only in memory. As one instance, Mr. Hulbert says that twenty-five years ago all the older women of the Druze sect wore a long silver or tin horn on the head, covered with a veil, which also enveloped the face, with the exception of one eye. But during the last two years he has visited every section of the Lebanon range inhabited by Druzes and has never seen a "horned woman." Not only so, but a long search in Syria recently failed to find such a horn for a gentleman who wished it for an American museum, and the agent had finally to have one manufactured at Beirut for the purpose. A lady friend of Mr. Hulbert's who lately attended a Druze wedding at Abeih, on Mount Lebanon, found the bride dressed in the latest Parisian fashions. Another illustration of the change going on is the recent erection by a wealthy German of a new mill for grinding grain near the Damascus gate of Jerusalem. This mill, imported from Manchester, England, contains the latest improved apparatus and is run by gas generated from petroleum. There is every indication that the old hand-mills, which date from Bible days, will soon be entirely superseded, as will also the time-honoured method of threshing grain by driving cattle round and round the threshing-floor.

THE contest for the Governorship of New York State seems likely to afford a pretty good opportunity for estimating the strength of the moral element as distinct from, and in this case opposed to, the partisan element in the electorate. From a series of interviews had by the *Tribune* it is evident that most of the influential clergymen of the various denominations are warmly opposed, on moral and religious grounds, to the re-election of Governor Hill, though it is highly probable that the sympathies of the majority of them are with the Republicans on general political grounds. The result will, however, be affected to a considerable degree by the extent to which the friends of temperance and prohibition support the Third Party candidate. This candidate has, of course, no possible chance of election, but every vote cast for him will be a vote which would otherwise have been given to the Democratic candidate, and so, as one of the interviewed ministers put it, will be "half a vote at least for Mr. Hill and the saloons." It would be a singular, but by no means improbable, result of Prohibition wrong-headedness, should the representative of the saloon influence be elected through the diversion of votes brought about by the Third Party candidate. The defeat of Warner Miller and the triumph of Governor Hill, through the failure of the temperance men to support the former, would be a spectacle that should open the eyes of Third Party enthusiasts all over the Union.

It is not often that the Government of a great and enlightened Empire descends to acts which savour so much of pettiness as the refusal of the German authorities to give Dr. Mackenzie access to official documents needed in the preparation of his book, while permitting his adversaries to have free access to such documents, and its prosecution of the parties responsible, or supposed to be responsible, for the publication of the extracts from the diary of the late Emperor. If, as there is little reason to doubt, these proceedings are taken at the instigation of Prince Bismarck, they will serve to confirm the popular impression in the outside world, that the character of the Man of Iron, notwithstanding its great strength, lacks some of the essential elements of true nobleness. In any case, such fear of public discussion marks a distrust of the people which shows how large is the element of despotism still lingering in the German system of Government, and increases the world's wonder that a people in the very van of progress in literature, art and science, should so long submit to such arbitrary curtailment of the rights of free speech and self-rule.