

The Dispatch.

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PITTSBURGH, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20.

TWELVE PAGES

JINGOISM OUT OF PLACE.

So well is the temper of the United States known both at home and abroad that there is not the slightest danger any responsible power will misunderstand such patience as may be shown in arriving at an understanding with Chile. This country, while in the very nature of its popular government and by the disposition of its people the most peaceful and reasonable upon earth, is also the very last which would submit to intentional insult or deliberate injury from a responsible quarter. Other countries understand that fact perfectly in proportion to their intelligence. If Chile does not grasp it, the cause lies in Chilean ignorance.

But it is precisely because the ultimate course of the United States is fixed beyond all given circumstances that it behooves whatever of the "jingo" tendency there is in certain quarters to check itself into a mood of serious moderation. War is not to be recklessly desired even with Chile. Up to the last, allowance should be made for the fact that Chile, just emerged from a civil conflict and in the hands of those who have as yet scarcely got a firm footing as rulers, may, without any derogation from the dignity of the United States, be given more time for reparation and expression of the regret than might be accorded if the offense came from other directions. Above all, the idea that the United States is to be in any degree impelled to war through the desire of politicians to make capital, or of naval officers to win glory, should not have the least encouragement. The intention of Washington is itself abhorrent to the better sense of the nation.

The moral considerations ultimately involved should rule the attitude and action of our statesmen; but there is also the material consideration which the "jingos" would do well to consider, that even Chile, relatively contemptible as such an antagonist might succeed in doing a vast deal of damage before being finally conquered. The correspondent who in yesterday's DISPATCH pointed out the condition of our navy and the insufficient defenses of our seaboard cities did a timely service.

Notwithstanding all the preparations and the belligerent talk the likelihood is as an hundred to one that there will be no hostilities. But if occasion for hostility came, it will be much more creditable to this nation and in accord with the feelings of our people, that it come as a virtual necessity rather than that it be encouraged as something desirable in itself. The tone of some of the papers which have been clamoring for immediate declarations against the Chileans is in no sense to be commended. Mr. Blaine, who has never been accused of want of spirit in his foreign policy, expresses much better the national feeling in refusing to give the encouragement to the idea that hostilities are either probable or desirable.

PROVING ITS USEFULNESS.

The letter from Chancellor Holland, of the Western University, upon the actual condition and workings of the Carnegie Library in Allegheny, while giving no more than a cursory observation, is reassuring to the believers in that educational enterprise. In the midst of acknowledgments of the good purposes of Andrew Carnegie there are no doubts of the value of the multitude in our days. These skeptics have in truth been more numerous than supposed. Doubtless the idea of the ungraciousness of looking a gift horse in the mouth has restrained most of them from open criticism—but all the same they have kept their opinions.

When the library lost its brand-newness as a gift—when the gloss of novelty wore off, and it became an item of considerable annual expense on the tax-list of Allegheny—criticism soon began to question its work. The subject has been up among Allegheny Councilmen, in the coming year's appropriation; and it is possible that not a few taxpayers are just now thinking of the cost rather than the benefits.

At this juncture Dr. Holland's letter upon the subject, which appears in another column of THE DISPATCH this morning, is decidedly timely. It tells in a plain way of the already large and growing public use of the library; and it shows that even in these days of cheap books, a well-stored public library is a thing of popular use as well as beauty.

JUDGE ACHESON'S RULING.

The summary of Judge Acheson's decision in the application of the Interstate Commerce Commission to enforce its order against the Lehigh Valley Railroad reveals points which were not given in the telegraphic report and puts a somewhat different place on it. The gist of the ruling is that the findings of fact and the points of law decided by the Commission are not regarded by the Court as conclusive in its proceeding, and the question must be reargued into and passed upon by the Court. But the ruling recognizes this difference from an original inquiry, that the burden of proof does not rest upon the complainants in the case, but the finding of the Commission establishes a *prima facie* case and places on the railroad the burden of overcoming its conclusion and establishing the reasonableness and impartiality of its freight charges.

While this decision does not seem to

carry out the full intent of the act with regard to the summary enforcement of the rulings of the Commission it does not, as was at first thought, reduce the means of enforcement to a nullity. It is permissible to infer that the order will be eventually enforced unless the railroad corporation is able to show good reasons for reversing. The enforcement will be retarded, and the procedure laid down by the court puts it in the power of the railroad to delay proceedings and take an appeal, simply by disobeying the orders of the commission. But it still leaves open the hope of an eventual enforcement at the time in the future, when the resources of delay at the disposition of the corporations in equity proceedings have been fully exhausted.

