

The Dispatch.

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PITTSBURG, TUESDAY, NOV. 22, 1892.

TWELVE PAGES

PUBLIC SPIRIT WANTED.

For some reason or other Pittsburg merchants and manufacturers have hitherto signally failed to respond to the call for united action to remove railroad discrimination against this city. Elsewhere will be found a letter from Mr. George T. Oliver to the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Committee on Rules and Transportation, which contains a striking comparison between the railroad treatment of Buffalo and that of Pittsburg. The statement of figures is followed by the natural reasoning that Buffalo's superior advantages are due to Buffalo's more energetic public spirit. If those in this city whose personal interests are directly at stake would show some slight symptom of the energy displayed by the writer of the letter referred to, and one or two other persistent movers in the matter, the gain would be great alike for the individuals and for the municipality.

Short-sighted apathy on all matters not pertaining to the regular routine of business must give place to perspicuous co-operative effort, if Pittsburg and Pittsburgers are to maintain and improve their position to the nation. On general principles Pittsburg needs more public spirit, if indeed it can be said to have any at all at present. And in this particular Pittsburg needs a freight bureau with a competent officer at its head to look after the interests of the city and its surroundings in regard to railroad conveniences. This bureau cannot be started and carried on by one or two men or firms; it needs concerted action for its inception and maintenance. And when once the necessity for the improvement has been realized its establishment should form the stepping stone to further developments of the municipality by the agency of public spirit.

AN UNCONSTITUTIONAL PROCEEDING.

Hon. Michael D. Harter, of Ohio, who has won national reputation by first fighting free silver coinage in the House and then presenting in its place the much more vicious State bank circulation proposal, is reported to have made a "fresh stroke for fame." About the time that the Democratic politicians of his district were ready to fall out with each other over the question who should have the postoffices, Mr. Harter has quelled all further dispute by announcing that he had that matter all settled, and publishing the list of the persons whom he had selected to fill the various positions.

This may still the Democratic tumult in the Massfield district over the offices. But it can hardly fail to evoke one question which ought to be of decided pertinence to the leaders of a party which makes decided professions of loyalty to the Constitution and bases its campaigns on reform. What section or clause of the Constitution vests the power of appointment in Mr. Harter so indisputably that he is authorized to announce his appointments a year before the Congress to which he has just been elected takes its seat? It would astonish a foreigner, after hearing of Mr. Harter's summary action, to learn that there is no authority whatever for his making the appointments.

Party usage carried to the degree of abuse has given Congressmen a decided authority in recommendations for offices; but the extent to which party usage has displaced constitutional government is signalized to a remarkable degree when Michael D. Harter feels empowered to announce the appointments for his district three months before the President, who is charged by the Constitution with the responsibility for all appointments, is inaugurated. It would certainly be discreet for Congressmen of the alleged reform and constitutional party to profess the virtue, if they have it not, of believing that the President will make the appointments instead of arrogating to themselves the executive power.

A CHANCE FOR A TRUST.

The announcement that Dr. C. W. Macune, a former leader of the Farmers' Alliance, after being turned down by the late convention of that body, has decided to organize a Trust of the cotton planters of the South, displays more than the usual ignorance of the conditions necessary to the successful organization of these monopolistic combinations. It would be impossible for any power on earth to combine the cotton planters of the South or the wheat or corn raisers of the West into an organization having the power to restrict production, suppress competition or advance prices. In the first place, it would require the union of a million individuals in an agreement that was never kept by a hundred; in the next place it would necessitate some means of preventing outsiders from planting new fields of cotton; and after these two impossibilities had been achieved, any advance in prices secured by such means would simply hand over the markets of the world to the cotton growers of other countries.

It is much more likely that some imaginative project has tacked this character on Dr. Macune's project than that a man of his prominence should be so silly as to suppose it possible to achieve any of the monopolistic ends of the Trusts. The details of his project indicate that it is rather in the nature of a co-operative agency of the cotton planters to sell directly to spinners, thus doing away with middlemen and securing more liberal rates of interest on advances. In view of the heavy charges usual among cotton factors it is quite possible that such an agency would be successful in reducing

the cost of taking the cotton crop from the planters to the spinners.

