

SCRANTON TRIBUNE
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General Manager.

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THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE.

SCRANTON, MARCH 29, 1894.

WILY MR. STRANAHAN yet evinces such a disposition to fight shy of the Democratic state chairmanship that we begin to fear he objects to further frolics. And he certainly has experienced his share.

The Elks' New Home. No secret fraternity today possesses grander principles or comes nearer to the observance of these principles in everyday life than the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. Outside the church it would be difficult to find a place where the enduring elements of a progressive civilization, those cardinal virtues which draw and hold mankind together and lift society up to a more liberal culture, are in clearer and steadier evidence than within the portals of a representative lodge of Elks. Truly democratic, truly fraternal, the order is more than this; for it embodies in its ritual and in its pledge of loyalty the very essence of charity, justice, fidelity and truth. Were it suddenly to overthrow all theology, there would yet remain to civilization, in the principles which all Elks subscribe to, religion's truest germ and spirit.

Such being the unanimous belief of all who have been favored with an insight into Elksdom, it agrees with reason that the progress of a local lodge is of more than secret importance. Within the next few days Scranton Elks will move into a permanent social and business home which, in all its equipments, appointments and significance, is fondly believed to be literally without a superior. Coming in such close succession after the erection of a pestilence city hall, the occupation of a magnificent federal building and the dedication of a superb new theater, this removal is of great architectural consequence, exhibiting anew the progress which growing Scranton is making. But above and beyond all merely outward and superficial show, the event is lastingly momentous in its influence upon the pleasures, the duties and the lives of the lodge's enlarging membership; and by direct radiation upon the pleasures, the opportunities and the development of our common city.

Scranton Lodge of Elks, No. 133, numbers to-day more than 350 members. This membership, it may be said without exaggeration, is the very cream of professional, industrial and commercial Scranton. It includes judges and physicians and merchants and attorneys who are in the very forefront of their respective vocations. It includes instructors and railway men and mechanics and tradesmen who are among the solidest in our citizenship. It draws from every rank, class and calling trustworthy representatives, and blends them all together in true equality. Men without knowledge, character or principle are not admitted. But when worth can be established that is all that is asked. While there is no encouragement to vice, no premium on license and no laxity of control, the discipline of the lodge does not bother itself about a member's race or politics or creed. It accepts him as a man and as a brother, and as a brother it will cheer him in success, shelter him in adversity, rejoice with him when he is well and minister to him when he is sick.

Is not growth upon such a basis deserving of grateful chronicle?

THE OMISSION from our national constitution of a direct reference by name to the God whom Christians worship was not accidental, nor is it strange that the house committee on judiciary, should by an almost unanimous vote, decline at this late day to reopen the question. While the overwhelming majority of Americans are deists, and believe in the existence of one Supreme Being, all wise, all powerful and everlasting, there are those who deny this faith and who even push their doubts to the point of organized resistance. A complete divorcement of church from state and an impartial application of liberty of conscience requires that no creed be either recognized or offended in our federal charter. To discriminate against atheists and agnostics is no part of the mission of a free government, any more than it is to discriminate against Catholics, or Protestants, or Jews, or Gentiles.

Pop Gun Tactics. Sensationalism is one form of journalistic evil that has pretty generally fallen into disrepute among intelligent readers. But there is a kindred offence that is yet too prevalent. It consists of publishing broadcast articles in which the facts themselves may be accurate enough, but which are of such a nature as to give the casual distant reader false impressions. It is a fact, for instance, that a certain local attorney recently brought harmful insinuations to bear upon the deputy prothonotary. It is also a fact that the latter official promptly entered a disclaimer. And it is a further fact that the president judge of this county, knowing the circumstances and the two men, promptly rebuked the attorney, threw his charges out of court and thereby vindicated the attorney's victim.

But it was not a fact, although special dispatches in certain metropolitan journals might lead distant readers to infer, that these insinuations had any particular significance. Residents of Lackawanna county, knowing the predilection which the attorney in point evinces for unearthing mythical marines' nests, would understand just how to interpret this incident and how to give it the requisite discount. The people of Philadelphia and New York, however, as well as those throughout the state, lack this inside information,

and are rendered liable by such partial presentations of the case, to jump hastily to a conclusion which does Mr. Kasson, individually, and through him, the reputation of the entire county and community, a gross injustice.

While it is possible that the intelligence and morality of our local courts have not in all instances exhausted the possibilities of improvement and reform, they are the only courts that we have, and we should be foolish to defame them undeservedly. One erratic or ill-digested accusation calculated to bring them into contempt does much more to perpetuate existing faults than it does to hasten the correction of real evils. If there be any substantial proof of irregularity or dereliction in the processes of these courts, it should be used with an honest view to promote the common welfare, rather than to create merely a transient sensation, inspire prejudice or bring a shaky case. It is undoubtedly the general belief that Judge Archibald dealt leniently with the author of this latest episode when he simply refused to take official cognizance of it.

