

Ink Stings.

—By the way! Has anyone heard anything of one SAMUEL PENNYPACKER lately?

—In New York the courts have ruled that eighty cents is all that can be charged for gas. In Bellefonte! Well—

—CHARLES DICKENS left an estate of four hundred thousand dollars which goes to prove that MICAWBER couldn't have been the favorite of his character creations.

—Mrs. CLAYT ERB wrote that "if it wasn't for fear of hell I would kill myself," but her sister didn't give CLAYT much time to relieve any fears of the same place he might have had.

—The old gang is in the saddle again, sure enough, and what the Country Members get at Harrisburg during this session of the Legislature will be what the Philadelphia and Pittsburg Members don't want.

—Dr. W. E. EVERETT, government geologist, who is just now investigating the causes and probable fields of earthquakes, makes an unwelcome announcement that the Atlantic coast States are in for a shaking up some of these days. He hasn't set any time for the upheaval, but it might occur about the time TEDDY gets home from Africa.

—Out in Illinois the Legislators are mad as hop toads because they think the Governor is getting too bossy. A funny situation it must appear to be to Pennsylvanians. Governors don't usurp any such powers in this good old Commonwealth. They are held in trust for the political heirs of the late M. S. Q. and Mr. PENROSE has just been reappointed trustee.

—Wouldn't it be a wise plan for the Bellefonte school board to make Mr. J. E. WAGNER the acting supervising principal until June and let it stand at that. If he has the qualifications for it Mr. WAGNER is certainly entitled to the position and such a plan would give him the opportunity of showing without committing the board or embarrassing Mr. WAGNER.

—A portion of the Bellefonte fire department hastened to the aid of burning Millheim, but before they arrived on the scene with an engine the fire had burned about everything in its path. The fact that our firemen rendered no great service is not the question. The fact that they were ready and eager to go is what should be remembered when the incident is discussed.

—It just took JIM McNICHOL about five minutes to sew the Senate up. The first act of the new session was to pass his resolution requiring that that body should consider no resolutions that had not been sent to a committee first. You know what that means. Sending them to committee is the easiest thing in the world, but it beats h—how hard it is to get some of them out again.

—A scientist, who must have been from Missouri, went to investigate the assertion that there are absolutely no microbes on the Swiss mountains above an altitude of two thousand feet and found the statement to be a fact. To the lay mind the settlement of the question doesn't amount to much other than to let us know for a certainty that the Swiss cheese is not made that high up.

—Of course it is only heresy with us but the story goes that SAM GUSEWHITE, single handed and entirely alone, rescued two women and an orphan child from the eighth-story of the Mueser house, during the great fire in Millheim on Tuesday. SAMULE is one of the veteran firemen of our department and was the hero of many a thrilling rescue before his eyes got bad.

—A news item from Allentown chronicles the fact of a woman, at her death, having bequeathed her fortune of \$10,000 to her daughter, with the exception of one dollar which was to be given in the custody of a trust company and the interest thereon paid annually to her son, a well known minister. And the will made no stipulations or placed no bar upon how the reverend should spend the income thus bequeathed him.

—The part of Governor STUART's message that insists that the Legislature shall make appropriations only so far as the revenues of the State will warrant is one that all will applaud. But the Governor might have reassured the people of the State a little by telling the Legislators that he intended to force a fair and equitable apportionment of the moneys available for charities. It is all very well to keep within the limits of the revenues but what institutions will be called upon to do it? Not those of Philadelphia and Pittsburg we'll bet.

—The power of the boss in Pennsylvania politics was never better demonstrated than in the defeat of FRANK McCLAIN, of Lancaster, for Speaker of the House. During previous services in the chair he had proven himself far more capable than the average Speaker and even tried to be fair and impartial with the Members.

The experience was so novel and pleasing that personally there was probably not a half dozen of the old men in the House who did not want to vote for his re-election. But because McCLAIN tried to be fair and impartial the bosses did not want him in the speaker's chair and there wasn't enough manhood in the creatures who are Pennsylvania's Representatives to vote for the man most of them preferred as their presiding officer.

