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SCRANTON, MAY 20, 1897.

The defeat of the Keator ballot reform bill adds another item to the large account which the members of the present legislature will have to settle with their constituents.

Patience Ceasing to Be a Virtue.

The argument that if we should recognize Cuban belligerency it would give Spain the right to search our ships and thus open the door to serious mischief may be replied to by asserting that Spain, in effect, already exercises this right. Her spies inspect every Cuban-bound cargo ere it leaves these shores, and if it is not to their liking they complain to the government and the government refuses clearance papers. This is really the right of search in an underhanded way. It is decidedly more offensive than would be an honest challenge at open sea. In that case the Yankee skipper could use his discretion in heaving to, in showing his heels or in swinging out his guns and telling the Spaniard to search at his peril.

It is not likely that Spain would exercise the right of search in such manner as to provoke war, unless indeed she desires to go to war with the United States, and if such should become her wish, we could scarcely hope to avert pretexts. On the other hand, the recognition of Cuban belligerency, without giving just ground to Spain for offence, would offer such authoritative testimony to the strength of the insurgent position in Cuba as would render it comparatively easy for the insurgent government from that moment to negotiate war loans, equip new military forces and move more rapidly forward to the goal of final liberation.

Although Spain recognized the belligerency of the Confederate states within 90 days after the firing on Fort Sumter, the United States in the case of Cuba have waited more than two years before taking any steps whatever. The political and commercial interest of Spain in the Southern confederacy was practically nothing; but the interest of the United States in Cuba, whether measured in the dollars of American capital invested there or in the larger light of ultimate political destiny, is of the very greatest importance. We have been patient far beyond the precedent set by Spain herself. No power on earth could hereafter question our long-suffering moderation. If now the decision should be made at Washington to assume a more determined attitude in support of American interests and the dictates of humanity, where in all the earth is the civilized man who could reasonably object?

As we understand it, Senator Mason's belligerency against the British is in no sense personal.

Our Incomparable Lake Commerce.

A letter in the Sun from Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., giving statistics of last year's lake commerce, furnishes food for thought. In 1895 the total value of all freight passing into and out of Lake Superior amounted to $159,557,129, but last year, though the average value of commodities was reduced about 14 per cent., the total value was raised $26,000,000. Had the values of 1895 prevailed in 1896 there would have been more than $230,000,000 worth of products sent through the canal at the eastern end of Lake Superior. Ten years ago it cost 2.30 mills for freight a ton a mile, and the rate has steadily decreased since then. Last year the 16,231,061 tons of freight that passed through the Sault Canal represented an average rate per ton-mile of .99 mills, about one-fifth of the rate charged on the most economically managed railroads of the country on long-distance traffic. Ten years ago the value of the vessels passing the canal in a year was about $19,500,000 while last year it was $45,140,000. Ten years ago 7 per cent of the business into and out of Lake Superior was done in Canadian and British bottoms, but in 1896 they carried only 4 per cent. Ninety-six per cent. of this vast commerce was carried in ships that floated the American flag.

Last year, according to the Sun correspondent, one steam vessel, the Queen City, owned at Duluth, carried the largest steamship cargo through the canal, amounting to 5,376 tons, but was beaten by the barge Aurania with 5,850 tons. The largest cargo in the preceding year was 4,294 tons, carried on the steamship Penobscot. Three years ago the first of the 4,000 ton ships was a rarity for a year; but in 1896 there were thirty-two steel ships that carried more than 4,000 tons to a load, and no fewer than eleven that carried more than 5,000 tons, averaging 5,250 at a cargo. Six years ago a vessel that would carry 2,500 tons on 14 feet draught was a monster for the upper lakes, and there was serious discussion at that time whether the size of lake craft was ever to become greater, or whether a greater size could be made profitable, even if possible. Today the big ships are loading to a depth of 16 feet, and have assurances that before the close of the year they will be able to settle a foot further into the water, with the progress of the government's project for the 21-foot channel between Duluth, Chicago and Buffalo. Another foot of water for the biggest ships on the lakes will mean about 500 tons more cargo, so that the records for carrying capacity will all be changed before the present year is much further advanced.

