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PITTSBURGH, MONDAY, MAY 6, 1888.

THE CHARGE OF BIGOTRY.

The statement of the Hon. George Shiras, with regard to the legislative investigation which he proposes into Judge White's conduct, may be summed up, as nearly as we can understand it, as follows:—

Mr. Shiras says that if any one understands his resolution as alleging corruption he is much mistaken, although the scope of the investigation would warrant evidence of such if presented. He is not in any exhibition of bad temper, prejudice, consultation with outside parties as to the granting of license, and a number of other qualities which Mr. Shiras sums up under the heads of bigotry and intolerance which he is charged with.

This, at least, permits the public to see exactly what the basis of the movement is. It is fair to infer from the statement that the resolutions have behind them no evidence of corruption of enough weight to establish even a presumption. As to the movement of Senator Cooper leading him to Judge conducted the License Court is fully before the public, and the unprejudiced part of it will have no difficulty in reaching a conclusion concerning charges with such a basis. It is not bigotry and intolerance for a Judge who believes that the liquor law is the best for the people to pass, to increase in the city of Pittsburgh. It is not partiality or undue influence to give the police authorities a hearing on the character of the licensed drinking places and their effect as to the maintenance of order.

If the police authorities were not fair in their testimony, the blame must be placed elsewhere than with the Judge. Judge White may have made, and probably did make, some mistakes in his license decisions. But Mr. Shiras' statement leaves his resolutions with scarcely a leg to stand on.

AN EXAMPLE THE OTHER WAY.

It is instructive to find that the supporters of the grade crossing bill in and about the Legislature are holding up an accident at Bridgeburg Junction near Philadelphia, in which a Pennsylvania Railroad train struck an omnibus full of people with destructive and fatal results, as an argument in favor of the bill. The always interesting Senator Cooper is quoted as saying that "such accidents as the one at Frankfort, Pa., which cost the lives of the Commonwealth against grade crossings, have predicted that a bill abolishing them would be passed by the next Legislature." That the people have already been educated up to the necessity of abolishing grade crossings is evident; but the sanguine temper of Senator Cooper leads him to overlook the vital fact that the bill which he is urging would not abolish the grade crossing which is cited as an example in his favor. When Senator Cooper brings in a bill to abolish the present grade crossings, the public will offer no objection to the prohibition of future ones on equal terms.

PATRIOTISM AND GRAMMAR.

Of course it was inevitable, after Mr. Chanucy M. Dewey had referred in his oration to the fact that "One Hundred years ago the United States began their existence," that some unscrupulous republican General should criticize the use of the plural in that connection. We observe that the esteemed Columbus Journal takes exception to the expression, saying that "it is grammatical, but not patriotic." The logic of criticism would make it important to say concerning the Constitution, "The fact is that the Constitution of those who consider that their views of this nation require them to jump upon Lindley Murray by making a plural subject govern singular verbs and pronouns must impeach not only the Constitution, but the fathers who created the Constitution and the nation. If they had desired to give the plural to the Latin in the singular number they would have called it the "United Nation of North America," or "United Columbia," or any other term that they desired to invent. They preferred to call it the United States, and to use the term in the plural throughout all the fundamental instruments which founded this country. The example, both of Mr. Dewey and of the constitutional fathers, should impress on our friends that patriotism does not require us to be ungrammatical.

AS IT SHOULD BE.

It is announced by the cable dispatches that the efforts of the copper interests to reach an agreement by which the price of copper should be fixed at an arbitrary figure and the output of the mines curtailed, have proved to be a failure. The American committee, it is said, have sailed for home, and "copper will be put on the open market and sold for what it will bring."

As that is the only way in which copper or any other staple should be sold, the world will waste no tears over the failure of the combination plot to make it bring a higher price. The American committee will be glad to add to the list of other staples in what will bring in open market with a free action of supply and demand. Grain, live stock, iron and nearly all the great staples have to be sold in this way, and the justice of the prices so established is universally recognized. If what in the open and unmanipulated market will bring a bushel that is its true value; if it will

bring only 75 cents that is no less its true value, and those who cannot afford to raise wheat for that price must seek some other field of production.

To permit the producers of copper, petroleum or any other staple, therefore, to establish an arbitrary price and exact more than it will bring in open market under free competition is to give them a special privilege and advantage over the great mass of producers. To let them burden those who have no such advantage may be looked upon as an infringement of Europe, where class privileges are firmly rooted; but in this country it is a violation of the very foundation of our Government. The announcement that copper will be sold for what it will bring is simply a declaration that the rule of competition is equal, is temporarily at least, re-established in the copper trade.

The fact that the recent effort to monopolize this trade has resulted in piling up an immense surplus which will probably depress the market below the cost of production, is likewise no more than satisfactory. It is the legitimate and natural penalty for the evil of combination, to force the monopolists to compete in an open market. Interests that are disposed to follow the example of the copper trade should profit by the example.

