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PUBLISHED SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 1906.

APPROACHING THE CRISIS.

Our Government's instructions to Minister Egan to insist on an immediate apology and reparation from Chile show that affairs are approaching a crisis. But the belief is gaining ground that not only will there be no war, but the Government contemplates nothing more serious than a severance of diplomatic relations in the event of the refusal of Chile to comply with our demands.

The polite announcement by the Chilean Government that Minister Egan is not persona grata but persona ingrata and the suggestion that he be removed as a condition precedent to the compliance with our demands is surprising. If there is to be an apology and reparation, it should not be conditional upon Mr. Egan's recall. The Chilean Government has a right to ask for Mr. Egan's recall if he is persona ingrata, and the United States has the right to recall him as a matter of self respect, if he is persona grata.

It is popularly expected that on Monday President Harrison will send his message to Congress, and at that time the exact nature of the demand upon Chile will be known. The instructions which Minister Montt is supposed to have received from Minister Matta and repeated to the State Department are sufficient ground for the delay of Mr. Harrison in sending in his communication. If it be true that the instructions were insulting and contained no conciliatory sentences, we may expect that Mr. Harrison has changed his mind and has been a mild man since he was in office.

It is difficult to say if last year's millage in city purvey is permitted for this year. The result upon the millage assess- ments will mean a heavy and oppressive draft on taxpayers. As until the Assessors complete their revision, there is no telling what percentage of increase the aggregate will show, it is impossible yet to figure how many mills will produce a given sum. But individual taxpayers who are troubled from one or several hundred per cent know that it will take a propo- sition some from them if these valuations and the old millage are both to stand.

The Assessors are, of course, being sharply rated by the property owners, whose assessments have gone up; and there is in the air the intimation of a desire to provide large revenues to be spent on the improvement of the city. However, it is well to be just to the Assessors. It is well to recognize that the cash value system has never been much more than a respectable pretense, and that many property owners have encouraged and been complaisant with the fiction so long they believed it profited them. That is to say, both in city and in country—the habit has been as in the city—the habit has been as in the country—as people can remember to assess below known values. In some cases, scarcely 50, 60, or 75 per cent has been assessed. This has been the rule in other cities, too. The business of assessing is easier done in this way than by seeking up for the limit of market quotations. Now the people who are to be assessed are called upon to assess at actual cash values—the cash values of the records and real estate offices—are they thereby advancing a plot for extravagance or are they not entitled to the plea that no matter what was done before it is their duty to make the assessments now as nearly as they can?

But be the Assessors right or wrong in their estimates—and they are certainly al- titudinous beyond expectation in most cases—there is no reason why the tax- payers as a body should allow assessments in the aggregate to draw a penny more from them in taxes than they really want for city betterment. They should know, or should know, what the city can wisely afford to spend for city purposes. In a couple of weeks from now they will have a chance at the polls to elect representa- tives to Councils to adopt any millage they themselves figure out as proper. If the gross assessments be large they can, if they will, elect members pledged to reduce the millage proportionally. They can also opt to elect members who will pay the taxes for them. If the increase of valuation is merely a rush of wealth to the head in place of to the pocket—the result

of imagination rather than of the market—they can secure things by ensuring pledges from their Councilmen to vote for a millage reduced in exact proportion as the aggregate valuations may be increased, with such allowances as they think fit for new and additional work, or for that matter with no extras at all, if they think that is best.

FINANCIAL GUESSWORK.

The methods of estimating receipts on expenditures, in the conduct of the Government finances, were strikingly illus- trated by the testimony of Assistant Sec- retary of the Treasury Spaulding before the House Ways and Means Committee. Mr. Spaulding first made an elaborate and apparently accurate statement of the receipts of the Treasury for the first six months of the current fiscal year. Then he guessed at \$20,000,000 more of receipts for the first twenty days of the present month, and he guessed that the receipts of the six months, added \$14,000,000 to them, and presented the result as the total of Government revenues for the current fiscal year, amounting to \$362,000,000. Against this he set an estimate of expenditures for the year of \$338,000,000, or \$24,000,000 less than the receipts.

A little light as to Treasury estimates is shed by Mr. Spaulding's subsequent statement that his figures did not include sink- ing fund appropriations, or river and harbor appropriations, and finally by his confession that the estimates were based on "a little experience and a great deal of guesswork." This last statement is calculated to disarm criticism, but on the other hand it permits us to take Mr. Spaulding's statements seriously. It suggests, however, that it might be well to adopt measures for the statement of Government expenditures on some more tangible basis than that of "guesswork."

LITERARY ABERRATION.

The reported assertion of Dr. Charcot, the great Parisian authority on mental diseases, that the insanity of De Mau- passant, the French novelist, is typical of his class and that "all literary men must, sooner or later, succumb to insanity," is a little startling at first. But as we consider it more maturely in all its bearings, as- pects are presented which commend themselves to our judgment and our moral sense.

