

A VICTORY AND A BANQUET.

The Chamber of Commerce of the city of New York celebrated last week its 126th birthday by the usual dinner at Delmonico's. More than 300 members and guests were present. It seems to have been intended to do particular honor on this occasion to Rev. Dr. Parkhurst and to William L. Strong, the new mayor, by reason of their prominence in the successful fight made for pure government at the recent municipal election. Both were invited, but only Col. Strong was able to be present. Many prominent bankers and business men occupied the tables, and the guests included statesmen, literary and military men of distinction. Mr. Alex. E. Orr, president of the chamber, occupied the chair, and made a wise address, part of which we transcribe:—

"I doubt not that many minds have been engaged in sifting the tangled masses of derangements and upheavals that have culminated in what will be known in history as the great panic of 1893, and have determined to their own satisfaction the primal cause of all the trouble. With some it was the vicious silver craze; with others it was the warfare that is more or less continuously waged between capital and labor. Others, again, laid all the blame to excessive production, stimulated by the protective influences of the McKinley bill, while others, equally sincere, had chapter and verse without end to prove that it was our gradual advance towards free trade conditions that threw this country upon its beam ends and suspended development.

"It may have been one, it may have been all of these causes combined. Yet I cannot help believing that the paramount menace of the present day to the growth, prosperity and happiness of this fair land of ours comes from a growing tendency to venal and incompetent legislation, both national, State and municipal, which tends to paralyze the moral forces of the nation.

THE EVIL OF VENAL POLITICS.

"I think the lesson is coming to us more rapidly than we realize that the only sure method of warding off these seasons of distress, these periods of national anguish, is to hold our individual interests far enough off from us to enable us to enlarge the range of our moral vision, and see to it that only men of tried integrity, capacity and patriotism are sent as our representatives to legislative halls or appointed to municipal office. Believe me, it is selfishness that largely lies at the root of all this evil; the love of power, the love of gain, the love of ease, this egoism on the part of the classes more than the masses, which dulls and deadens our senses to the sacred rights and duties of the franchise, and too often throws the nominating power, and therefore the controlling power, into the hands of demagogues and place-hunters, whose only object is to acquire money in some way without honest labor, or to perpetual partisan political power for selfish ends, without any concern whatever for the important—the vital—interests confided to their care."

Some of the plain and forcible remarks of the mayor may well be commended to the residents of Toronto at the present time:—

"The Chamber of Commerce was the cause of the great reform movement started in the city of New York. It was a victory of good government, a victory for the people. I have had a great many gentlemen call on me making suggestions to me just how my office should be run. I do not think anyone called upon me who did not know more about it than I did. I want to say to you, gentlemen, and take you into my confidence, because we are all members of the Chamber of Commerce, and talk to you just as if we were sitting down there in the Chamber of Commerce. A gentleman called to see me the other day, and he said: 'Strong, I want to talk to you about one of our departments in the city of New York,' and he went on to tell me about the corruption in that department, and when he had got through I says, I have thought in my deliberations upon that subject in regard to the commissioners you have mentioned, that nobody would suit me just as well as yourself. I am going to appoint you to that position. The gentleman replied: 'My dear sir, I cannot take that position; I am going to take my family to Europe very soon. I shall be gone eight or nine months, and it would be impossible; you must find somebody else; I am not the man.'

"In about two days another gentleman came

in. I think I have seen that gentleman's face here this evening. In talking with me about another department he went into details, and when he had finished I said to him, 'I was thinking over that department last night, and I made up my mind you would be exactly the man to fill that position.' 'No,' he says, 'I am not able to take that position.' I said, 'You must take that place.' He said, 'Colonel, I cannot do that. I am going to Alaska next March and am going from Alaska to Japan and China.'

DECENT MEN MUST TAKE OFFICE.

"Now, gentlemen, I want to say to all of you and all of your peers in the city of New York, that it is just barely possible the corruption that we have seen for the last five or six years may have arisen from the fact that it was impossible to get such men as are before me now to take the positions that the mayors had to give. And unless you gentlemen and your peers in the city of New York—understand, I do not mean to say the Chamber of Commerce has all the talent in New York—will take charge of the departments in New York for the mayor whom you have elected and help him to redeem this city, this city cannot be redeemed.

"I have nothing more to say, except that if all of you want good government in the city of New York, and want the affairs of this city administered on just the principles that you have all so thoroughly talked of in the last six weeks, I want you, gentlemen, to come into my confidence, and any man that I select from this table right here or any other part of the city of New York, I want him to make the same sacrifice for the city of New York that the mayor has made." (Applause).

THE STORY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Mr. George M. Theal, of the Cape Colonial Civil Service, the author of an elaborate "History of South Africa," has been invited to prepare a sketch of that region for the *Story of the Nations Series*. The parts of this sketch relating to the Cape Colony, to Natal, the Orange Free State, the South African Republic, Zululand, and Basutoland, are mainly taken from the larger work; but they are brought down nearly to the present date. Nearly, but not quite, for the account of the British Chartered Company's territory stops short of the outbreak of hostilities which has led to the occupation of Matabeleland. The early history of the nominal Portuguese annexation of the country south of the Zambesi, and the actual Dutch colonization of it, together with the southward pressure of the Kaffirs, interesting results of which were the Zulu and the Matabele military organizations, is indispensable to a thorough understanding of the present state of things in South Africa.

