

WASHINGTON LETTER.

WASHINGTON D. C. Nov. 2, 1891.

The jealousy between Mr. Harrison and Secretary Blaine, which some people will persist in saying does not exist, crops out at all times. The latest statement by the friends of Mr. Blaine is, that if Mr. Harrison had been content to wait 48 hours for the arrival of Mr. Blaine, instead of himself hurriedly preparing the demand made of the Chilean junta, the administration would not to-day be in its present awkward predicament. They contend that Mr. Blaine would have drawn up the document so that the Chileans would have found it impossible to have answered in the manner they did that of Mr. Harrison, and charge that Mr. Harrison's reason for hurrying the matter was that he thought to obtain some popularity by posing as the champion of American interests abroad which might otherwise have gone to his Secretary of State.

Speculation as to the outcome of the Chilean difficulty is the principal occupation of a good many people in Washington at this time, and not a few of them including all the officers in the Navy, where promotion is slow in time of peace, are heartily wishing for war, notwithstanding our poorly prepared condition for war, even with a weak power like Chili. Secretary Tracy admits that few even of our new vessels are properly prepared to fight and that something is lacking in either the equipment or armament of every one of them; besides, we would find it very difficult to maintain a fleet in Chilean waters without a single coaling station in that section of the world. However, it is not probable, although possible, that we shall go to war with Chili. Senator Montt, the Chilean Minister here, is confident that an agreement mutually satisfactory will be reached after his government has finished the investigation it is making in to the fight of the mob, but advices from Chili do not indicate that such an opinion is entertained there.

Republicans admit that Mr. Blaine would like very much to get Minister Egan out of Chili, being fully satisfied that he made a mistake in sending him there, but they say he will not be recalled while the relations between the two countries are in such a strained condition as at present, unless it shall be determined by the administration to break off all diplomatic relation with Chili, and that will not be done unless it becomes absolutely necessary in order to maintain the position assumed by the administration in its original demand upon Chili.

Just a little more than \$4,500,000 of the matured 4 1/2 per cent bonds are now outstanding, and not far from ten per cent of them are in the hands of the U. S. Treasurer to secure parts of the circulation of less than a dozen national banks. These banks have been requested to have these bonds extended at two per cent, which would make them available as security for their circulation, and which would also please Secretary Foster, inasmuch as it would mean several hundred thousand dollars more to help to meet the appropriation of the billion dollar Congress.

The Naval Court of Inquiry into the loss of the U. S. S. Despatch has been holding daily sittings here for nearly a week, but the amount of actual information it has brought out might easily have been developed in a sitting of one hour. Briefly stated the testimony of those on the boat is all to the effect that the vessel was lost because Lieut. Noel, the executive officer, changed the sailing orders of the commander—Lieut. Cowles,—after he had retired, and that this change was justifiable because a light which should have shown white, from a lighthouse, appeared to be red which indicated that it was aboard of a certain lightship. The most amusing incident connected with Inquiry was when a batch of sailors, who had served on the Despatch, were brought before the Court, and after having the sworn statement of the Commander read to them, were asked if that statement was correct. Of course everybody knew what the answer would be. These men are still in the navy, and none of them would be foolish enough to contradict any statement made by an officer, even if they knew to a certainty that the statement was incorrect, which, please understand, it is not my intention to even intimate, not having any better source of information than the testimony before the court. It is only the absurdity of expecting enlisted men to disagree with their commander, to which attention is called by the incident.

Secretary Foster was the only member of the cabinet that went on the stump during the State campaigns just closed.

Since Secretary Blaine's return Secretary Tracy is no longer known as brevet Secretary of State.

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TALKING WITH STARS.

PROFESSOR DAVIDSON'S VIEWS OF INTERPLANETARY SIGNALS

Suggested Use of a Huge Telescope in the Desert of Sahara—Improbability That the Attempts Will Be Successful.

When Professor George Davidson of the Davidson Observatory and the Const and Geodetic Survey was shown the Paris cablegram saying that an old lady had just died at Spa, leaving 100,000fr. as a prize to the astronomer, French or foreign, who within 10 years shall be able to communicate with any planet or star, reread it through slowly once, then he read it twice more rapidly. Finally he picked it up, held it at a proper distance from his eyes, and squinted at it just as he would squint at Mercury through his telescope if he wanted to find the big tortoise shaped spot on its northern hemisphere.

"An old lady—an old lady!" the veteran astronomer finally exclaimed. "Now, isn't that a pretty way to treat such a piece of philanthropy as that?" An old lady, indeed! Now, why under the sun do you suppose they keep back her name? I am inclined to believe that some good looking young man—one of these smooth talkers—has been getting close to her and talking a lot of astronomy into her ear."

Professor Davidson picked up a blue pencil and drew on a white sheet of paper a right angled triangle.

"This that I have drawn," he said, "is the old triangle of Pythagoras. That triangle has a right angle, and the square built upon the side opposite the right angle is equal to the sum of the squares built upon the other two sides. The proposition is said to be the fundamental one of geometry. It has been proposed to draw such a figure as that in the Desert of Sahara, or some other great plain, the lines, of course, to be hundreds of miles long, and made so they would be distinct on the desert sand."

"These are the suppositions that go along with the idea. It is supposed that there are people on some of the planets, at least on Mars. It is supposed that the people on the planet are civilized and capable of looking through telescopes, and it is concluded that if this is so, they must know the Pythagorean proposition."

"So, if the people on Mars look through their telescopes at the earth they will be sure to see that enormous figure on the desert, and seeing it they will realize that the earth is inhabited by men of knowledge, and that the drawing is a signal. Then, of course, they will set to work to answer it by building just such a figure on Mars. That will be talking from star to star."