THE WILKES-BARRE News-Dealer thinks these nine opinions of the supreme court last Monday sustaining earlier findings in this county indicate that Lackawanna's judges "know the law." This compliment is as true as it is graceful. Duly considering Lackawanna's youth and modesty, it may reasonably be doubted if any other county in the commonwealth has any abler or fairer judges. But we shall never be quite sure of the supreme court's work until we can see on the bench some one who knows the technicalities of mining litigation. There are occasions nowadays when a reversal by the supreme court does not carry with it a reversal of confidence that our own judges are right.

The Light Problem.

The need of detailed information as to the cost of a city electrical plant, now that the question has been raised in Scranton, is well illustrated in the discrepancy between the estimate of the electrical committee of Philadelphia's council and that of Chief Walker, of the electrical bureau, of the same city. Mr. Walker calculated that it would cost to establish an experimental 400-light plant in Philadelphia \$109,510. The joint committee, which has just concluded an investigation of this interesting subject has reported that such a plant could not under ordinary circumstances be built for less than \$251,783. Reported upon this as a basis the joint committee has decided adversely upon the proposition to establish a municipal plant, alleging that under municipal control each light would cost 49 cents per night, whereas under the existing contract with the Brush company this cost is only 33 cents.

It will strike most observers that this discrepancy of \$142,273 between estimates is too large to be honest. Either the inquiry upon which Mr. Walker founded his calculation has been hurried and inadequate, or else this must be taken as true concerning the joint committee's investigations. Whichever supposition be correct, it is evident that if Scranton intends to go into the electrical business, in competition with private enterprises, there is need of much further and more careful study of the question than has yet been accorded to it. It should obviously be an important public benefit that would induce this municipality to arrogate to itself in any unusual manner the functions of private business; and such benefit, if it be discerned at all, must rest upon substantial ground. We cannot afford to let it rest upon any haphazard foundation of guess work like that exhibited in this Philadelphia contention.

While THE TRIBUNE has no desire to prejudice this discussion, it is simply fair to the Scranton Light, Heat and Power company to say that it offers decidedly better terms than appear in the Philadelphia joint committee's report. Where that committee declines to pay \$251,783 for a 400-light plant, our people would, for about the same sum, get an 800-light plant, in good working condition, equipped with the best machinery, having over 100 miles of wire already strung, successfully lighting 410 city lamps and supplying in the neighborhood of 300 commercial patrons. And we would have to pay only \$50,000 down, leaving the remaining \$300,000 of indebtedness to run, if desired, for forty years. The system employed is the Brush, generally conceded to be the best, and the quality of the engines, dynamo, machinery, etc., is represented by the company officials to be very desirable.

Yet, as we have said, all this may not have any relevancy. If the city could do better by building an entirely new plant, it should not permit Mr. Scranton's offer to stand in its way, provided it really proposes to go into business for itself. Should it add the function of business manager to its other functions? Should it compete, or try to compete with individual enterprises? Does it anywhere appear that it would gain enough in dollars and cents to justify this far-reaching experiment? These are the questions now before the people and now is the time for the discussion to wax warm.

NO PRESIDENT has ever been successful and, what is more, no president can be successful in carrying water on both shoulders. Mr. Cleveland must either confront the inflationists with a resolute veto or else give himself over entirely to the free silver theft.

Railroad Shrinkage.

The president of the Wabash railway system, Mr. O. D. Ashley, has compiled certain statistics with reference to the recent shrinkage of railway property that are momentous in their significance. In 1887, 11,877 new miles of railway were constructed. In 1893 the number of new miles was below 2,000 and the decline has been a gradual one. From 1887 to 1893, inclusive, 25,375 new miles were laid, an average of 8,125 miles per year. From 1890 to 1893, inclusive, notwithstanding marked advances in other industrial directions, the new miles aggregated 17,420, an average of only 4,355 miles or yearly average decline of 3,815 miles. Counting this annual loss for four years, Mr. Ashley contends that it is equivalent to the withdrawal of \$437,800,000 of money from circulation.