Democratic Matchman

STATE RIGHTS AND FEDERAL UNION.

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NO. 2.

Good News if True.

People hereabouts who know, or at least think they know, assure us that a two-mill reduction in the tax-rate of the county will be made very shortly after the new board of County Commissioners get down to business. We hope they are right. Nothing would be more gratifying to the taxpayers. Certainly nothing would better please the people than to understand that for the future Centre county is to get along on a three-mill rate of taxation and that economy in county expenditures is to be the rule that will be followed by the new management.

That we can get down to a three-mill rate is due to the good work of the late Democratic board of Commissioners. Their carefulness made this possible. Their management wiped out the forty-two thousand dollars of indebtedness, and the unexpected claims presented against the monument, that was loaded onto their shoulders three years ago, and put us down again, to the simple matter of providing only for the ordinary county expenditures. It will, of course, take wise and economical management to get along on a three-mill rate, but that was the rate up to three years ago, and general county expenditures should be no heavier now than prior to that time. The five-mill rate that had to be resorted to temporarily was not because legitimate county expenses were increasing, but because of the reckless and extravagant management that characterized county affairs from 1902 to 1905, and as we understand, was promised to be taken off just as soon as the indebtedness that had accumulated was paid. If the forthcoming statement shows, as it is generally believed it will, that there is a surplus of assets over liabilities, then the time is here for the promise made the people to be realized, and the new management will be but fulfilling the general expectation of the people by putting them on this basis.

If matters are as generally anticipated, the incoming board will start under most favorable auspices—no debt, no outstanding claims against the county on account of the monument, the public buildings in good repair, the larger and more costly bridges all built, turnpikes condemned and paid for, our census growing shorter and should be less expensive every term, and without any unusual or excessive outlays necessary in any line for several years, they ought to be able to get along with a less aggregate county expense than has been known for years.

Will they? Can they? A recent gratifying report referred to above, comes another later, that tells us that a movement, on the part of a few political managers, is already well under way to influence the new board of Commissioners to let the millage stand as it now is for two years at least or until a considerable surplus is accumulated, and it is proven that the county can get along with a less rate. Very plausible argument, can be made on this side, and it is possible they may be listened to by the Commissioners. But will not a surplus tempt to extravagance, and may not this move to prevent a reduction of taxation mean that there are schemes ahead that will need money to carry them out, or expectations of jobs that will not be undertaken if there is not an excess of money in the treasury? Wait and you will see.

Let Us Have a Change of Election Laws.

Whether or not the Legislature that has just adjourned for a two week's rest and recuperation, after the arduous work of a two-day's session, will have either the desire or the disposition to so change our complicated, costly and fraud producing election laws, that we will in the future be able to have honest elections at a reasonable expense, no one can say. That it should be the belief of every honest citizen. That it will be the hope of every one who cares for either the honor of the State, or the honesty of our elections.

That we have the worst election laws that disgrace any of the Commonwealths of the country can neither be denied nor disputed. That they breed venality, protect crime, foster bribery and encourage rascality and wrongs of every character, is equally true. That our system, besides being as rotten and unfair as it is, is needlessly and excessively complicated and expensive, is known and acknowledged by all.

Why then not change it? It would be an easy matter to go back to our old, simple and satisfactory, vest pocket preserve. A few changes in it, that would prevent the secrecy of the ballot and prevent the espionage of the citizen while casting his vote, would secure us as fair elections, with as little expense as it is possible to do. It would do away with the business of the briber. It would take from money the power to control our elections, and it would put a stop to both the debauchery and bull-dozing of voters.

Two years ago a bill providing for a ballot somewhat similar to the old vest pocket ticket that was used prior to 1891, and that continued the present booth into which the voter was required to go and place the ticket he proposed voting into an envelope, unsealed or unassisted by any one, and then depositing it in the ballot box, was presented in the House but was smothered in the committee, because the ringsters and ballot box manipulators were opposed to any change.

