

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, FEBRUARY 18, 1897.

Although Brother Dugan retains his scepter as the King of Dunmore, he understands at last the meaning of opposition.

The New Capitol.

Governor Hastings' statement of the reasons why the state capitol should not be removed from Harrisburg is sufficient to settle this point, if, indeed, it had ever been unsettled. The talk of removal has from the first been artificial, and was started chiefly to spur the citizens of Harrisburg to the provision of better protection against fire and to other concessions. By all accounts these objects have been attained, consequently the agitation for removal may with propriety cease.

As to the form in which the burned capitol shall be restored, that subject will bear careful study. The governor's suggestion is that instead of undertaking to build one massive structure, which would involve a large initial cost at a time when the finances of the commonwealth are already seriously embarrassed, and which would not be available for four or five years to come, the new capitol should be so planned as to become one of a group of state buildings, and built just large enough for the legislature's needs. Such a building could be completed in time for the next general assembly, and the companion buildings for the various departments could be added from time to time as circumstances would permit.

At first thought this suggestion runs counter to the widespread feeling in favor of a "representative" capitol; but, after all, is it for any practical reason necessary or desirable that the commonwealth should seek to glorify itself in architecture? Would not a series of buildings, separated one from another, present quite as sensible an appearance and be in addition more business-like? In that case, a fire in one building would not endanger the whole investment, and the number of buildings could be increased to keep pace with the growth in departmental work. Beyond a certain point it is not so much the beauty of the capitol as it is the efficiency of the labor done within it in which the commonwealth should be concerned. The suggestion of the governor as to the form of the new capitol is one, we think, that will grow in favor.

Our excess of exports of merchandise for January, 1897, over imports was larger than for any January in the prior eleven years; and for the first time in four years this January shows a balance of gold imports. In other words, prosperity is coming.

Jonah and the Whale.

For upward of a month discussion has waxed warm in theological circles over a statement by Dr. Lyman Abbott repudiating belief in the literalness of the Bible story of Jonah and the whale. Dr. Abbott is by no means alone among pious and sincere expounders of the Christian religion in declining to accept in other than an allegorical sense certain portions of the Scriptures which under a literal interpretation appear to come into conflict with the laws of God as revealed in nature. The more frank representatives of the so-called higher and newer criticism are outspoken in the belief that the miracles narrated in the Bible it is essential to believe implicitly only in those which center about the person and divinity of the Founder of Christianity; the others, they affirm, may be regarded as in some degree the products of imagination teaching truth by parable.

The weakness of this position is set forth with admirable conciseness by the New York Sun, when it asserts that "if there is not supernatural authority for Christianity it becomes simply a question of moral philosophy, regarding whose soundness disagreement is justifiable and inevitable. Christianity as a religious system would be wholly subverted. Instead of a religion deriving its authority from a supernatural source, we should have only a religious philosophy limited by the inability of the human intellect to go beyond this world of sense and fact. Jesus would be relegated to the place of Buddha and Mohammed, and the Biblical stories of supernatural occurrences would take their place along with the tales of Greek and Roman, Assyrian and Egyptian mythology. Nothing would be left for man except the guidance of human reason alone. The foundation upon which the church and Christian theology are built, would be swept away absolutely. \*\*\* If the story of Jonah is merely allegorical, a fable, every other Biblical tale, from the creation of Adam and Eve up to the supernatural birth and resurrection of Jesus, is likewise allegorical, for they conflict equally with the possibilities under merely natural law. In other words, the arguments of Dr. Abbott and his defenders shatter the whole fabric of religion built by faith, and put the Scriptural reports of supernatural occurrences in the same category with the tales of mythology." To this argument there is no response. It is unanswerable. Either Christianity is true or it is not true. It cannot be accepted literally in one chapter and figuratively in another without doubt being engendered as to the authenticity of the whole; and it were far better to rest the claim of the church flatly upon the solid foundation of faith, in front of which skepticism stands powerless, than to attempt to accommodate the enemy by going out to battle on his territory where he has all the advantage.