It is evident that on the lines of Dr. Charcot's theory, the manifestations of mental aberration, generally known as lit- erary productions, are as varied as the more material classes of insanity, which range from delusions of imperial power down to the imaginary impersonation of a beetle. In De Maupassant's case, af- ter working out for some time in the shape of rather delirious novels, it took the more active shape of personal destruction. In some other it exhausts itself in the very mild luxury of poems and the delusion that the public wants to read them. So on through the entire field of literary effort, we see the varied forms from idiosyncrasy to the most complete and un- derstandable insanity.

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Our neighbors of Buffalo are cherishing laudable ambitions. The proposed util- ization of a portion of the surplus pro- duced by the city is a most laudable and re- sponsible way to blow its horns. High- erto Buffalo has rested on the laurels of a big business in wheat, flour, lumber and cattle. But the construction of the Niag- ara tunnel, by which 120,000-horse power will be deliverable at Buffalo, causes that city to indulge in prophesies of a million population at the end of the decade, and to speak slightly of the prospects of Chicago, and to assert that the course of the empire may be compelled to reverse its proverbial direction.

A SUCCESSFUL DEMONSTRATION.

There seems to have been a demonstra- tion of the ability of women to work political springs in the result of that hearing before the Senate Committee on woman suffrage the other day. Those who can convince a Senate Committee are certainly possessed of political skill; for while the ladies are working to prevent their own enfranchisement, they are at the same time applying of Sir Philip Sidney's "spoonbegg" that "he who aims his arrow at the midday sun, though he knows that he shall never hit the mark, yet it is certain that his shaft will fly higher than if he aimed it at the wayside bush." Buffalo will be none the worse for entertaining great expecta- tions, even though they are somewhat con- trary to the political standard.

SENATORIAL ELECTIONS.

"ELECT SENATORS by direct vote of the people," is the battle cry which will sweep the country.—Tribune. It is certainly a high thing that something is done to prevent the election of a man who is already a body of plutocrats.—Wheeler Intelligence. There seems to be no real danger to re- publican institutions involved in passing an amendment to the Constitution providing for the election of Senators by the people.—New York Journal. It is by no means certain that the election of Senator by popular vote would result in elevating the intellectual standard of the body or in doing away with fraud.—Indianapolis Journal. We hasten to declare that this would be a great boon to the Southern States and to the people at large—perhaps the greatest that has ever been rendered by any constitu- tional amendment save that prohibiting slavery.—New York Journal.

A REMARKABLE MAN GONE MAD.

Leander Holmes, whose proxy in 1860 was Horace Greeley, a Mental Weak- ness, was the well-known pioneer of the North-west. He has been adjudged insane. He was elected delegate from the Territory of Wash- ington to the National Republican Con- vention which nominated Abraham Lincoln for President in 1860. Mr. Holmes was unable to attend in per- son, but he sent his proxy Horace Greeley, and that is how Greeley came to be a mem- ber of the Convention. Mr. Holmes was ap- pointed United States District Attorney for Washington and held the office four years. He is now a hopeless mental wreck.

THE POLITICAL CONCLUSION FROM THE EVENTS OF THE PAST WEEK ON THE DEMOCRATIC SIDE OF THE HOUSE IS VERY POSITIVELY THE EFFECT THAT WILL BE MADE BY THE NEW YORK DEMOCRACY IN HIS POCKET, THERE IS ONE SECTION THAT HE HAS NOT GOT HOLD OF, AND THAT IS THE DEMOCRACY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PUBLIC BUILDING JOBS.

The Senate seems to be determined to make better progress than the House in one respect; but that respect is one in which the public is not so much interested. It is that of rushing through roll-calling build- ing bills at the rate of about \$1,000,000 for each day's work.

At a time when the impossibility of find- ing revenue for all of the appropriations of the last Congress, the item of public buildings presents an extremely eligible field for the exercise of the power. The Government has commenced buildings of course the trust economy is to complete them, and wherever the business of the Government is hampered for lack of needed facilities, it can afford to provide them. But that rule can be met, and yet a great reduction of expenditure can be effected by stopping the present roll-calling system of scattering public building broadcast wherever the political affiliations of Senators and Representatives may re- quire.

Even if the Treasury were in a condition to allow of large expenditures in public buildings, the system by which the dis- tribution is made is a peculiarly senseless one. The expenditure is made on the basis of the political affiliations of the buildings are to be erected. The distribu- tion is entirely a matter of favoritism. In the appropriations which the Senate passed last week, the commercial centers of Norfolk and Hastings, Nebraska, got \$250,000 each. The Dalles, Oregon, job got \$100,000, and the city of San Francisco got \$100,000. There are