The same bill, with such changes as would do away with some minor objections that were made to it, ought to be introduced and pushed from the first day that bills can be presented. There should be neither delay in starting nor let up in the fight, for a law and a system, that will save our State from the disgrace and debauchery, that the law and the system, we now have, have brought upon it.

And we hope that the honest members of the House and Senate will take this matter up, immediately upon their return to Harrisburg, and push it persistently and determinedly until the ringsters and roosters, the bosses and the hoodlers, are compelled to permit the changes needed, or the people have demonstrated to them, in such a way as to leave no doubt in the mind of any one, who is responsible for a continuation of Pennsylvania's disgrace and the evils and expenses that grow out of our rotten election laws.

Good Suggestions.

If the Republican party in this State is wise it will see that its Representatives in the Legislature adopt the suggestion of Governor STUART as to public road system, and the preservation of the water supply of the State, without delay. His recommendation for a State thoroughfare from Philadelphia to Harrisburg and from there to Pittsburg, to be built and maintained at the expense of the State, should certainly meet the approval of the people, as well as his suggestion that there be such changes in the present system as will secure the maintenance of such roads as are built jointly by the State, the county and the township. "It is useless," as the Governor says, "to waste money in building roads," if after they are built they are not properly maintained or kept up, and it is simply squandering the public funds, to grade and make foundations for roads that are to be neglected and uncared for until they become no better than the common highways.

There is no use to which the money of the State could be put that would give greater returns, afford more comfort and pleasure to the people, or add greater to the wealth of the community, than in making good public roads. In this we will not even exceed such improvements as would probably be made in our public school system were greater appropriations made for that purpose. We have now reached the point in school matters where every child in the State is enabled to secure a good common school education, if its parents so desire. Further than that it is questionable if the public should go in educational matters.

But in road laws, road systems, or efforts to have good roads, we are away behind the times and most lamentably lame. Even the State system that has been in force for the past six or eight years, has proven a public sink hole where public funds are dumped for the benefit of the few who are favorites of the machine, and from which neither better roads nor benefit to the public have accrued. A few rods of fairly good highways, here and there, and so far apart and in such varied directions that no connection can be had between them, has resulted, but for all the money that has been expended, no general good to the public has been returned. Such is the case at least in this section and we presume it is the same in all other parts of the State.

If the Legislature, now in session, will stop the patch work, expensive and we might say spotted system of road making now in vogue, and get down to the work of building public highways—beginning somewhere and ending somewhere—we might have some benefits from the money expended, but as long as we go on with a patch here and a patch there and with neither patch long enough to be of any particular advantage to any particular section or community, the money put into this work will be practically wasted.

The weather this week has been variable—that is, sunshiny and cloudy, rain and heavy fogs in the beginning of the week, then a sudden change on Wednesday to cool, cooler and cold by Wednesday night and yesterday morning with high, shifting wind—especially shifting. But don't get discouraged; if the weather man has any other kinds of weather on hand he will likely deal them out to us before the end of the week.

Landlord H. S. Ray entertained eighteen friends at a supper at the Brookborough house on New Years eve, the entire party being gathered around the festive board to welcome the incoming of 1909.

Wrong Man Condemned.

Mr. HENEY, the lawyer who managed the prosecution of RUEF, the San Francisco hoodler, declares that EDWARD H. HARRIMAN, the railroad magnate, is responsible for the graft in that city. He, Mr. HENEY adds, began the bribing business, and by packing the courts with corporate emissaries, made the punishment of corruptionists in public life practically impossible. A year or more ago LINCOLN STEFFENS attributed the venality of the public life of the country to what are called the captains of finance and it is now alleged that the exposure of graft in Pittsburg was in consequence of the importunities of the councilmen for hoodles from the corporations and wealthy individuals who were constantly striving for special privileges and valuable franchises.