Richard Harding Davis' story of the young Cuban woman who was stripped on board an American ship at Havana by Spaniards and searched for papers has been modified by the young lady to this extent: The search was made behind closed doors by a Spanish woman. But it has yet to be explained why a Yankee skipper, flying at his ship's masthead the Stars and Stripes, should permit even a Spanish woman to commit indignity upon one of his passengers. Things were not thus in Captain Ingraham's time.

In two states, Nebraska and Delaware, woman suffrage has recently been defeated. The weight of argument is yet on the side of those who oppose the extension of the franchise to a moiety of our population only a few of whom appear to want to vote.

Billion-Dollar Congresses.

Notwithstanding the grim determination of Speaker Reed to prevent a waste of the people's money—a determination, it should be said, in which he has been unprecedently successful in spite of great pressure from members anxious for political reasons to pass public building and other just non-essential appropriations—the present congress is likely in its expenditures to go several million dollars beyond the limit of the much-decried Billion Dollar congress. No estimate can be made yet until it can be seen to what extent the pending appropriation bills are likely to be trimmed down in debate, but it is certain to be a billion dollar congress, and maybe more.

However, this does not mean that the expenditures of the present congress have been unwise, or that they represent an increase in the actual burden laid upon the nation. As Robert P. Porter, the well-qualified statistician, in a recent letter has pointed out, the real test is the per capita expenditure for federal purposes. For the last eight years this has been:

Table with 2 columns: Dollars per capita, and Dollars per capita. Rows show years 1889-1896 with values ranging from 5.30 to 6.21.

In some departments of the government, notably the postoffice department, the public has demanded improvements which, though costly and at first non-productive, will in time return their cost and more in increased business. These expenditures have practically been ordered by the people; they help to swell the totals, but still they do not make each citizen's share of the burden heavier than before. Furthermore, this is a growing country and can stand a legitimate increase in its expense account. If it couldn't, billion dollar congresses might be fair targets for criticism; but it will be recalled that when we first had a congress of that dimension we also had a Republican treasury which had in it "money to burn."

If New York isn't to get a cabinet officer we have in mind a state that will.

Slightly Overdone.

It is, of course, easily possible to carry a good reform to extremes, and this should be guarded against. A physician writes to the Sun of a case in which it appears that the new rules of the Gotham board of health relative to the prompt certification and investigation of cases of tuberculosis were enforced imprudently. This physician, in his attendance upon one of the city hospitals, recently examined and prescribed for a young man with incipient consumption. Although depressed in spirits, his general condition was good, and an encouraging opinion was expressed as to the future course of his disease. At the same time he was instructed regarding the proper sanitary and hygienic precautions to be observed. The physician adds:

As is required by regulation, the hospital clerk reported the case to the health department. A few days later the patient's mother and sister, in tears and alarm, called at my office with a story of the health inspector's visit. A pamphlet of instructions had been left for them to follow, conspicuous in which were directions for the care of the patient's body after death, the preparation of anti-septic winding sheets, and the whitewashing, painting and disinfection of the room after removal of the body. The effect of these gruesome details, which might with propriety, perhaps, be given to an undertaker's helper, upon the unfortunate patient himself, who was the first to read them, may be imagined. Of a delicate, sensitive nature, he was plunged into a fit of despondency, from which he was several days recovering. His family was convinced that his condition was much worse than represented at the hospital, and it took no little persuasion to overcome the morbid effect of the careless rant of tact and thoughtless cruelty of the inspector's visit. It may well be doubted if the public here is prepared for a sort of thing which would so severely be tolerated in Russia or Imperial Germany. The infectiousness of consumption is conceded to be so slight that very simple precautions are sufficient to reduce the danger to a minimum, and there would seem to be no good reason why these should not be left to the discretion of the physician rather than to the perfunctory visit of an official who has no personal interest in the patient.

