

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, JANUARY 2, 1895.

THE SCRANTON OF TODAY.

Come and inspect our city. Elevation above the tide, 740 feet. Extremely healthy. Estimated population, 1894, 163,000. Registered voters, 55,222. Value of school property, \$750,000. Number of school children, 12,000. Average amount of bank deposits, \$10,000,000. It's the metropolis of northeastern Pennsylvania. Can produce electric power cheaper than Niagara. No better point in the United States at which to establish new industries.

When a government comes to Scranton it will probably not come on the platform of trying to pull everybody else down. In fact, it will need quite a different "pull."

The Governor's Message.

The last message of Governor Pattison, elsewhere summarized at considerable length, is a dignified and comprehensive document, replete with good suggestions. It covers very thoroughly the field occupied by the various state departments, and is rich in suggestion as well as in recapitulation. We regard it as, in the main, a much able message than that which preceded it during the second Pattison administration. It points out legislative needs with more care and is less given over to political argument.

That portion of the message relating to the present election laws will be read with particular interest. Notable in it is the following paragraph: Unfortunately, I believe, for the best interests of the public, the constitutional amendment proposed a few years ago for the repeal of the constitutional provision requiring payment of a poll tax once in two years was defeated. Since then the enormous evil of political committees paying the taxes and holding the tax rolls of voters has been on the constant increase. It has attained most alarming proportions, especially in the great cities, where the number of voters whose political duties are thus attended to by party organizations now runs up to hundreds of thousands. Vast sums of money, in Philadelphia alone in a single campaign amounting to \$50,000, are raised by the political parties. The very raising of this fund leads to public demoralization and keeps up the vicious system of bribery and vote buying which has become a part of our politics. It places parties under obligations to those who furnish it and taxes public servants to raise it. I earnestly recommend your honorable bodies immediately to formulate and pass a constitutional amendment abolishing the tax on the franchise; indeed, I am convinced that the proposition made in another article some years ago, to impose a tax upon those who neglect one of the first duties of citizenship, viz., to vote at all elections, would be a more reasonable and effective regulation of the elective franchise than to impose what, at most, is an irritating tax upon the right to perform one's duties.

The governor's complaint at the farical character of most election contests as conducted under the act of 1874 is re-echoed by the public. The instances are unfortunately far too numerous where it has, as he charges, "been the rule to make these trials mere matters of form, to suppress and prevent actual judicial investigation. The election committee travels about, going through the form of examining witnesses, without much regard to legal principles or judicial forms. Questions of law and fact are decided mainly on partisan or personal grounds, and the so-called 'investigation' is not only a judicial farce, but a most costly and unsatisfactory proceeding." This applies not only to legislative contests but to county contests as well. The former can be remedied by throwing them wholly into the courts. The latter seem to be incurable.

There is strength in the governor's general argument against violence on the part of disinterested labor, but weakness in his suggestion that "there might be no difficulty in devising a board of arbitration in which both sides would have confidence." There is great difficulty in this direction, and it is not becoming less. Another weak point is shown in his inconclusive treatment of the company store problem, a subject which, like all other questions, has two sides. The last feature of special interest which we shall notice is the portion relating to street passenger railways—to the duty of protecting the streets and highways from the aggressions of trolley companies without at the same time sacrificing the public's honest interests. On this point the governor says: If the claims which are made for electricity as a cheap, profitable and effective motive power are founded on well-established scientific basis there can be no doubt that roads operated by this agency can do much for the development of our commonwealth, and that in the near future they must be invested with the right of eminent domain, the authority to carry freight, mails, and perform all the functions heretofore exercised by steam railways. But all such municipalities and the highways of the rural regions are not to be given away without compensating advantages to the public, and franchises which, in the very nature of the case, must be monopolies, should not be granted except the provision be coupled with the concession that as the grant becomes more valuable the compensation paid to the grantor shall steadily increase. With respect to these and all corporate franchises it needs to be kept constantly in view that their competition, and not their consolidation and combination, is for public advantage. It has become the fashion for corporations, under the plea of a healthy competition, to secure special franchises from municipalities on their streets and, these once secured, imme-

diate to effect consolidation with others—all the parties to such combinations pooling their issues and violating the very essence of the conditions upon which they obtained their grants. To prevent these I am of the opinion that the legislature should prescribe regulations similar to those of the fourth section of article xvii of the constitution, relating to parallel and competing lines of railroads or canals. Competing lines of passenger railroads, gas, water or electrical companies should not be allowed to effect consolidations and combinations hostile to the interests of the commonwealth or of the citizens of municipalities which have granted them rights for the express purpose of obtaining the benefits of competition.

We cannot hope, in this running summary, to do the message justice. It will well repay perusal from beginning to end.