This is unquestionably true. The story goes that HENRY C. FRICK has grown tired of paying Pittsburg councilmen for favors which he has received at their hands. He didn't object to dealing with them when he needed their votes. At that stage of the game paying councilmen for their votes was precisely the same to him as paying the boiler-maker for a boiler, or the car-builder for a car. But having received the boiler and the car and paid the price agreed upon, that settled the accounts between Mr. FRICK and the manufacturer. One payment was all that was required and if the councilman had been equally amenable to the rules of business, there would have been no trouble between Mr. FRICK and them. Whenever he needed votes he would have continued to patronize them and pay whatever was agreed upon. Their cupidity got the better of them, however, and they offended, not Mr. FRICK's moral principles but his business instincts, and he turned against them.

The truth of the matter is that the business element of the country is rotten. The captains of industry speak disrespectfully of politicians because they accept bribes. But the politicians wouldn't accept bribes if there were no bribes to accept. The manufacturing barons and the Napoleons of finance want favors and express a willingness to pay for them. They know the councilmen are betraying their public obligations by engaging in this wretched commerce. They understand that they are violating every principle of human and Divine law by enticing public officials to favor them at the expense of the public. But as long as it is cheaper to bribe councilmen than to get what they want in a legitimate way, the bribery goes on. Mr. HENEY is right. HARRIMAN ought to have been convicted instead of RUEF.

Democrats and Tariff Revision.

Representative RANDALL, of Texas, one of the Democratic members of the House Committee on Ways and Means, can dispel our hope of genuine tariff reform in the actions of that committee. "The scheme of revising the tariff," he observes, "is, as usual, full of deception, and it is quite clear that the tolling masses in this country will be left to the tender mercies of incorporated wealth. With the Republican party," Mr. RANDALL continues, "the first consideration is to satisfy the trust magnates who keep it in control of public affairs. The party is drunk with power and the trusts, confident of their new lease upon the resources of the country are exultantly default toward all opposition." He could hardly have put the proposition in fatter terms. He gave a volume of facts in a couple of sentences.

For these reasons the Democrats in the next Congress have practically decided to prepare a tariff bill for consideration. It is not enough to take the tariff off steel and iron and leave it on wool. As Mr. CARNEGIE has emphatically declared the steel and iron men can undersell the whole world without tariff taxation and maintain prices at home because of the cost of carrying of foreign product. But it is different with wool. Only a meager part of the wool used in this country is grown here and the tax on wool is not only a burden on the consumers but it is a menace to the public health. There is mighty little sense in fighting tuberculosis on a small scale while we are disseminating the germs of the malady by making it impossible for other than the wealthy to get proper clothing.

The House Committee on Ways and Means proposes to put hides on the free list as another "pop to the whale." But the Republican majority on that committee will not listen to a proposition to put shoes on the free list and thus give the public a share of the advantages of the reform. Every intelligent observer of affairs knows that shoes are made in this country cheaper and better than anywhere else in the world. But the price is kept up by the tariff tax on the product of the shoe factories and it is now proposed to increase the graft by giving the manufacturers free hides and maintaining the tax on shoes. The Democrats will insist on free hides and shoes and that will compel a decrease in price to the consumer without impairing the profit of the manufacturer.

When the Wrong Was Done.

From the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Mr. Taft wants a straight educational and property qualification with no exceptions. No objection could be raised to a law of this kind, he says, although it would be a matter of fact, disfranchise 10 or 20 times as many negroes as whites, and thus accomplish the purpose aimed at. Such legislation, it is needless to point out, is opposed to the doctrine contained in the Fifteenth Amendment, and would subject the States to a reduction in their representation in Congress and the electoral college, if Mr. Crumpacker were insistent and could get action on his resolution.

It is evident that Mr. Taft has not given the subject the attention and study it deserves. Had he done so, he would have seen that it is not as simple and easy as he imagines. No matter how much more consideration than this in the South, and the greatest minds of this section have sought to reach a correct and practical solution. It has taken years to do so, and while the plan generally accepted, and which has been adopted in most of the Southern States, is confessedly faulty, it was the best that could be devised to meet all the conditions found to exist.