We are inclined to believe with this correspondent that the effort to cause municipal supervision of all cases of consumption is as likely, in immediate results, to do harm as to do good. But in no other way can the general subject of the curability of tuberculosis be so thoroughly treated as by the use of the microscope of certain precautions which have been brought so clearly to the attention of the classes whose present ignorance or neglect most conspicuously feeds the mortality rates from this source. For this reason, therefore, we approve of the agitation, and trust that it may continue until the terrors are wholly subtracted from this most prevalent and destructive form of disease.

Senator Cullom proposes to offer an amendment to the sundry civil bill, providing for an appropriation of \$125,000 to pay the expenses of a preliminary survey for a ship canal from the great lakes to the Atlantic ocean running through a section of Pennsylvania and cutting through New Jersey not many miles south of Philadelphia. This idea is a fascinating one and must some day be realized, but the government is too poor to go into the canal business at this time.

According to the Rev. John Culpepper, of Kansas City, "when a man is 22 and unmarried, he ought to be taxed \$100; when 23 he should be taxed \$200. The tax should be increased \$100 a year until he is thirty. Then, if he is not married he ought to be put in the penitentiary." Maybe this minister in so strongly advocating marriage has an eye to business.

The execution of Duestrow was in one sense a vindication of justice, since it showed that the ownership of millions could not avail to exonerate gross guilt. But if Duestrow had been a poor villain, could he have poisoned the inevitable for nearly three years by resort to legal quibbles and technicalities?

STATE LEGISLATIVE TOPICS.

The Philadelphia branch of the National Republican League of Business Men (the Wanamaker-Dolan organization) announces that it will continue the battle for new legislation in the coming session. It pledges itself to secure the nomination and election of proper candidates for the office of state treasurer and auditor general. To use all proper means for the passage of a bill to regulate deposits of state moneys and to secure interest thereon. To advocate such changes in the conduct of the state treasury, by legislation or otherwise, as will prevent the withholding of the state's money—on deposit in certain banks—from the general accounts of the state, to the great embarrassment of the schools and charities of the commonwealth. It is also proposed that the league shall operate with the following ends in view: To further the passage of a proper revenue law, which will so modify the present tax system as to give relief from unjust discrimination and at the same time provide an adequate revenue for the state. To protest against the enactment or reduction in the annual appropriations to the several counties of the state for school purposes. To favor the enactment of legislation to limit and control the operation of pools and trusts. To urge the passage of laws that will most effectively put out of business the "reform" plank in the last two state platforms. It is interesting to note in this connection that the one source of opposition to the legislation of the league is the reform legislation comes from those members who recently supported Mr. Wanamaker for senator.

There is general agreement among sensible legislators with the advice offered by the Philadelphia Chronicle when it says: "The time has come to consider the great wealth of Pennsylvania. Its almost inexhaustible resources, are we not robbing the rising generation, now in the public schools, and without cutting off the bounty heretofore allotted to the beneficiaries of the state? The great Pennsylvania boast of a capitol built with the money wrung from the latter class and denied the school children? Is this a credit to the state? Is it a credit in keeping with her position in the sisterhood of states, but under no circumstances should one penny of its cost come from the sources now served by some men at Harrisburg—at the expense of the schools, hospitals and asylums."

Prohibition State Chairman Charles H. Jones is endeavoring to have the ballot law changed, so that any party polling 10 per cent. of the total vote in any office in the state shall be entitled to file certificates of nomination. As the law now reads, the percentage necessary is 2 per cent. This results in the fact that the candidates in order to be represented on the ballot, must circulate nomination papers and get a large number of signatures before they can be placed on the ballot. Injustice, inasmuch as they have been nominating candidates for the past twenty-five years, and declare they shall continue to do so until the law is changed from legally continuing business.

