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Some very sensible observations in spelling were recently made by Mr. Arnold Tompkins, principal of the Normal school at Chicago. He does not believe in teaching children to be accurate spellers of obscure words. They can spend their hours of study, he thinks, to far better advantage than in learning how to spell off hand, words like "parachronism," "caoutchouc" and "anterrhinum." He might have added that their memories would be all the better for having other goods in stock. To this absurd memorizing of words infrequently used, Mr. Tompkins wisely prefers "a spelling conscience and a pocket dictionary."

The death of the great painter Verestchagin, who went down with the Petropavlovsk, is a loss to the whole world. He was not only a great artist, but a great man. No writer, no orator, no preacher, has done as much as he, by his paintings, to make war hideous. The artists may criticize him as they please, but he was far greater than any of his critics, and produced a marvelous effect upon the world which will increase with time. Not only in war pictures was he great. His painting of Jesus looking over the Sea of Galilee is one of the most beautiful pictures of modern times, and the fact that the face in this wonderful painting is not seen seems to add to the artist's effectiveness. The Springfield Republican well says of him:

Verestchagin was as characteristically Russian as Tolstoy and there are many points at which these two men meet in their work and its impulse. He was not such an idealist as the great novelist; he was rather

a fatalist; but he was as truly and definitely opposed to the evils of the state, and in his own way engaged to better it.

President Mellen, of the New York, New Haven and Hartford road, is one in authority who is well informed, and so fair in his speech that he seems open minded enough to see farther into industrial conditions than is indicated by his almost admirable address recently reported in the Baltimore Sun. "I would like," he said, "to pay the men of our company better wages and allow them greater privileges than my neighbors, but if I do some one else will take my place who will bring about an equitable comparison." This is a fact. President Mellen can not pay higher wages than his competitors, and this is an answer to those who preach individual righteousness as a means of increasing wages.

We are approaching the 100th birthday of Richard Cobden. This centenary occurs on the 3d of June, and the American Free Trade League urges that it be celebrated appropriately throughout the United States. Extensive preparations are being made for its celebration in Great Britain. In London Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman is to preside at a great meeting in the Alexandra Palace, and a large number of prominent public men will address subsidiary meetings in the open air. The American league suggests that a similar programme be followed in this country. A demonstration is already planned for Boston, and the league invites suggestions and cooperation from all centers where Cobden's teachings and principles have taken root. It is a good omen that in this centennial year of Cobden the American Free Trade league should be under the management of two such radical

free traders as John DeWitt Warner, of New York, the president, and William Lloyd Garrison, of Boston, the secretary. Although the suggestion for celebrations comes late, there is still time to arrange for the sincere and simple kind of public recognition which the life work of this world's democrat calls for.

Attention is called by the Commercial Bulletin, of New York, to the startling fact that in that State real estate to the value of \$1,007,992,364 is exempt from taxation—about 20 per cent. of the total of that class of property. And of this exempt property a very large proportion, says the Bulletin, "is held by religious organizations for purely religious purposes of a sectarian or denominational character." It is obvious, of course, that in this manner taxpayers are compelled to support religious establishments in which they do not believe; for just as these establishments are exempt, so are taxpayers in general weighted with heavier taxes. The Bulletin therefore asks if there is "any sound principle upon which this kind of exemption is justified?" Manifestly there is none. It is justified in fact only as all other legal looting is justified, namely, by the plea, more or less disguised, that the legalized looter needs the money. Even among the exempt churches themselves, the system works unjustly. A rich congregation escapes a heavy tax; a poor congregation owning its church property escapes only a small tax; and a poor congregation, worshiping in a hired hall, does not escape at all. There is no sound principle in the custom. It exists because it has existed and its beneficiaries are politically strong enough to ruin any politician or political party that dare propose its abolition.