"Many of the notable recent advances in marine architecture," the correspondent adds, "have originated on the American lakes. The first quadruple expansion engines to be used in the merchant marine were put into the two express passenger steamships of the Great Northern railway, which are scheduled for shuttle-like runs between Duluth and Buffalo at a sustained speed of twenty miles an hour week after week. Twenty miles an hour on the lakes and the connecting shallow channels, is very different from the same speed in a seaway with plenty of water under the keel, no tortuous rivers to thread, no currents to push against, and no stops at way ports and lift locks. On the lakes, too, were first used in merchant service tubulous steam generators in place of the time-honored boilers. The lakes have developed, under stress of circumstances, new methods of steel construction for hulls, and the channel system in use at most lake yards for the larger ships is supposed to be ahead of any other method for strength and saving. The lakes, too, have the only exclusive passenger express steamships in the world in use for long-distance travel. They have facilities for cargo despatch that are the wonder and admiration of all who see them. Lake ships can be loaded with grain at the rate of 1,000 bushels a minute, or with ore at the rate of 1,600 tons an hour, or with coal by whole car loads at once, the loaded freight cars being picked up in hoists, run on the ship, turned bottom side up, and returned to the dock, all in less than two minutes. Ore and coal are unloaded from the vessels' holds, either by hand shovelling or by great automatic dredging machines, at the rate of 250 or 300 tons an hour. This rapid despatch is necessitated by the short season, the short distance travelled, and the enormous amount of freight to be moved. It is probable that not less than 50,000,000 tons of freight will be moved on all the inland lakes of the chain this year."

Every American who can afford the luxury should hasten to make a trip over the great lakes. It is an object lesson in American patriotism.

Meanwhile, what Commissioner Calhoun doesn't see in Havana he has merely to ask for.

Has Come to Stay.

Thus far surprisingly little criticism has been offered upon the recent enactment and approval at Harrisburg of the emergency direct inheritance tax. That tax is entirely distinct from the 5 per cent. tax on collateral inheritances, and applies at the rate of 2 per cent. to all direct inheritances of personal property exceeding $5,000. It was enacted because of the peculiar revenue necessities of the time and is to continue only for two years, unless otherwise ordered; but the chances are that it will remain on the statute books indefinitely. Its yield will, it is estimated, amount to from $1,000,000 to $2,000,000 per annum; and the advantage of it is that it reaches a class of property far too liable, at other times, to escape its just share of taxation.

"It is an open secret," remarks the Philadelphia Times, "that millions of personal property escapes taxation in this state. There have been instances in this city where men of high social position have returned but little if any of the large amount of bonds, mortgages, etc., they have for taxation, and in several instances, when the fraud was discovered after the death of the person thus concealing his property to avoid taxation, it was necessarily discovered in the distribution of his estate and the collection of the taxes enforced with the penalty. Under the direct inheritance tax law the personal property of every decedent must come under the official cognizance of the register of wills, and all frauds attempted by concealing taxable bonds, mortgages, etc., must be discovered." The extent to which evasion of taxation on personal property prevails among the well-to-do is forcibly shown in the last report of Comptroller Roberts, of New York. A careful examination into the records of that state revealed that in 107 estates property of this kind worth more than $215,000,000 was fraudulently concealed from the tax-gatherer. Such a condition of affairs is simply intolerable; and a moderate tax on direct inheritances is a conservative step in remedy thereof. The state might with reason resort to more drastic measures.

It is not likely that the operation of this new tax will be resisted in Pennsylvania on constitutional grounds. An endeavor was recently made in Illinois to nullify a similar enactment, but the Supreme court of that state very sensibly overruled the effort, remarking: "The law of descent and devise being the creation of the statute law, the power which creates may regulate and may impose conditions or burdens on a right of succession to the ownership of property to which there has ceased to be an owner because of death and the ownership of which the state then provides for by the law of descent or devise. The imposition of such a condition or burden is not a tax upon the property itself, but on the right of succession thereto. To deny the right of the state to impose such a burden or condition, is to deny the right of the state to regulate the administration of a decedent's estate."

This decision, in fact, covers even more than the Pennsylvania law, for unlike our new law, the Illinois statute graded inheritances into different classes, concerning which fact the court ruled that "no person inherits property or can take by devise except by the statutes, and the state, having power to regulate this question, may create classes and provide for uniformity with reference to classes which were before unknown," thus sustaining the entire principle of inheritance taxation in the broadest possible manner. The affirmation in this commonwealth by the Pennsylvania Supreme court of the validity of the existing collateral inheritance tax applies with equal force to the principle governing the direct inheritance tax, and it is fair to conclude that this latter tax has come to stay.

The Mugwumps, it seems, may abuse public officials all they please, and it is perfectly proper; but when a man like Governor Black, losing patience, hits back, then the grannies of the press all look horrified. Great is humbug.