The complications in Ohio are believed to be the result of the work of Governor Hastings' selection for postmaster general. The president-elect has asserted the governor's friends that he would give him a seat in the senate. The United States senate Governor Hastings will take Professor Wilson's place. If Hanna is not sent to the senate he will be given the seat in the senate. In that event he will have to give up his seat in the house for election to the senate two years hence.

The Bill revenue bills will be considered later by the house ways and means committee. It is believed they will not pass unless in greatly modified form. It is believed that the bill of the state conference will not be passed by the legislature. A test of the proposed bill for the last two years was made by the general assembly. It is found it does not raise enough revenue.

There is renewed talk in legislative circles in favor of the creation in this state of an excise commission to take the license problem off the shoulders of the legislature. It is probable that a bill to this effect will soon be introduced.

From the Troy Times. Ten years ago the electric railway was almost unknown, but during the year 1887 the trolley system was introduced in the city of Troy. At that time there were thirteen street railways using electricity and operating about 100 cars. Two years ago the number of electric street railways in the city of Troy was 150. The mileage was 5,000 miles and the cars in use numbered 2,000. The aggregate investment in these plants being more than \$10,000,000. At present it is estimated that there are more than 12,000 miles of electric railway in the country, while the cars number not less than 30,000. Last year 1,200 miles of track were constructed and 5,000 new motor cars added to the total rolling stock. This increase is truly remarkable and for two reasons. In the first place, it was due to the fact that street railways are directly affected by dullness in general business. In the second place, the work of substituting electricity for horse power in street railways was practically completed some time ago. There are comparatively few horse cars left, and the increase in the number of electric cars now means virtually new roads or new extensions.

Dr. Bell, of Newton, Mass., an authority on matters pertaining to electrical power, estimates that the gross power of the electric motors used in the United States is not less than 1,200,000 horse-power. The total seems enormous when it is considered that only a few days ago electrical power in all its applications was almost unknown. Even the total power five years ago was not more than one-fifth what it is today. From this comparative showing it will be seen that the progress of electrical power is increasing even more rapidly than the railroad mileage, and this is accounted for by the fact that electric power is being generally introduced in many industries. It has been found that electric power may be obtained at small cost, and especially is this the case with respect to mining plants located in localities where coal is expensive and water power plentiful. One example is cited by this authority in which an electric installation for mining purposes paid for itself at the rate of five per cent. a month.

There is every reason to believe that electricity produced by water power will at no very distant day furnish the bulk of the industrial power of this country. The problem of transmitting power over long distances still presents many difficulties, but the electrical experimenters have already surmounted many obstacles and are likely to surmount those that remain before many years have elapsed. The history of the harnessing of Niagara is familiar to all, and the transmission of the current from the Cataract to Buffalo is looked upon as a great electrical triumph. Yet even this has been surpassed. In California rapid progress has been made in the long distance transmission of electrical power, and at the present time Fresno derives power from the waterfall thirty-five miles away, the line being eight miles longer than that between Niagara and Buffalo.

There are many electrical investigators who are undoubtedly dreamers, but even the most thoroughly practical now believe that the day is not so far distant when the electric horse-power will be available in this country will be utilized for electrical power. The transmission of

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Daily Horoscope Drawn by Ajacchus, The Tribune Astrologer. Astrological cast: 2:15 a. m., for Thursday, Feb. 18, 1897.

It will be apparent to a child born on this day that Dunmore is entitled to the cake for the rapid increase of population in voting districts.

The ground here evidently viewed his shadow in the vicinity of Mr. Paul's sidewalk.

There is plenty of money in the country, but the people who circulate it seem to become more scarce daily.

The crusade against people in Scranton who neglect to shovel snow from sidewalks will be all right if the snow only holds out.

The butcher is about the only business man who can make both ends meet these days.

Ajacchus' Advice. Remember that enterprise never thrives in the vicinity of the miserly. "Blow in" a dollar occasionally.

BEIDLEMAN, THE BOOKMAN 37 Spruce Street. Opposite The Commonwealth.

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