

CHAMP CLARK'S LETTER

Commissary Frauds In the Philippines.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

Proconsular Government Always Vicious.

BECOMES DISHONEST AND UNJUST

Thomas B. Reed Says Every People Is Capable of Self Government. Tom Johnson's Victory Puts Him In Line For Greater Things—Carter Harrison a Rising Star In the Democratic Party—Senator James K. Jones an Able and Pure Statesman. Benefits of Primary Elections—A Word About Poets—Cheap Advertising.

[Special Washington Letter.]
 "History repeats itself" is an ancient dictum whose verity has been demonstrated over and over again for our instruction. Mark Twain once sagely remarked, "Human nature is very strong, and we all have a great deal of it in us." The illustrious Missourian was eminently correct, far more correct than the French savant who said, "It is always the unexpected which happens." The expected has happened at Manila. The most startling headline in the great dailies is "Fraud in Philippines!" Did anybody expect anything else? It was inevitable that fraud would be committed, for that has been the history of proconsular government since the world began and will continue to be until the earth shall perish as a scroll. It makes no sort of difference whether the proconsuls are Roman, English, Spanish, French, American or what not. Warren Hastings, "the oppressor of India," as Burke properly termed that mighty man, is the type of them all. Racial traits may vary in the manifestations, but essentially they are the same. The vice is an infirmity of human nature and in the system itself. We know from highest authority that the Ethiopian cannot change his skin or the leopard his spots. Neither can proconsular government be made honest or just. The most sensible prayer ever uttered in this world was, "Lead us not into temptation." And proconsular government leads all who are concerned in it into irresistible and multifarious temptations.
 The following dispatch, let us hope, makes the situation out worse than it is:

Scandal in the Philippines.
 MANILA, March 21.—Interest in the capture and fate of Aguinaldo is well nigh overshadowed in Manila by sensational developments, present and prospective, of frauds in the commissary department. How widely these extend has not yet been ascertained, but enough is already known to justify the belief that they are far-reaching. Captain Frederick J. Barrows, of the Thirtieth volunteer infantry, quartermaster of the department of southern Luzon, together with seven commissary sergeants, several civilian clerks, a prominent government contractor, the assistant manager of the Hotel Oriente, the proprietors of three of the largest bakeries in Manila, a number of storekeepers and other persons, has been arrested. The investigation has scarcely begun, but thousands of sacks of flour, a quantity of bacon and wagon loads of other goods, all bearing government marks, have been found in the possession of unauthorized persons. It is alleged that the contractor in question, who has been doing a business approximating \$100,000 per month, has spent huge sums in entertaining officers. A prominent commissary officer is accused of leading a scandalously immoral life. It is asserted that large quantities of stores have been lost or stolen in transit and also that there is a shortage in the commissary depot. New scandals are developed daily. Illicit transactions have been traced back to June, 1900, and it is possible that there are others of earlier date. The scandalous traffic provisions makes the surreptitious sale of commissary supplies immensely profitable. It is understood that other United States officers may be arrested.

Condensed Wisdom.
 Hon. Thomas Brackett Reed is devoting most of his time to practicing law and making money, but he has not lost the happy faculty of condensing into a few words as much wisdom as is found in many a long speech. Not long since he was in Baltimore on business. A reporter asked him if he thought the Philippines capable of self government, whereupon he replied: "I think every people is capable of self government. It may not be the kind we have or want, but it is the kind that is satisfactory and sufficient for them." Thomas' large and capacious head is level. He might have added that we evolved through hundreds of years into our great capacity for self government. That's the only way to attain to the high position we hold—to evolve and revolute. Peoples who now are striving for self government have one great advantage which we did not possess—they have a model, this puissant republic. We and those from whom we sprang in Europe had to go it blind, to grope in darkness, to explore an unknown world. We made many mistakes in our experiments which our imitators may escape, but we succeeded, and they can likewise succeed if they will exercise energy, vigilance, courage, fortitude and, above all, moderation and self abnegation.

Tom Johnson's Great Victory.
 Individually I feel happy as a clam at high tide over the election to the majority of Cleveland of Tom Johnson—not Thomas, mark you, but plain Tom. My first cause for rejoicing is because I know Tom, like Tom, believe in Tom. He is a free trader who has the courage of his convictions and who is not afraid to speak out in meeting. He is a disciple of Henry George and was a bosom friend to that illustrious statesman, philanthropist and philosopher. In the second place, Cleveland is the home of Marcus A. Hanna. It is good

and pleasant to see Mark under Democratic rule.
 Tom Johnson has a great head and is a great character. He is young and smart as a whip. He did not make the race for mayor for fun; he is after bigger game—the governorship of Ohio and a seat in the senate of the United States. The chances are that he will get both. Far stranger things have happened than his election to the presidency some day. If he could get his pet theories enacted into law, there would be a great and deafening rattling of dry bones. Hurrah for Tom! He is a multimillionaire and looks like a cherub.