But its distinct character from the Trust is apparent in the fact that its only hold on the planters would be in its doing the work cheaper than the old agencies. If it does not do that the planters will continue to sell their cotton to the former merchants. If it does it will be a success by successful competition and not by any actual resemblance to the Trusts.

HOPING IT MAY PROVE TRUE.

The report that Mr. Cleveland has made an effort to have Edward Murphy, the Troy jobber in street railway franchises, pulled off the track for United States Senator in the interest of the President-elect's personal selection, presumably William C. Whitney, is gratifying. Of course the story goes that Mr. Cleveland's request was met with a very brief refusal.

That has been the result of Mr. Cleveland's previous appeals to Tammany to have his wishes respected. It is worth while to remember that a case very similar to this marked the inception of Mr. Cleveland's career when it was attaining national proportions. He went so far as to ask the retirement by Tammany of a State Senatorial candidate named Gandy on the ground of his personal comfort; and the result showed that Mr. Cleveland's personal comfort was the last thing for which Tammany has any care. The consequences since that have been that Tammany and Cleveland have not pulled together with any zest until they united for the purposes of the late campaign.

If Mr. Cleveland has requested Mr. Murphy's retirement it may be expected that the step will so arouse the spoils of the Sherman anti-trust act, and the intention of its framers to reach railroad and traffic arrangements. He is at least right in urging its rigid enforcement, and the courts should be provided with plenty of opportunities to test the matter. If it should be found that the act really provides for the regulation of interstate commerce, a very general public satisfaction would result. On the other hand without energetic prosecutions neither this law nor any other will be found competent to cope with evils that ought to be cured and not endured.

Mr. WHITELAW REID'S reasons for attempting to explain the Republican defeat by ascribing it to the growth of socialism, after denouncing such explanatory attempts as whining over split milk—are not very evident.

WHEN Hungarian laborers in Ohio sought to roast their boss to death was rescued, went home, got a gun, returned and dispersed the crowd after the shooting of a snowman with her dog. She was searched in a sheep pen where she had been kept warm and alive by the warmth of the sheep. "How did she get that? Angels!" Is this not "Little Brethren" over again with a vengeance?

It is not well to pin too much faith on the current stories about the President-elect, but we will hope that this one of an early split with the Hill-Tammany element may prove to be true.

THAT PANAMA SCANDAL.

From the sensational proceedings in the French Chamber of Deputies yesterday, as described elsewhere—it is evident that the Panama Canal business will develop into a scandal of unsurpassed magnitude.

Among other charges it was asserted that the Government was induced to permit the issue of the infamous lottery bonds by the distribution of three million francs among a hundred and fifty Deputies and a few Senators.

From the prominence of the projectors, the multitude of small shareholders who all over the country invested their savings, and from the Government permission to issue the lottery bonds, the matter had already obtained national importance.

And now these last charges of crooked dealing on the part of Deputies and Senators puts the national honor directly at stake. To-day a parliamentary committee is to be appointed with full power to make a thorough investigation, and if the drainage of a whole sea of putrefying corruption do not result, no abuse can be too severe for the men who made yesterday's charges.

BIRMINGHAM'S DEMONSTRATION.

An interesting article by Joseph Chamberlain on the municipality of Birmingham appeared in the November Forum. The engrossment of most minds in the election is the reason why the article did not receive the attention it deserved. It should be of the utmost interest to dwell in American cities, for it makes clear the difference in system which makes the difference in results between one of the best-governed municipalities in the world and a number of what must be confessed to be the worst governed in civilized and progressive nations.

The splendid work which has been done in rebuilding, improving and ornamenting Birmingham, has already secured world-wide fame. Within the past quarter century it has been practically transformed into a metropolis, with its streets well lighted, well paved and well cleaned; with free libraries, parks, a school of art, new assizs courts and courts of justice, with ownership of gas works, water works and street railways. The splendid work that has been done in this line has been widely celebrated in various magazines and newspapers, but what is not so generally understood is that these municipal services are rendered to the people of Birmingham at an annual cost of taxation about one-fourth the average of American cities. It is calculated to arouse stupefaction in the Pittsburg mind to find it asserted that the municipal services of Birmingham, excepting public schools, lunatic asylums and poor fund, is \$1,683,000, or about 40 per cent of Pittsburg's expenses, while Birmingham has nearly double the population.