The trouble is due to the hasty and unwise legislation contained in the war amendments, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth. Conceived in a spirit of bitterness against a long civil war, these amendments were intended to cripple the South politically, and did cripple it, not only politically, but financially, industrially and in nearly every other way. There are few to-day, North or South, who do not admit that the amendments were a grievous mistake and did incalculable harm. Mr. Lincoln himself had opposed the idea of universal negro suffrage, but thought a few negroes of the better class might be granted the franchise, as they proved themselves fit for it.

But although the grant of a ballot to the negro is now, with almost unanimity, recognized as a mistake, the North will not allow that mistake to be corrected. It is a matter of sentiment, that it would be a surrender of what was won in the civil war.

How the "Old Thing Works." (Adapted from the French of Bastiat.)

A poor farmer of Pennsylvania raised with great care and attention, a fine crop of wheat, and forgot in the joy of his success, how many drops of sweat the precious grain had cost him. "I will sell some," said he to his wife, "and with the proceeds I will buy carpet for our bare floors." The honest countryman, arriving in Philadelphia, there met an American and an Englishman. "Give me your wheat," said the American, "and I will give you 25 cents of carpet. The Englishman said: "Give it to me, and I will give you a hundred yards for we Englishmen can make cheaper carpets than Americans can for our wool is not taxed." But a custom house officer, standing by, said to the countryman: "My good fellow, make your exchange, if you choose, with the American, but my duty is to prevent your doing so with the Englishman." "What?" exclaimed the countryman, "do you wish me to take 75 yards of American carpet, when I can have 100 yards from England?" "Certainly. Do you not see that America would be a loser, if you were to receive 100 yards instead of 75?" "I can scarcely understand this," said the laborer. "Nor can I explain it," said the custom house officer, "but there is no doubt of the fact, for Congressmen and editors all agree that a people is impoverished in proportion as it receives a large compensation for any given quantity of its produce."

The countryman was obliged to conclude his bargain with the American. His wife carpeted three rooms instead of four. These good people are still puzzling themselves to discover how it can happen that people are ruined by receiving four instead of three, and why they are richer with 75 yards than with 100.

The next year the farmer voted for "Protection"—as usual. He wondered why he could not make ends meet—as usual—SAMUEL MILLIKEN.

The Man Higher Up.

From the Pittsburg Post.

It is a confession of our own weakness that we stand in open-mouthed amazement before the statement of Francis J. Heney, that Edward H. Harriman is responsible for the graft in San Francisco. We are simply astounded that this man has the temerity to make the declaration openly and without equivocation. It is no credit to us to say that we have known it all along. None of us have dared say so. Perhaps we only suspected the guiding force of an unseen hand that worked all things and all men to its own end—through the power of bribery.

Spawls from the Keystone.

—Altoona barbers are advocating raising the price of a hair cut from 20 to 25 cents.

—H. D. Seely, of Jersey Shore, while in Williamsport last Thursday, lost his pocket book containing \$102.

About 26,000 Red Cross stamps were sold in Phillipsburg during the holiday season to help along the crusade against the white plague.

—There are at present 1,300 prisoners in the western penitentiary, at Riversville, Pittsburg, and of this number over 200 are from Cambria county.

—An epidemic of scarlet fever is prevailing at Titusville, over fifty homes being under quarantine and public schools and Sunday schools are closed.

—Nearly 3,000 nomination papers have been placed on record in Wilkes-Barre for the various local offices to be filled throughout the county at the ensuing election.

—The people of McConnellsburg, the county seat of Fulton county, which has no railroad, are petitioning for a morning mail, from the east, so they can get a reply off the same day.

—Dr. J. C. Biddle, for twenty-five years superintendent of the Ashland hospital, Schuylkill county, and noted as a skillful surgeon on limb amputations, has during that period made 2,500 amputations, all with the same saw.