A Rising Star.
 There can be no question that Carter Harrison is a coming man in the Democratic party. Indeed he has already arrived. His splendid victory in Chicago turns all eyes upon the brilliant young Illinois statesman. Thrice elected mayor of the second city of the continent, he is still a youth. Surely there are greater honors in store for him. With Illinois we can elect a Democratic president, and it looks as if Harrison can carry the state. His name is already familiar to the ears of every newspaper reader in America, and he has demonstrated his winning qualities beyond all cavil. The estimation in which a man's home folks hold him is the very best and most reliable verdict upon his merits and his standing, particularly when that verdict is three times repeated, and upon no man in America has a more flattering home verdict been pronounced than upon young Carter Harrison. Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey of Texas is a statesman with an unusually level head, and here is what he says:

Carter Harrison's sweeping victory for mayor of Chicago, I believe, will result in his nomination for the vice presidency in 1904. I sincerely hope so. He is the strongest Democrat in Illinois, and if he is named for second place on the national ticket the Democracy will be invincible in that state in 1904. Altho' he has sunk into political oblivion for all time. Harrison is the greatest vote getter in Illinois.
 These utterances of Mr. Bailey are regarded as significant. Many Democrats believe he desires to be president, and some of his closest political friends are enthusiastically talking of Bailey and Harrison as the next presidential ticket of the Democrats.

Mr. Chairman Jones.
 Senator James K. Jones of Arkansas, chairman of the Democratic national committee, is to be congratulated on the personal victory he won by having his friend and constituent, E. D. Scott, appointed as one of the Louisiana Purchase exposition commissioners. I haven't the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with Mr. Scott, but I will risk my head on the proposition that he is a good man. Otherwise Senator Jones would not have made a fight for him. But I am not talking about Scott. Senator Jones and his victory constitute my theme. No purer man and few ableer live than Senator Jones. He has rendered his party and therefore his country great service under very hard conditions and onerous circumstances. True, the Democrats lost in 1896 and in 1900, but the probabilities all favor the proposition that they would have lost under any chairman and that Senator Jones was the best possible selection in both campaigns. He is honest as the day is long, true to his friends and to his principles as is the needle to the pole, of handsome presence, of good manners and of buoyant temperament. He is an honor to the American senate and to American manhood. Nevertheless he has been pursued by many Republican papers and, alas, sad to relate, by some so called Democratic papers, with a rancor that is amazing. Notable among his persecutors is The Globe-Democrat, and its performances touching Senator Jones and the Scott appointment do it no honor whatever. In order to prevent the appointment by the president of Mr. Scott The G.-D. and others misrepresented a speech which Senator Jones delivered before the Arkansas legislature, published garbled extracts of it and made malicious comments on the same. They also revived the ancient and odoriferous lie that Senator Jones is one of the chief manipulators, owners and beneficiaries of a trust, the round cotton bale trust; but their malice did Senator Jones no harm in the mind of President McKinley or any other fair and candid person. Mr. Scott was duly appointed because Senator Jones pressed his name, which, in the face of the antics of The Globe-Democrat and other preposterous malcontents, is a great and well deserved victory for the senior senator from Arkansas. The truth is that Arkansas has a splendid delegation in both house and senate.

Trust the People.
 More and more state legislators are realizing that the most certain method of securing pure and capable public officials is to see to it that nominations are made in the fairest manner possible consistent with the ineradicable imperfections of human nature. Experience hath shown that the primary election is the best plan and reduces evil influences and unscrupulous manipulation to the minimum, while mass meetings and conventions furnish the greatest opportunity for crooked work. The primary brings the great duty of making good nominations home to every citizen and gives each a chance to exercise his best influence in a perfectly legitimate way. Consequently for several years the primary has more and more come into vogue for the nomination of district, county, township and municipal positions. South Carolina has a law compelling all nominations, including that for United States senator, to be made by primary on a day fixed by statute and under the general election law. If no one receives a majority of the votes cast, then two weeks later a secondary primary is held to select a nominee from the two candidates who received the highest vote at the first primary. Nothing could be fairer, and it works like a charm in the Palmetto State. Arkansas has a law much

the same, and it works well in that state. Now comes Wisconsin and joins the procession by what will be known as the La Follette primary election law, because it was championed and forced through the legislature by the governor of that name. Minnesota has just enacted a law providing that congressional, district, county, township and municipal nominations shall be made by primaries—in fact, all officers except state officers and senators of the United States. These undoubtedly will follow later. The primary idea will spread until it becomes universal, for it narrowly concerns the people that the best nominations possible shall be made for all public positions by all political parties, because, blink it as we may, this is essentially and necessarily a government by party. The ultra conservative oppose primaries honestly, but not wisely, simply because they are innovations. Corruptionists oppose them because when primaries rigidly guarded by law are the rule they will be like Othello, for their occupation will be gone.

