

The young Russian exile named Silverstein who threw a lighted bomb into the midst of a crowd gathered in Union Square, was no coward, for he risked his own life in a crazy attempt to do something in the cause of alleged Liberty. The murder of a priest in Colorado and some pyrotechnical talk from anarchists in Chicago have stirred up a degree of uneasiness among sober citizens of the United States. However, the editor of the *Argonaut* is probably wiser than any other counsellor of the Republic when he urges that the law should be enforced relentlessly against anyone who incites another to violence but that the loquacious anarchist is killed more easily by contempt than by any other treatment. The San Francisco writer points to England's policy by way of example. England is comparatively free from anarchist outrage; and yet London is almost the only capital in Europe where the anarchist may say and do anything that pleases him, so long as he keeps within the bounds of the law. He may unfurl his precious red flag in Hyde Park and screech himself hoarse against all authority while the bored and supercilious policeman stands by to see that the course of his oratory is not violently interrupted. The anarchist is vain, above all other created beings, and so long as he is allowed to talk, he is not likely to menace the well-being of the State. But the moment he is advertised or his eloquence is threatened with suppression he becomes a danger to the Government. England lets him talk to his tongue's content, benevolently regards his red flag as a harmless and somewhat picturesque feature and her Sovereign and Prime Minister are safe from maniac attack. If that "interesting virago," Emma Goldman, had been ignored or good-naturedly allowed to shriek her ungentle sentiments to her unsoaped audience, she would be less influential than she is to-day, since the attempt at deportation has failed. The strenuous lady exults in the so-called "persecution" and redoubles her efforts at spectacular speech. The editor of *La Question Sociale*, the anarchist paper of Paterson, New Jersey, which President Roosevelt has suppressed, is no doubt regarding himself as an understudy for the martyr.

THE DECADENCE OF DRAMA

IT is several years since Mr. William Winter, the veteran dramatic critic of New York, startled the public by his burning denunciation of many of the most popular performances of the day. Since that time, the "drama" seems to have steadily become flimsier and more vulgar with each season. A comedian who was playing in Canada last week and who usually manages to divert his audiences with clean fun declared to a newspaper reporter that many of "these jingling musical comedies are filled with vulgarity from beginning to end." The element in the musical comedy which is most undesirable is unquestionably the chorus girl. With few exceptions, these members of the cast are uneducated, unmelodious and blatant. They appeal to the least elevating impulses and are a source of degradation to much that is called "drama." The few who are above the sort of performance required from the chorus girl make their escape as soon as possible from that class of theatrical exhibition. The journals devoted to drama are beginning to deplore the introduction of the chorus girl with her dreary vulgarities and inane following. If anyone who cares to see a good play, by some unhappy fortune finds himself forced to attend the average musical comedy, the words of Mr. Winter come back with mournful appropriateness: "Three-cornered girls, proclaimed as 'actresses,' rasp the welkin with voices which rival the screech of the peacock . . . The plays of the hour are mostly furnished by writers who manifest the brain of the rabbit combined with the dignity of the wet hen."

The "drama" of England is afflicted by a similar blight. "Drivel for the Dregs" is what Mr. Stead called the ordinary music-hall programme and many of the popular theatres afford nothing better. The dramatic instinct belongs to humanity. Drama has been and may be a noble element in our civilisation, attracting the keenest intellects to its interpretative service. Its degradation, let us hope, is only temporary. There are a few theatres in the country which endeavour to provide plays of the better class but too many are given up to trashy and vulgar musical comedy or vaudeville.

NOMINATING CANDIDATES

THE quadrennial and quinquennial nominating farces are to be enacted this year in three cases; the Ontario general election, the Quebec general election and the Dominion general election are in sight. The "ward" and "riding" bosses are now selecting the delegates to the nominating conventions. Few men can get on these favoured lists unless they agree with the "boss" as to who should be the candidate. To be a good party man is not sufficient; the aspirant

for delegate honours must profess a willingness to vote for a "named" candidate.

A few of these party leaders get together and they decide that "so and so" shall run in Montreal East or "so and so" shall be the candidate in North Toronto. The president of the Ward Association is then called in and given his orders. He goes out and arranges the nomination. In country constituencies, the lines are not drawn so closely as in city constituencies; bossism never secured much foothold in townships and villages. When all the delegates are selected, the nominating convention meets. The word is passed around among these "hand-picked" delegates that the leaders favour Mr. Blank, and Mr. Blank gets the votes of the faithful. Usually the nomination is his on the first ballot. Then Mr. Blank is introduced as the choice of the convention, whereas there is really no choice—the delegates have dutifully done as they were told. Amid cheers for the candidate and the leader, the delegates disperse to their homes to forget, as speedily as may be, the exhibition of pusillanimity which they have made.

In probably one-half the cases in each election, the rank and file of either party will have no say as to who the candidate shall be. The delegate who refuses to pledge himself in advance, will probably be appointed an "alternative," and find that he is not required. This is party government as it works out. It has come to this pass because business and professional men think they demean themselves when they mix up in "ward" politics.

This partially explains why so many poor candidates get nominations and why there is not a higher average of ability among members of legislatures and parliaments. It also explains why the best men in parliament often come from the rural constituencies. The greater freedom of choice and the higher standing of the delegates enables the rural constituency to select the man who is really most fitted for the position.

GAME AND THE FORESTS

OUR game can only be preserved by protecting our forests—this was the summing up at this week's meeting of the Ontario Fish and Game Protective Association. Already Manitoba, Alberta, Quebec and New Brunswick have adopted the idea as well as Ontario, and great reforms are expected in the near future.

Ten years ago a forest was, in most parts of Canada, considered a nuisance or an asset of limited value. Even the trees along the roadways, line fences and watercourses were ruthlessly cut down. Now we have discovered that all this waste is the reverse of economic. We find that we have destroyed millions of dollars, have opened up the watercourse to the sun and subjected ourselves to all the dangers of spring floods, and have destroyed the natural haunts of the game and fish which made the sporting season so attractive. We find that we were quickly turning our country into one vast treeless tract, tending to be monotonous, lacking in variety and presenting only one idea to the mind of the weary agriculturist. With the woods, the game and the fish gone, how dull would be our existence! When nature had lost her charm, how we could preserve that love for the naturally beautiful which alone may combat materialism?

Professor Fernow tells us how valuable the forests may become and he also tells us that by protecting the forest we may perpetuate a supply of venison which will be worth millions of dollars annually to the people of Ontario. In the little kingdom of Prussia, the annual marketed venison is valued at three millions of dollars. In Ontario, it might be worth ten or even fifteen.

In Scotland, shooting districts rent for sums running as high as twenty-five thousand dollars a year. Add to this the value of the grazing, of the product of certain arable portions, and the value of the ripe trees, and you have an annual income of considerable proportions. Moreover, there are many districts in Ontario and elsewhere that are of no value for any other purpose. The attempt to turn such districts into agricultural settlements has resulted in failure.

Such associations as these and such discussions should be encouraged by all broad-minded citizens. Mr. Evans may be a faddist, but he has done wonderful work in organizing this body and securing the assistance of such men as Professor Fernow and Dr. Hornaday.

In these public movements, the general mass of the people are apt to stand back and leave the work to a few leaders. This should not be. If the general public would talk more about game preservation and forest protection, the laws and regulations would soon be materially improved. Moreover, wanton destruction would rapidly become unpopular.