THE Queen Regent of Spain smokes at least 15 cigarettes a day.

THE new Lord Tennyson is said to have very little interest in poetry except for the fine verse it possesses at the publishers.

GENERAL GLICK, of Kansas, will make an effort to secure that sent in the United States senate soon to be vacated by Mr. Perkins.

E. F. TILBOY, stenographer at the White House, has taken down every speech the President made since his inauguration, nearly four years ago.

WHAT is the cause of this remarkable contrast? Some people are disposed to attribute it to the large element of voter who are not property holders. This may have some effect, but not much in Birmingham, where all rate-payers of any sort, both male and female, have the right to vote at municipal elections. The registration shows total voting population in Birmingham of 88,000, or about one to every four and a half of population. So that the suffrage as far as it affects Birmingham's municipal affairs is as widely distributed there as here. Nevertheless there is an important political difference which Mr. Chamberlain makes very clear. Although politics enter into the composition of the Municipal Council, they are not allowed to have the slightest force in the election of permanent officials or the employment of workmen by the city. The strongest evidence of this is the fact that, while the Council has been for two generations a Liberal or Radical body, the majority of the high officials of the city have been Conservatives. Mr. Chamberlain says:

When a new official will be to be elected, no questions are asked as to his political opinions, and no interference would afterward be tolerated with his exercise of privileges. It is an unwritten law that no paid official shall take an active part in political contests. He is expected to refrain from the press and the press in relation to such controversies as may arise. His private opinions and his voice are entirely excluded for his own discretion. Once chosen, if he discharges his duties well and faithfully, he remains in office for life, or till his resignation; with the probability that he is disgraced with age or infirmities, he

will receive a pension proportioned to his salary and the length of his service.

In other words, the employment of administrative officials solely with a view to their efficiency, and keeping them apart from politics, makes the difference between a municipal expenditure of twelve dollars per capita in Pittsburg and less than four per capita in Birmingham. When people grasp the full meaning of that fact they will be likely to improve in the Birmingham example, and insist that national policies shall be entirely excluded from any municipal election.

PRESIDENT-ELECT CLEVELAND owes his election to the American people more than to any individual supporter, or clique of office-seekers. As a man of moderate powers, therefore, he must show his gratitude to the people by appointing to office those best fitted to discharge official functions. By so doing Mr. Cleveland has everything to gain and nothing to lose. His reputation cannot but be affected for better or worse according to the character of the appointees. And the better the appointments he makes, the better will be both for his reputation and the welfare of the country. In his second term, Grover Cleveland has an unrivaled opportunity to make a record in this direction that shall be a bright example for his successors.

FROM the vigor with which they are contending one another, it appears that the professional astronomers are about as trustworthy as forecasters of a comet's performances as "practical" politicians are as pre-election prophets.

EX SENATOR EDMUNDSON is emphatic in denouncing his belief in the constitutionality of the Sherman anti-trust act, and the intention of its framers to reach railroad and traffic arrangements. He is at least right in urging its rigid enforcement, and the courts should be provided with plenty of opportunities to test the matter.

If it should be found that the act really provides for the regulation of interstate commerce, a very general public satisfaction would result. On the other hand without energetic prosecutions neither this law nor any other will be found competent to cope with evils that ought to be cured and not endured.

THIS with the combination in Brooklyn and other cities, as well as the Birmingham line, gives the McKee-Clegg party a very handsome amount of street car property. It is more than suspected that there have been overtures to combine the McKee outfit with the greater holding of the Widener-Elling party, but there is scarcely any prospect of their coming together.

THESE are odd stories, which comes by relay from Brooklyn City, Iowa, and which apparently the Pittsburg press has not heard of.

THE next issue, therefore, will be the money question. The issue will be whether the tariff legislation. There is no remedy but to stop the increase in the value of the money, and until that is done, the steady appropriation of the earnings of the people by the insidious device of an increasing money standard will be an increasing unit of length, or of weight, or volume.

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