Sweet Is Revenge.
 Colonel John A. Joyce, poet laureate of Washington, D. C., is incubating a biography of that rare genius, Edgar Allan Poe, in which he proposes inter alia to prove that Poe was a plagiarist and stole "The Raven" from an Italian whose name is not divulged. This Italian wrote, so it is said, a poem entitled "The Parrot," which much resembles "The Raven." Poe may have fished from him, for all I know, although Colonel Joyce must permit the suggestion that he is rather late in preferring the charge. His evidence will have to be overwhelming to convict Poe, for he has been universally considered as the one American poet blessed with unquestioned originality; but if Colonel Joyce does fasten the charge upon him, and if the spirits of dead poets take any interest in the happenings on this mundane sphere, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow will be in ecstasy, for Poe worried him greatly in this life by attempting to prove that he was a plagiarist. In passing it may not be inappropiate to remark that Colonel Joyce and Ella Wheeler Wilcox have for years been hurling at each other the charge of plagiarism, each claiming the authorship of "Laugh and the World Laughs With You."

Cheap Advertising.
 Some time ago I stated in these letters that the signs indicated that Mr. Babcock of Wisconsin was posing as a tariff reformer for some other reason than a sincere desire to cut down the rates of the Dingley bill. I further stated that Bab knew he could not induce a Republican congress to choke the pap suckers loose from the public test. It looks very much as if Bab is simply trying to secure for himself a lot of cheap advertising, or he is seriously considering a change of political base, for if he has half the sense he has been credited with he knows that the tariff barons and trusts own the Republican party body, soul and breeches, and consequently it has no more idea of cutting down the tariff than Bab has of trying to marry the dowager empress of China.
 The Philadelphia Times has this clear and timely article on Bab:

Congressman Russell of Connecticut has been talking on the subject in the newspapers and declares that he will never support such a measure unless it can be made to affect some other fellow's product exclusively. In plain English, no tariff protected industry is protected enough to suit its beneficiaries, and there is likely to be a union of the representatives of all protected industries to prevent the passage of the Babcock bill in the next congress.
 Despite the stereotyped Republican boast that the Republican party can be depended on to protect the public against injustice and extortion the Chinese will tariff won't be lowered, even as a defense against the trusts, until there are enough Democrats in congress to lower it.
 Commenting on that excerpt from The Times, the Washington Post, a high tariff advocate, says that the friends of the tariff must and will revise it, forgetting that they always revise it by the simple process of raising the rates. They never revise by cutting them down. The Post adds:
 Our Philadelphia contemporary's prediction that the tariff will not be "lowered, even as a defense against the trusts, until there are enough Democrats in congress to lower it" would be funny if it were not pathetic. There have been "enough Democrats in congress" to pass a bill just once—for one congress, for precisely two years—since 1898. That congress was elected for "tariff reform." It was the culmination, in 1897, of the crusade begun by Mr. Cleveland in 1887. Does The Times remember the result? We are sure Mr. Cleveland has not forgotten it. Since that time four congressional elections have occurred, in all of which the Democrats have scored defeat.
 Clearly The Post intends to convey the idea that the Wilson bill defeated the Democrats at four consecutive congressional elections because its rates were too low. As a matter of fact, it defeated them because it left the rates too high, and every intelligent man in the country knows that that is true. The Post's plan (and Bab's, too) appears to be to cut off the dog's tail piecemeal, so it will not hurt him very much all at once. There is only one way to successfully amputate the tariff dog's tail, and that is close up to his ears, the closer the better. Horace Greeley said, "The way to resume is to resume." The way to bust the trusts is to place everything they make, handle or sell absolutely on the free list.

Stuck to It.
 Aggrieved Youth—In your "Literary Outlook" in this morning's paper you say "there has not been a volume of poems printed for six weeks." Yet I sent you a copy of my "Songs in Various Keys" not more than two weeks ago.
 Literary Editor—Yes, I remember it, I see no occasion to revise my statistics. Frightful weather, isn't it?—Chicago Tribune.

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