NEW YORK, JUNE 13, 1908

"Billups' Booze Bill" As is well known, Oklahoma was admitted under an enabling act which required the new State to make the sale of liquor in what was formerly Indian Territory unconstitutional. As a matter of fact, when the Constitution was submitted, the people voted to extend Constitutional prohibition to the whole State. This was one of the issues on which the present Governor, Mr. C. N. Haskell, won his election. The Constitution, moreover, in accordance with the enabling act, permitted the Legislature to establish a dispensary system for the sale of liquors for medicinal purposes and alcohol for industrial and scientific purposes. The bill which was enacted in accordance with this permissive probation was introduced by Mr. R. A. Billups and was finally signed by the Governor. There are people in Oklahoma who believe that it has practically nullified Constitutional prohibition; and in derision they have dubbed it "Billups' Booze Bill." It provides for a State Agency in charge of a Superintendent, at a salary of eighteen hundred dollars. He is appointed by the Governor and responsible to him. He employs assistants, purchases liquor, fixes the standard of quality for liquors, affixes labels, and distributes liquors to the local agencies. These local agencies are established one for every town of two thousand inhabitants, and, when established by the Superintendent and approved by the Governor, one for any town of one thousand population. These local agencies are to be in charge of persons appointed by the Governor. They are required to keep a very strict account of all liquor sold, and every sale has to be accompanied by a physician's prescription. Speaking in the city of Guthrie, Governor Haskell described the process in these words:

An ordinary single section book-case will hold all there is in town. Every package will have the seal of the State on it. Every package will be numbered, and every Monday morning the first thing the local agent has to do will be to make out a report like this, beginning:

On hand last Monday, packages Nos. 21-50 inclusive.

No. 38, inclusive.

Then he starts out a new line to account for the fourteen packages sold that week, giving the proper date of each sale from last Monday morning; say, like this:

April 1, 1908.

Package No. 24 sold to John Smith at 2 P.M., on prescription of Dr. Duke; prescription attached, together with the receipt of the man who got it, also an affidavit:

And each sale will follow right down like that, counting each and every package, and accounting for each package that he has not on hand. . . .

The strictest limitations are placed about the purchase and even the use of liquor. The evasion of the law by clubs is guarded against. Heavy penalties are attached to the violation of the law. Any compounds, whether medical or not, "which contain as much as one-half of one per centum of alcohol" (except pharmacists' preparations not subject to United States tax) come within the interdicted category of liquors. The law goes into elaborate details.

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In spite of the rigor of the law, some people in the State denounce it bitterly as a betrayal of the people's will. They declare that the State has gone into the liquor business; that its Legislature has deliberately saddled the State with the obloquy of hiring bartenders to dispense intoxicants, and has inaugurated a shocking change of policy. They especially single out for condemnation the provision of the bill which apportions the emoluments to the local agents in proportion to the amount of their sales. They also condemn what they call the attempt to commandeer the medical profession as a partner in a bizarre
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referred to the people by the Legislature; four of them are legislative measures upon which the referendum has been ordered by petition of the people; the remaining eleven are laws or Constitutional amendments proposed by initiative petition of the people. Some of the latter deal with woman suffrage, the single tax, the recall of public officers, instructing members of the Legislature to vote for the people's choice for United States Senator, proportional representation, and a corrupt practices act.

Cheap Ocean Postage

The announcement that a two-cent per ounce postal rate on letters between the United States and the United Kingdom will go into effect on October 1, 1908, caused cheering in the House of Commons on Wednesday, June 3, and much unreported rejoicing in both countries. Ocean penny postage is no new thing. It has long existed between the United States and its insular possessions. International penny postage is nothing new. It has existed since 1875 between the United States and Canada, and now also with Mexico, Cuba, and Panama. Now for the first time two great world powers agree to it as a strengthener of the ties already uniting them—an agreement prolific of others. France and Germany, for instance, are not likely long to lag behind Great Britain in such reciprocity with us. More correspondence means more acquaintance, friendship, brotherhood. Last October letter postage for all countries in the International Postal Union was reduced from ten cents to five cents an ounce; the present reduction to two cents an ounce in the rate on letters to Great Britain thus makes a cut of eighty per cent within a year. It is within living experience that the earliest transatlantic steamers advertised the transmission of letters to England at a dollar apiece. A heavy tax lay upon the correspondence of our grandfathers. Before the present writer lie some letters between New England States during the first two decades of the last century, on which the local postmasters wrote the name of the mailing office and the postage due from the addressee, as 12½ cents, or 18¾ cents. In 1816 a letter might go not over thirty miles for 6½ cents. These curious fractions were due to the general circulation of two small Spanish coins valued severally at 6¼ and 12½ cents, the latter locally termed "York shilling," and valued at eight for a dollar. The silver half-dime now supplanted by the nickel did not come into vogue until the introduction in 1845 of the five-cent rate on half-ounce letters going not over 300 miles. In 1816 a quadruple rate was laid on letters weighing an ounce or more. This for a letter going 400 miles or more amounted to one dollar. It took more than ten years of agitation to abate the heavy taxes on correspondence. Meanwhile private expresses carried large numbers of letters between the principal cities at lower rates. After 1845 this was illegal unless the letters bore postage stamps. In 1851 the bottom rate dropped to three cents on half-ounce letters. In 1863 this was made the uniform rate for all distances. In 1883 the two-cent rate per ounce came in, and now a demand is already astir for one cent as the letter-writer's ideal. The two-cent ocean rate which now gladdens both shores of the Atlantic would doubtless have been sooner agreed to but for the different aims of the two Governments—the British aiming to make the postal service yield revenue, the American to make it pay expenses, both of which will in course of time be found compatible with the reduced tax on letters. The next step in advance in the United States will be, as it ought to be, the introduction of the Parcels Post and the Postal Savings Bank. Among the many who have promoted postal betterments during the seventy years since Rowland Hill, of England, and Edward Everett, of Massachusetts, the eminent efficiency of Henniker Heaton, M.P., together with that of our own Postmaster-General, Mr. Meyer, in securing this last great improvement deserves grateful recognition.