A HIGH LIMIT.

Senate bill 157, which is expected to come up for passage in the House of Representatives this week, is a jewel in its kind. It provides that for the merger and consolidation of railroads in the State, which are not competing or parallel lines, the amount of stock or bonds issued by the consolidated company may exceed the amount of such stock or bonds owned by the constituent companies. But a limit is secured for this by providing that no issues shall be made in excess of \$150,000 of stock and \$100,000 of bonds per mile of railroad.

The gravity with which the possible abuse of this scheme is prevented is shown by setting a limit of \$300,000 of capitalization per mile is a joke well worthy the genius of Senator Cooper, the putative author of the bill. The average and honest cost per mile of railroads in this State is between \$30,000 and \$40,000. The Pennsylvania Railroad, one of the most of the four-track roads, which is one of the costliest in the country, is less than \$100,000 per mile. To pretend to set a limit of \$300,000 per mile is simply to open up a scope for stock watering beyond the wildest imaginations of that line yet on record.

What is the use of wholesale issues of fat stock and securities is behind this bill, we cannot say. Perhaps there is none. Possibly Senator Cooper introduced it solely for the amiable and philanthropic purpose of making things lively for the printers of bonds and stock certificates.

WHAT WE SHOULD NOT COPY.

Perhaps it was a necessary outcome of the late Centennial event, but it is nevertheless one of its drawbacks, that we find the New York Herald improving it as an occasion for urging a return to the knee breeches of our fathers. That journal, which for the knee breeches and gilets, is the imitation pictures of Washington, Hamilton, Franklin and Adams, clothed "in those comical sacks, miscalled pantaloons."

It is probable that the use of trousers which approximate comical sacks by the same Centennial committee, is a practical protest by them against the former proposition of knee breeches. They know very well that the physical shortcomings of the age make the knee breeches useless for this day. When it is proposed that they shall exhibit their shrunken shanks to the public gaze, they prefer to disguise them by wearing the more voluminous drapery that ever before. The judgment of the dudes, even upon matters of costume, is not infallible, but in this respect they are more nearly right than usual.

The same Centennial should remember, however, an article which our fathers inherited from the rule of monarchy. It only took a few decades of republicanism to make them pass out of existence. When our esteemed contemporary, the Herald, brings its mighty intellect to shaping the sartorial policy of the nation, it should remember the significance of this fact, pointing out to the people the knee breeches as the sign of inequality and privilege. They create an aristocracy of well-dressed knaves, and submit the epinephle-shaped, knave-kneed and bow-legged to the sneers and sarcasms of the unfeeling workmen. Besides this, they encourage the policy of shame, and burden the people with the dangers and inconveniences that are experienced by yielding to the temptation of false calves. To say nothing of their relative inconvenience and discomfort, they are a disgrace to the nation, and celebrating a century of republicanism, urge a return to the aristocratic and undemocratic knee breeches.

Beyond this let us urge upon the esteemed Herald one more great truth. In copying the noble example of our fathers, it is necessary to go a good deal higher than the knee breeches.

ONLY five hundred postoffices to dispose of during Washington's first term! No wonder that the practical politicians regard the methods of those days as obsolete and entirely unsuited to the necessities of the present day.

OUR esteemed contemporary, the New York Evening Sun, lightly casts aside Bishop Potter's remarks as "positivism." The fact is that the Bishop's remarks are not so much as an Italian title for sale in the New York market, which it points out as a reproduction of one of the features of Bur-yon's Vanity Fair. But no one has any right to think this a proof of decadence, for such an idea, on the authority of the esteemed Sun, Mr. Chanucy M. Dewey and other eminent authorities, would constitute the unpardonable offense of positivism!

NINETEEN MILLIONS reduction of the public debt for the present fiscal year is a very good record, which shows that the nation keeps on reducing its obligations whether Republicans or Democrats are at the helm.

AS IT SHOULD BE.

It is pleasant to observe that hope springs with great vigor in the human breast, as is shown by the manner in which the esteemed Philadelphia Press suggests the possibility of great things for Philadelphia flowing from the American Committee on the price of copper in Montgomery county. The Press remarks that it is "a trifle premature to speculate on the benefits," but it is quite right in not permitting that consideration to deter it from a glittering dream. If any people could not hope prematurely for oil and gas, they could never get it at all.

The Wall Street organs are now engaged in booming stocks. Consequently nothing more is heard of the way in which the latter State commerce law is raising the railroads.

REPRESENTATIVE LEMON'S denial that the liquor interests had anything to do with Representative Shiras' resolution, together with equally solemn assertions to the same effect, made in this city, revivels a perception that the movement may develop the qualities of a boomerang. Nevertheless the frequency and urgency of these denials recall the criticism of Hamlet's mother or the Player Queen: "Whether the lady do protest too much."

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