"But all this is bosh and nonsense to me, and I dare say it was bosh and nonsense to the man who wheedled this Frenchwoman into setting aside her 100,000 francs. But whoever he was, he knew on which side his bread was buttered, and knew that such a trust, for whatever purpose, would bear interest."

"But even supposing that the Desert of Sahara is one great plain and that it is large enough for the purpose, and even supposing that it was possible to make such an enormous figure, I am in doubt whether the people on Mars, with such telescopes as we use, would be able to see it."

"At certain times Mars is but 34,000,000 miles from the earth, but it gets further and further away, until the distance is 61,800,000 miles. That is a good way off to see triangles. But if Mars is inhabited I am inclined to believe that the inhabitants are not fools. If they saw a triangle shaped object on the face of the earth they would not jump to the chimerical conclusion that there were idiots enough down here to build such an affair."

"The truth is we do not know whether any of the planets besides the earth are inhabited. We think we know that it might be possible for men to live on Mercury. The situation and condition of things on the other planets are altogether different from those on the earth. So, when we talk about the inhabitants of the planets we enter the realms of surmise, and Jules Verne has a better chance than the scientist."

"The four planets nearest the sun are Mercury, Venus, the earth, and Mars. Mercury is only 35,392,000 miles from the sun, which isn't very far when you take the heat into consideration. Consequently we believe it is a good many times hotter than Arizona on Mercury. There are other disadvantages, such as a lack of space, enormous mountains, and no certainty of atmosphere. Mercury is only 3,060 miles in diameter, yet there are mountains on its surface over 12 miles high."

"Venus is 66,134,000 miles from the sun, and is plenty hot enough, although nearly twice as far as Mercury from the great heater. Then there is some question about the atmosphere as yet, and the year is only 224 days long."

"The earth comes next, being 91,430,000 miles from the sun. After this planet is Mars, 139,311,000 miles from the sun."

"All astronomers admit that if people like those on the earth live on any of the other planets Mars is probably the one. The reason why is easy to tell. Although Mars is further from the sun than the earth its orbit is so eccentric that at certain times he is only 126,318,000 miles away, consequently the temperatures are, likely, merely a little more moderate than those on the earth. Then, too, the diurnal motion of the two planets is about the same, so that from one year's end to another the distance from the earth to Mars varies only from 28,800,000 miles to 61,800,000 miles. Mars has its seasons and its polar ice, just like the earth."

"Through the telescopes we can watch ice fields at the poles get larger as winter approaches, and see them get smaller again in the summer. Mars has an atmosphere and clouds like those on earth. There are continents and oceans on Mars, so that altogether the analogy between that planet and the earth is very close, the striking difference being that Mars is much the smaller. Astronomers are more and more disposed to believe that Mars is inhabited."—San Francisco Examiner.

Quay's Libel Suits. CONGRESSMAN DALZELL OPPOSED TO THE SENATOR.

It is very strongly intimated that Senator Quay already wishes that he had not been so impetuous in bringing suits for libel. There is some talk that Mr. Quay will endeavor to get a change of venue from Allegheny county, and if possible, have his suit against the Pittsburg Post tried in Harrisburg. The senator's reasons for choosing Dauphin county are unknown, but everyone is entitled to a guess. His reasons for desiring to keep the case out of the Allegheny county courts are much easier to determine.

The senator learned yesterday for the first time that Congressman John Dalzell would be one of the counsel for the defense, and that set him thinking. John Dalzell, D. T. Watson and Willis F. McCook form a very strong combination from a legal point of view; in fact, they are the undisputed leaders of the Allegheny county bar. But that is not the worst of it. The appearance of John Dalzell as counsel for the Post has a political significance. It means that the congressman believes his time has come to kill off Quay politically, and to stride over the corpse into the United States senate.

Quay may feel confident that he has good legal grounds for libel, but he has suddenly remembered the trial of the case will be given the fullest publicity, and that the arguments of the counsel for the defense, while they may make good reading, will be decidedly unpleasant for him to hear. Dalzell has no love for the Senator and is not likely to spare him, and as he is a master of the use of sarcasm and polished invective the result will be painful, especially when it comes from a Republican congressman and is directed against a Republican United States Senator.

The fact that Dalzell will appear as counsel for the defense has convinced Quay that the Magee-Dalzell combine is still in existence. Now, the Allegheny county court house ring, of which Magee is an honorary member, is possessed of remarkable powers likely to be displayed in the most unexpected directions. In a jury trial the composition of the panel sometimes has much to do with the final result, and while neither the Senator nor anyone else would intimate that a jury had ever been fixed in Allegheny county, Mr. Quay would feel easier if the case is tried in some county outside of Magee's influence.

It is now pretty generally the opinion that these libel suits mark the end of Quay's political career, and strange to say, but few regrets are heard, not even from Republicans, many of whom insist that if Quay stays in politics much longer he will wreck the party in this State. That the defense will endeavor to show up all the dark spots in the Senator's career no one doubts, and many believe that some things will be brought to light that will result in Matthew Stanley Quay's permanent retirement from politics.—Patriot.

TOO SERIOUS FOR JOKING.

"Smart Alces" air their wit to amuse sufferers with funny stories, with reciting the imaginary virtues of some inert nostrum, but the pangs of rheumatism, neuralgia, sciatica and carbuncle, the horrors of scrofula and specific disease, are not at all funny. It is more interesting to know that Cactus Blood Cure infallibly cures these ailments by simply purifying the blood.

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