The Dreyfus Infamy

Again

Paris has had another touch of the Dreyfus insanity, and a revival, which it is to be hoped is sporadic, of the Dreyfus infamy. The proposal to transfer to the Panthéon the
body of Zola, the novelist, and the servant and defender of French honor and righteousness by his courageous appeal for justice to Dreyfus, met with bitter and in some cases ridiculous opposition. One French gentleman, with a title which had been secured by a military adventurer of Napoleon's time, threatened to remove the remains of his grandfather from the Panthéon in order to protect them from contamination; and there were furious speeches and editorials, and a recrudescence of that shouting for the army which sickened the whole world when it was heard in court on the lips of dishonored French generals. The body of Zola was quietly taken to the Panthéon and public exercises were held in that great building on Thursday of last week. As the President of France, the Premier, and other Ministers were taking their departure at the close of the ceremonies, a military writer of some standing, Gregori by name, drew a revolver and fired two shots at Major Dreyfus, slightly injuring in the forearm the victim of race hate and military passion. The Panthéon was filled with men of distinction, and the reports of the shots caused intense excitement. For a moment everybody thought of the President. In an instant, however, the would-be assassin was surrounded by soldiers and protected from the fury of a crowd that probably would have made short work with him. Like everything connected with the persecution of Dreyfus, this attempted assassination was contemptible in its meanness; the first shot was fired from behind Dreyfus's back! Paris is now wondering what lies back of this attempt to end a man who had been tortured almost beyond the limits of human strength. Gregori is an Italian by parentage, but has long been an ardent Frenchman in his sympathies, has written with some knowledge on military topics, and has been in intimate relations with leading French officers. The question is whether he was merely an individual assassin, or whether he was the tool of a little group of Royalists who have never accepted the decision of the Court of Cassation and the reinstating of Major Dreyfus. The fire of race hatred, which was only smoldering, has been fed by the anti-Semitic papers ever since the Government decided to place the body of Zola in the Panthéon; and the meanness to which brilliant men can descend when race prejudice takes possession of them is brought out by Henri Rochefort's statement in an interview in which he says, "It would have been a glorious death for Dreyfus. It would have been his first and only time under fire." Gregori fired the first shot from behind Dreyfus. The bullet penetrated the sleeve of his coat and passed on, burying itself in a flower-pot at the base of the catafalque. Dreyfus turned at the sound and threw his left arm over his heart. The second shot was fired point blank at his breast. The bullet entered the wrist and moved upward. Dreyfus's brother Mathieu, who sprang forward to help him, with a chivalry to which his opponents are strangers, protected Gregori from the crowd who were beginning to pound him with canes and umbrellas, saying as he did so, "It is not for us to punish. Let the law take its course!" This extraordinary incident is in keeping with the whole tragedy, which has been one of contemptible baseness. The charges against Dreyfus fell to the ground; the men who brought them were proved to be scoundrels; the nation reversed its verdict; and yet Dreyfus receives a bullet while he is paying honor to a man whose only offense was that he heroically led France out of a slough of dishonor!

The secret of the sincere popularenthusiasm with which President Fallières was received on his recent official visit to England is revealed in a recent article in the Pall Mall Gazette, of London, which we find reprinted in the New York Evening Sun. This article, written by an Englishman, constitutes an intimate personal portrait of the French President, and discloses those genuine human qualities and that simple and straightforward spirit to which geographical boundaries, political barriers, and race prejudice are never permanent obstacles. President Fallières is the grandson of a black-