Representative O'Malley shares with Mr. Farr and Lieutenant-Governor Watres the credit of having achieved a notable victory for Lackawanna county at Harrisburg yesterday. For the "baby" of the house, Mr. O'Malley is doing quite well.

Lackawanna at Harrisburg.

The selection of James E. Watkins, of Taylor, as reading clerk of the house was a somewhat unexpected climax to the spirited contest waged for this position before Monday evening's Republican caucus. Mr. Watkins will, however, be none the less difficult for having been a political "dark horse." Personally genial and good humored to a degree, he will not only make friends rapidly at Harrisburg, but he will exhibit qualities which will keep those friendships. That he will prove thoroughly adequate to all the duties of the reading clerkship, none of his home friends think of doubting.

The defeat of ex-Journal Clerk Fletch is ascribed in some quarters to the active hostility of prominent Republicans who resented his course in the Robinson-Lyon fight for the lieutenant-governorship. This may have had its influence, but it was no doubt aided by the fact that a considerable number of Mr. Fletch's personal friends in Lackawanna county objected to the violent manner in which his candidacy was to all appearances seized upon by one of its leading promoters as a personal prerequisite. In his own name, Mr. Fletch, with his large experience in house procedure and his wide acquaintance with state politicians, would perhaps have been stronger than he proved to be when regarded by many as merely an incidental character in a larger and more daring contest for state recognition.

We congratulate Mr. Watkins upon his success, and regret that Mr. Fletch could not have been permitted to fight his own fight on his own merits.

That Soda Water Case, Again.

Exception is taken by the prosecution in the perjury case against C. A. Wiley in Philadelphia in the evidence printed editorially in The Tribune of last Saturday. The attorney for the prosecution, J. Elliott Ross, contradicted the case against Mr. Wiley rested, as we then claimed, on a technicality. He contends that a transcript of the court records will establish that Mr. Wiley, on the witness stand, testified that four persons, who said they paid nothing for soda water obtained one Sunday at the drug store of D. S. Ryan, did pay the money therefor and later received change for it—in other words, one man's word, as against the word of four. Mr. Ross disclaims a desire on the part of his client, Mr. Ryan, to persecute Mr. Wiley, but, if we understand him correctly, wishes merely to impress upon the recent defendant the wisdom of being accurate when testifying under oath against a fellow citizen, and causing him to be fined.

It is fair to give Mr. Ryan the benefit of this explanation. The case originated, as most of our readers remember, during last year's Sunday observance campaign and is one of a number of unpleasantnesses which linger in that movement's wake. The jury having disagreed, it is impossible as yet to say, officially, which side is technically correct, although until convicted, the defendant in common fairness is to be regarded as innocent. Enough is known, however, to justify the conclusion that in any future movements of a similar character, should such be under contemplation, it would be wise to delegate the collection of evidence to regularly authorized officials. We do not believe that in this case Mr. Wiley was actuated by selfish or vindictive motives. Neither do we believe that, supposing a jury should find him mistaken in some of the details of his testimony, he would therefore deserve to be sentenced to the penitentiary, alongside hardened criminals. Such a sentence would, it seems to us, be repugnant to every human sympathy.

As to Party Criticism.

The Philadelphia Record is moved to anger by what it calls the "reckless and indiscriminate abuse" by leading newspapers of the Cleveland administration "merely because it is Democratic." It is particularly sensitive with reference to the current criticism of Secretary Gresham; but it will excuse us if we suspect that its sensitiveness is greatly intensified by the extraordinary vulnerability of the present secretary of state to public criticism. We do not remember that the Record was similarly sensitive when the Democratic partisan press was doing its level best to cast ridicule on Secretary Blaine. Yet, in point of abuse, Gresham has been treated with marked leniency by the Republican press, if we compare their course with the treatment accorded by Democrats to Mr. Blaine.

An Inevitable Compensation.

The completion of the great Maxwell coal breaker seems destined to inaugurate a decided revolution in the mining industry of the anthracite region. This immense structure, which contains 3,000,000 feet of lumber and cost \$25,000, possesses the largest screening surface of any breaker in the world, and by means of its chutes and crushers will undoubtedly effect an almost complete saving of the smaller sizes of coal. The mine operators will not only be thus enriched, but the cheapened price of coal production per ton will be a blessing to the consumers. One feature of this new era to be regretted is the inevitable calamity which will overtake breaker boys, hundreds of whom will eventually find themselves superseded by these giant automatic competitors. History has invariably demonstrated, however, that such innovations of machinery create in redoubled prosperity new fields for displaced labor.

Not a Representative Jury.

From the Carbondale Herald. It is to be hoped that the jury on duty in Scranton last week was not a representative one. They acquitted everything they laid hands on with two exceptions. We suggest that the next jury be selected from the inmates of the county jail. They surely could not manifest more sympathy with the lawless element and might honestly do better. Charity is a good thing, especially on Christmas week, but sometimes it can be too much of a good thing. After reading the evidence in these cases we wonder what amount of evidence it would require to convince this jury of a man's guilt.