—After experimenting for two years with the system of paying their road taxes in cash the farmers of Union township, Lawrence county, will, at the election in February, vote for a return of the old system of working out their taxes.

—The large purchase of heavy nails by the East Broad Top Railroad company has started the report that the road is to be made wide or standard gauge; also that it is to be extended to Burnt Cabins, McConnellsburg, and Hancock, Maryland.

A gas well that is being drilled on the Campton farm, near Clarksburg, Indiana county, is now 2,000 feet deep but it is said the project will not be given up until a depth of 3,000 feet is reached unless gas is struck at a lesser depth.

—Bids were received on Wednesday evening by the borough council of Latrobe, for a new bond issue of \$57,000 bearing five per cent interest, and the bid of the successful bidder, Kountz Brothers of New York, was \$90,237.60. Quite a flattering premium.

—A quarantine to last 100 days has been placed over Springboro, Conestogutville, Meadville, Brookville, Linesville and other towns in Crawford and adjoining counties, because of the prevalence of hydrophobia, and the presence of dogs said to be affected with rabies.

—John Dietrick, watchman at the silk mill in Shamokin, early on Saturday morning discovered three men trying to set the mill on fire. He opened fire with a revolver and they also fired at him. He wounded one of the men but his companions aided him in escaping.

—Mrs. Eliza A. Steinmetz, who died recently in Allentown, leaving an estate of \$10,000, bequeathed all to her daughter except one dollar, which is to be placed in the hands of a trust company and the interest paid annually to her son, the Rev. C. H. Steinmetz, during his lifetime.

—The fifth annual meeting of the State Horticultural association of Pennsylvania will be held in the board of trade rooms, Harrisburg, on January 19 and 20. A very interesting programme has been prepared and it is quite likely that some of the fruit growers of Centre county will be in attendance.

—Henry Miller, an old and esteemed resident of Union township, Huntingdon county, died at his home near Mapleton Depot, last Saturday in his 75th year. Senile gangrene resulting from an injury received on the great toe last winter by wearing a boot that was too short was the cause of his death.

—The partly decomposed body of Harry Kinsey, the young bartender who disappeared from the Hotel Brenner at Ligonier, on December 22, was found lying in some underbrush near New Florence on Wednesday afternoon, two hounds having led their master, Harvey Clark, to the remains. Death it is believed was due to exposure.

—Jackson Green, colored, the oldest resident of Bedford county, died in Everett on Christmas, in his 102nd year. Deceased was born at Romney, Hampshire county, West Virginia, on July 15, 1807, and was a slave for many years. At one time he was sold for \$40.50 to satisfy the creditors of his master. He was a local preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal church.

—On January 1, 1908, two hundred and fifty talents were given to the members of Trinity Lutheran church, Chambersburg, a talent in this case being one cent. The members having the talents all put them to use and on New Year's night, when they came to render an account, the result showed a return of \$784.84, with a few yet to hear from that may run the total up to \$800. Quite a good return from \$2.50.

—Hundreds of people in Westmoreland county were surprised on New Year's day by the appearance of an immense aviator or balloon, which finally landed on the farm of A. S. Storer, near Ligonier. It was the "Ohio" carrying Dr. H. W. Thompson, of Salem, O., and Dr. J. G. Woltz and William Most, of Canton, O. They had come from Canton and made the flight of 151 miles successfully in less than three hours.

—The Pennsylvania railroad has broken a long standing precedent in promoting John S. Considine, of Columbia, Pa., but formerly of Lock Haven, to become assistant supervisor. Mr. Considine had previously been a track foreman, which may be considered the highest rank of non-commissioned officers on the road. An ordinary laborer could eventually become a track foreman, but it has not been the policy of the company to promote track foremen to a higher rank. There are some 150 track foremen on the Pennsylvania railroad, and this removal of a long standing barrier will make it possible for any one of them to be promoted to the company's higher ranks. The actual effect of the new policy is to open to every man in the service the privilege of promotion to any place for which he may be fitted.