Computing every phase of this loss, including the reduced wages to trainmen and the decreased opportunities of profitable operation, Mr. Ashley estimates that it is equivalent to a yearly loss of \$200,000,000; or nearly one-half the ordinary expense of the government. Mr. Ashley continues:

The time is not far distant when people will gaze with astonishment at the destructive work of a popular fallacy. It will come when people understand that the interests of trade and industry are so closely identified with railroad progress and prosperity that no material injury can be inflicted upon the one without correspondingly affecting the other. The whole silver product of this country is annually about \$20,000,000. What comparison would a total loss of this product bear to the enormous vacuum in railway enterprise? How much has the volume of trade shrunk from the silver and tariff agitation combined, as compared with the extension of railway construction and re-education in railway industries? Unfortunately it is not upon trade and industrial interests alone that these losses fall. The same causes which stop construction and compel economies in the operation of railways, developed in a large reduction in profits, have made total loss of this product bear to the millions of people who have invested their savings in railway securities, and upon such one of those sufferers an impression against railway securities has been made which will require years of prosperity to efface. Has this great loss of income had no effect upon public confidence? In 1893 more than \$1,750,000,000 of railway bonds and stocks went into the hands of receivers, mainly in consequence of the meager profits of the previous years, against which the companies had vainly struggled. Is there nothing taught by this?

There are various ways of explaining this decline. Part of it is due, inevitably, to the gradual occupation, by trunk line systems of all territory commercially susceptible of profitable occupation. Some of it has been due to hostile state legislation, superinduced by the unreflective eagerness of agrarian revolutionists to hit by statute at those who own railway securities solely for gambling purposes, regardless of those who own them by virtue of honest intentions and equally regardless of the hundreds of thousands of families that gain livelihoods by them. We dare say that the interstate commerce law has operated, in various directions, to cripple railway enterprise and repress railway development. All these things, of course, are wrong; but the railway managers themselves are not wholly innocent. Greater honesty, fidelity and prudence on their part, and less desire to startle the public by means of theatrical coups, Napoleonic maneuvers and speculative tableaux would have made possible a much better showing.

FORGETFUL THAT every law restricting immigration has been Republican in origin, the Williamsport Sun says "the laborer may hope that under a Democratic administration the landing of pauper labor on our shores may be stopped." There is nothing to prevent the laborer from hoping that, but there is nothing in the Democratic record to indicate that his hope will be realized.

WE DO NOT see how congress can evade its plain duty with reference to the Carnegie armor plate scandal. There is a coin in that steel pile and it needs to be captured and labeled.

THE RELINQUISHMENT of the fight against oleo in this state is a new triumph for modern science. The anti-fats have lost.

IF GRESHAM would go, Grover should sign at once. And he should sign, whether Gresham goes or stays.

AT THE Pie Counter.

Ye winds of March are wafted through
Ye trees devoid of sap;
Ye early buds have withered, too,
Because of ye cold snap.

Elected—Why do you seek an appointment? You took no part in the campaign.

Applicant—That's just the reason. If I had taken a hand your goose would have been cooked.

"What became of Jones?"
"Died of dyspepsia. You see his wife joined one of the amateur cooking clubs and Jones only lasted six months from the first lesson."

Stern Employer—See here, young man, this makes three times you have been late at the office this week. I demand an explanation.

Bliss Clerk—Well, I believe in the theory that the office should seek the man rather than the man should seek the office.—Philadelphia Record.

Statesman—No, I cannot vote in favor of any measure that would benefit the hospital.

Citizen—Why?
Statesman—It's a corporation; and I'm agin corporations.

Stale—When I was a child my nurse made me terribly afraid of the dark, and I've never quite gotten over it.

Ebels Knux—I wonder why you waited for daylight to go home.—Hager's Bazaar.

Poor James! His bright career was blasted in the prime of life.

Why? Is he dead?
Aias! worse. He has located at Wilkes-Barre.

"The Star of Kentucky" probably was named because of his disposition to sin till late.—Chicago Dispatch.

SOME PASSING THOUGHTS:
Prosperity generally must be pursued, but it is never necessary to chase adversity.

The politician who waits for the office to seek him in this age will accumulate moss on his chin.

The world was made for all, but many of us have been too slow in fencing up our allotment.

New brooms sweep clean, but it is the faithful, stubby handle that can deal telling blows to a dusty carpet.

What if the servant girls and cooks, who prepare toothsome dinners for Sunday eating, should join in the movement for more thorough observance of the Sabbath?

The individual who brings something to the editorial sanctum "just to fill up," unconsciously pays the most delicate left-handed compliment to the brains of the staff that can be imagined.

any happier but less bored, if he shinned up again.

Got the Relatives Confused.
Barrenbury Patriot.

The SCRANTON TRIBUNE pays some very high compliments to Peter A. B. Widener's partner in electric railroads, but confounds Mr. Widener's partner with Stephen B. Elkins. The gentleman THE TRIBUNE starts out to praise is really William L. Elkins.

Dark Pants Just as Valuable.
Colonel Sam Hoop.

Coining the seigniorage is the putting of a certain amount of silver dollars in circulation, the redemption of which is not provided for by any security. Brooches and dark pants would answer just as well for a money medium, and would be just as valuable.

Honest Confession.
Baltimore Herald, Dem.

Protection is always unconstitutional, except when it affects some big interest in a Democratic state.

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