Will Have Public Support.

From the Wilkes-Barre News-Dealer. The ladies dragged in Scranton scooped in about forty estimable knights of the green table of that town on Saturday night who were engaged in watching "ships that pass in the night." The fines imposed netted the city \$90, while the proprietors of the respective places are out a couple of thousand apiece. Gambling has openly flourished in Scranton for years and if the mayor compels players to observe a semblance of decency he will have the support of all good citizens.

One of Dan Hart's Jokes.

From the Wilkes-Barre Leader. Her lips quivered and her breath came in labored gasps, but she did not speak. The lady was in a room for years and she was asked to work incessantly toward such a condition of American politics. But we must decline to regard the imbecilities and gelatinous policy of the present secretary of state as representing more than a sharp contrast to what an American foreign policy should be.

Romance and Health.

From the Atchison Globe. It is more romantic and better for the digestion to sleep with wedding cake under the pillow than to try to sleep with it in the stomach.

Effective Oratory.

From the Detroit Tribune. "Jags, did your speeches on the stump against the income tax have any effect?" "Did they? Well, I guess yes. The commercial agencies raised my rating twice."

TO THE NEW YEAR.

Standing by the cradle Of the year that's born today, What is it the laughing eyes Pain to us would say? What the message mystic Brought from realms above, Is it joy or sadness, Is it hate or love? Is it wealth or poverty, Is it health or pain? Is it sweet prosperity, Is it loss of gain? We cannot read the answer, Those red lips hold it fast. We must not know the coming, What'er may be the past, For the little babe just born Holds in his tiny hands The fate of men and nations, The story of all lands, While o'er the message mystic He brings to you and me, A kindly God behind the veil Of dim futurity. —T. P. Ryder, in Wilkes-Barre Record.

Christmas Presents . . .

Useful and Ornamental goods for the holiday trade. LADIES' DESKS. CABINETS. BOOKCASES. LADIES' DRESSING TABLES. TEA TABLES AND LIBRARY TABLES, BRASS AND ONYX. TABLES AND CABINETS (OF A GUARANTEED QUALITY.) AN ELEGANT STOCK OF PICTURES AT MODERATE COST. FANCY BASKETS AND LAMPS. CALL EARLY AND MAKE YOUR SELECTIONS WHILE OUR ASSORTMENT IS COMPLETE.

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JUSTICE TO OUR JUDGES.

From the Philadelphia Press. The Scranton Tribune is one of the very few papers of the interior unhesitatingly speaking out in favor of the passage of a judge's retirement act by the legislature at its coming session. The declaration of our Scranton contemporary on the subject is both significant and effective, and all the more so because on the bench there is no judge who would come under the provisions of such an act for many years yet, and between a judge at 20 years of age, or even 30, and retirement at 70, there are several contingencies. It seems very certain that a retirement bill will be presented at the coming session, and it will be received with a great difference of opinion. The opposition to it from the interior of the state, as already indicated, will be very strong, not so much on account of the principle involved as because of the expense which it is presumed will follow. This would not likely cost so much, however, as to continue on the bench men who are no longer really fit for duty, thereby compelling an increase of judges in order to get the work done.

First Rate Philosophy.

From the Post-Express. We have often differed from friends who, we rather, in point of abuse, are unavoidable in this world, and the main thing is to say honestly what you believe, and be charitable and good humored.

GOLDSMITH'S BAZAAR.

Wherewithal Shall Ye Be Clothed?

As the icy breath of Old Boreas sweeps around the corner it carries that question right home to us. Humanity can no more stand such weather unprotected than can the Lilies of the Field. Remember right now, that flannels are cheaper than funerals, and that underwear costs less than undertakers. Therefore, we say: Come unto us all ye who shiver and are lightly muffled, and we will warm you up

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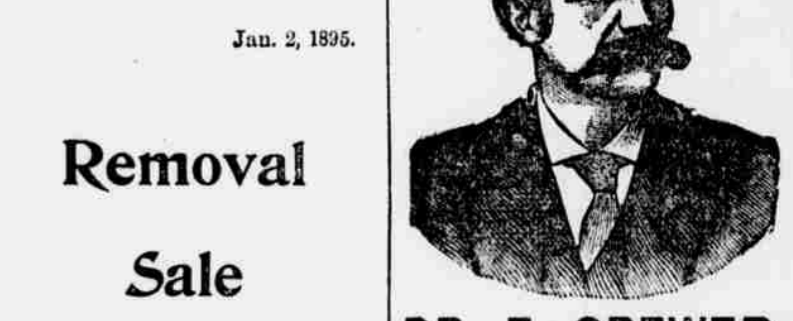
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