A preliminary word ought to be said concerning certain words in common use in South Africa, but whose exact significance does not seem understood elsewhere. The term Boer, for instance, means in Dutch a tiller of the ground, but in South Africa is applied to cattle breeders, as well as to agriculturists, and is frequently used in the plural form to signify the whole rural population of European blood speaking the Dutch language. By kraal is meant a cattle-fold. The word is a corruption of the Portuguese "curreal." It is also used to signify a collection of either Hottentot or Bantu huts, as these are usually built in a circle, within which the cattle are kept at night. The Dutch word lager means an enclosure for protective purposes, such as a circular wall of stone, or a number of wagons lashed together. By burgher is meant a European male, no matter where resident, who is in possession of the franchise, and liable to all public duties. It corresponds to the *civis Romanus* of old. Heemraden are burghers appointed by the government to act as assessors in the district courts of justice. A landdrost is a stipendiary magistrate who administers justice and receives the revenue of the district. Another Dutch word, volksraad, signifies the people's council, an elected legislative body. Three Bantu words are in common use, viz., induna, an officer of high rank under a Zulu chief; calabash, the hard rind of a gourd used for various purposes, such as water-pots, jars, dishes, basins, snuff-boxes, etc., and tsetse, a fly whose sting destroys domestic cattle, but has no effect upon wild animals. Curiously enough, the tsetse disappears from a district when the game is

exterminated or driven away. We add that the word assagai, meaning the javelin or dart, used by the Hottentot and Bantu in war and the chase, is a corruption of the Portuguese *azagaya*, which was derived from the Latin *hasta*.—*The Sun*.

PHILADELPHIA FIRE UNDERWRITERS.

The Philadelphia Fire Underwriters' Association held its annual meeting at the Continental Hotel a week ago, and re-elected a new chairman, executive committee and officers. This was the first year of the organization under the new plan—that is, having the officers of the companies represent it in the association instead of agents, as heretofore. The scheme has proved a perfect success, and will be continued for another year.

General Robert B. Beath, chairman, addressed the association and declared that the year just closing had been more satisfactory than 1893, and that all the companies could show better returns for business. It was decided not to make any changes in the rules governing the association, or to recommend any increase of rates. The organization will endeavor in the future to improve all class of risks, thereby keeping the premiums down and lessening the liability of loss. As an instance, last week the rates were increased upon electric light plants. The owners were then told of improvements that could be made at slight cost, in consideration of which the premiums would be reduced.

Philadelphia has been gridironed with trolley wires during the past year, but the underwriters have not increased the rates of insurance on the streets over which the lines of electric cars run, and no rise in premiums is contemplated. The railroad companies will be compelled to provide safeguards from fire, thus saving the insured from unnecessary expense. This decision is regarded as very important, and will be commended to insurance associations in other cities.

The Underwriters' Association is composed of all the companies doing business in the city, whether Pennsylvania or foreign corporations. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: Executive committee, General Robert B. Beath, United Firemen's, Philadelphia, chairman; George L. Reger, of the Franklin; Eugene L. Ellison, Insurance Company of North America; A. J. Wright, Springfield Fire and Marine Insurance Company; E. O. Weeks, Aetna, of Hartford; W. S. Newell, German American (New York); J. R. Mullikin, Merchants, of Newark, N.J.; E. B. Clark, Phoenix Assurance, London, England; George Wood, Royal Insurance Company, London, England; S. D. Hawley is treasurer and Charles A. Hexamer secretary.

CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.

The book of Congressional appropriations shows that the total specific appropriations of the first and second sessions of the last Congress amount to \$391,156,005; the permanent appropriations, \$101,074,680; making a total of \$492,230,685. The new offices created are 474 in number, at an annual cost of \$654,712, and the offices omitted and abolished are 923 in number, at an annual cost of \$1,235,992, making a net reduction in number of 449, and in amount, \$581,179. The appropriations by bills for the session were as follows:—

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| Agricultural | \$ 3,223,623 |
| Army | 23,592,884 |
| Diplomatic and consular | 1,563,918 |
| District of Columbia | 5,545,678 |
| Fortifications | 2,427,004 |
| Indian | 10,659,565 |
| Legislative, etc. | 21,305,593 |
| Military Academy | 406,535 |
| Naval | 25,327,126 |
| Pensions | 151,581,570 |
| Post Office | 87,236,599 |
| Rivers and harbors | 11,643,160 |
| Sundry civil | 34,253,775 |
| Deficiency | 11,811,004 |
| Miscellaneous | 577,956 |
| | \$391,156,005 |
| Permanent appropriations | 101,074,680 |
| Total appropriations..... | \$492,230,685 |

—*Washington Post*.