

nearly at death's door. At last, a couple of wise men came along, and looked him over, and then cured him by an operation! What did they do? Why, children, it's very horrible to tell, but if you want to know,—they cut off nearly half the heads, plugged a lot of the empty ones with cotton wool and left them for show, bored holes in many and let out a lot of false impressions which were swelling them up, put rings in the noses of one or two, banged some of them hard against the wall and poured cold water on the whole lot of them, combed their hair and shaved them, and made them look good, buried the ones they had cut off, and in a few weeks the Giant was as well as ever.

MORAL—Some reforms have to commence at the top.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM AND THE HIGHER APPOINT- MENTS.

A Test Case at Chicago.

A frequent criticism of appointment by competitive examination is that it does not work out satisfactorily in the higher positions. Men who are of sufficient training and experience to be suggested for a position in, say, Division I. of the service, will not, it is said, submit to a method which savors so strongly of the school-room.

Whether this position is really sound is at the present moment being put to a new and delicate test in Chicago. Several years ago the entire public library service of that city was placed under the merit law. But the librarian, together with many other officials, retained his office as a hold-over, having risen to it from the position of a page. When the librarianship was

vacated this spring the question arose how, under the civil service law of Chicago, which is based on the merit system, men of experience, caliber, and standing sufficient to manage the public library of the second largest city in the United States, could be induced to submit to any test by which they could be legally placed upon the eligible list for appointment to this office.

Excepting in New York state, no position of such educational exaction and importance has ever been filled by competitive appointment. And among the library profession a well-nigh unanimous sentiment is known to prevail against this method of appointment in any branch of public library service.

As it happens, the general situation in the Chicago public library has been far from satisfactory. The library has fallen behind that of most other city libraries in nearly all of the branches of work that to-day belong to progressive administration. So much so that at length the City Club of Chicago was impelled to undertake a comparative study of library conditions and service in Chicago and other cities. A report, prepared by a special committee, was recently completed and published in the bulletin of the club.

The comparisons of such a committee could not well fail to be invidious to the restrictive policy so long pursued by previous administrations. It rendered further service in weighing the *pros* and *cons* regarding the civil service method of appointment to the librarianship. Since in this instance there was no other legal way of filling the position, the friends of the library and of the civil service cause were encouraged and strengthened by this conclusion of the committee's report: "It is certainly conceivable that under the direction of the civil service commission a method of