It is a significant indication of the struggle over the question whether the railroad should be made to obey the law that the public will be thankful for that fact, and hope that the law will be triumphant.

WHOLEBACK FIGHTING VESSELS.

It is stated by an Eastern journal that Captain McDougall, the designer of the wholeback freight vessels, is "seriously entertaining an idea that has been discussed elsewhere rather as matter of curiosity, namely, the construction of warships on the wholeback principle." The fault to be found with the statement is that the idea has been discussed elsewhere as a matter of curiosity.

Everyone who has given attention to the claims in behalf of the wholebacks as freight carriers must have recognized that if these claims are fulfilled in actual practice, as they seem to have been, the wholebacks presents a type admirably adapted for the heavily armored warships of the future. The Monitor class, which has never been excelled for fighting qualities in smooth water, is heavily handicapped by the unseaworthiness of that class of vessels. But the voyage of the wholeback barge, first to England and thence around the American continent to Portland, indicates that here is a type of vessel that combines the impregnability of the Monitor type with the seagoing qualities of the cruisers. Its sloping decks, from which almost any shot must glance, permits of perfect protection with much less weight of armor than is necessary for less protection on vessels of high free-board. Its large tonnage capacity indicates that after allowing for the weight of armor turret and guns, it could carry an amount of coal that would give it a larger radius of action than could be secured for the European battleships. Its submerged prow could be sharpened and armored so as to combine with the artillery power of its protected turret ram—a naval ideal of thirty years' standing heretofore never realized.

Such possibilities as these give point to the suggestions of THE DISPATCH that the United States should, besides providing its navy with cruisers of the best class, proceed tentatively in the line of constructing battleships. There is every reason to believe that the wholeback fighting ship, properly worked, may work as great a moral destruction among the navies of Europe as the Monitor and Merrimack did in their day.

APETIZING GRIEF.

The usual annual research into the archives of Senatorial luxuries reveals the regular evidence of the expense of funerals, with the additional feature of evidence of the hearty appetite that enables the Senatorial mourners to bear up on those sad occasions.

The funeral of Senator Wilson cost, exclusive of the undertaker's bill, \$2,029.58. Of this sum \$845.58 was for meals. As this allows \$42 worth of provender to each of the twenty Senatorial mourners, it is evident that the grief of that sad occasion was of the chastened variety, which enabled the bereaved Senators to take plenty of sustenance for their perishable bodies. The funeral of Senator Hearst was a more expensive one, costing \$20,000. The exact amount spent for victualing the grief-stricken Senators is not given, nor is the cost of the stimulants used to revive and console their depressed spirits. But supposing the proportion to have been the same as in the other funeral, we infer that each of the bereaved mourners exhibited a heroic determination to bear up under affliction by putting himself outside of four hundred dollars' worth of the products of the caterer's art. The Roman heroism which keeps up the Senatorial appetite on these occasions of grief is one of the many striking and peculiar features of that peculiar institution, the Congressional funeral.

CRIMINAL POLICE PRACTICES.

The acquittal of the persons charged with the kidnapping of a wealthy Detroit citizen reveals a state of affairs that calls for wide comment. It is hinted upon the brief telegraphic report by the remark that the verdict will probably result in "a wholesale cleaning out of the police force."

The crime of kidnapping a wealthy citizen and holding him for ransom, is a peculiarly bold defiance of individual rights and the whole system of law. If there had been any decent proof that the parties accused were guilty of that bold crime, there can hardly be any doubt that the jury would have convicted them. The conclusion from the verdict is that the jury was satisfied from the evidence that the Detroit police, being unable to find the criminals, concluded to vindicate themselves by trumping up a case against some one. The result is that the vindication has settled on the wrong persons.

If this is the real state of the case, it shows the police to be no better than the criminals. Officers of the law who try to send innocent men to the penitentiary in order to conceal their own inefficiency are no better than kidnappers themselves. When the possibility of such a practice is demonstrated, it opens up the road to all sorts of corruption, such as shielding criminals, and sharing in the profit of criminal acts. When citizens are at the mercy of kidnappers or conspirators, whether in uniform or out of it, the question whether there is any real protection in law becomes a vital one.

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