We have received the initial number of the Local News, a weekly paper published in the interest of Dalton and neighboring towns. It presents in intelligent manner the local happenings of its community and merits generous support. A well-supported local newspaper is the best institution that any community can have, next to a school and a church.

The senator who objected to fighting Spain because our coasts are not defended might reassure himself by removing into the interior.

The Proper Basis of Comparison.

Mayor Nichols of Wilkes-Barre, who ardently advocates a change of that city's charter, supplies in support thereof a comparative statement of the costs of government in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, as follows:

SCRANTON.

Assessed valuation of taxable property	$20,186,713
Real valuation	$40,569,139
Rate of taxes on assessed valuation	13 mills
Rate of taxes on real valuation	4 2-5 mills

WILKES-BARRE.

Assessed valuation	$ 6,756,445
Real valuation	$20,086,231
Rate of taxes on assessed valuation	22 mills
Rate of taxes on real valuation	4 3-5 mills

"Thus you can see," adds he, "that notwithstanding the fact that the city of Scranton occupies a territory whose area is 19 6-10 square miles and our city a territory of only 4.858 square miles, thus compelling the former city to support a much larger police force, a larger number of street lights, and pay much larger expenses for the improvements, etc., of longer and a greater number of streets, they are able to support and operate their third class government with the proceeds of a smaller rate of taxation than is required here."

Mayor Nichols unconsciously overlooks two factors requisite to a fair comparison. First, which city is getting the better government? and secondly, might not Scranton, under a charter like Wilkes-Barre's, have as good a government as it has now, or a better one, at even less than the present tax-rate? If Wilkes-Barre's real valuation, area, and population were as large as Scranton's, could not it govern itself under its present charter on a tax-rate of 4 2-5 mills and have money to spare? We are inclined to believe that it could; or, in other words, that the lower rate in Scranton is due, not to any superiority in our scheme of municipal government, but simply to the necessarily greater economy of government on a larger scale. It ought to be possible under almost any system to govern 120,000 persons at a lower rate per dollar of real valuation than to govern 40,000 persons.

It is charged that a group of senators at Harrisburg demanded of a prominent insurance company $50,000 to defeat certain bills. An investigation is ordered, and its first move is to exclude the press. What does this mean?

Gossip at the Capital

Special Correspondence of The Tribune.

Washington, May 19.

An investigation is likely to be made of the charge against and denial by ex-Assistant Secretary of State Rockhill that during the last administration he notified the United States consuls in Cuba to suppress information favorable to the insurgents. Notwithstanding Mr. Rockhill's denial there are at least three persons in Washington who are ready to make affidavit that such instructions were issued by the state department, because they saw the letters containing them.

The proceedings of the meeting of Cuban sympathizers in this city last Sunday have smoked out at least one Spaniard. In a letter to the Post one Juan Gonsalez sputters and fumes in indignant protest. "We, in Spain," he says, "know that this rebellion would never have been started, much less continued, were it not for the active aid in money and arms which has been given to the insurgents by a limited number of the citizens of a nation professedly friendly to Spain; we know that tons of dynamite have been successfully landed in Cuba and employed in blowing up trains crowded, not by soldiers, but by women and children, and peaceful passengers. This is the warfare which has called forth the active sympathies of some of the reverend ministers and belligerent senators of this great and glorious country. Has the dynamite plot in Chicago faded from the memories of those gentlemen? This surely was an object lesson to be remembered. Were the authors of that plot hanged according to the rules of civilized warfare?"

Continuing, Senor Gonsalez asks: "Who started the trouble in Cuba? Was it Spain? No; for Cuba, before this insurrection began, was in the enjoyment of greater material prosperity than one-half of the states of the Union, and Spain was actively engaged in discussing legislative reforms which the most advanced liberal politicians in the island advocated, and was only anxious to meet their views in any reasonable way. Was it the inhabitants of Cuba themselves? No; for at the very commencement of the rebellion an energetic protest was filed by all the liberal parties on the island. The rebellion was organized, encouraged, paid for, and finally started in the United States. Maximo Gomez, a Santo Domingan, was smuggled into Cuba as commander-in-chief with the openly avowed intention of driving the Spaniards to abandon the island by the destruction of all property capable of destruction. From that moment death and desolation stalked through Cuba, and only quite lately has it been clear that the end of the rebellion is at hand. 'Hinc illae lacrymae' among the reverend and political sympathizers with the rebellion. May the bloodshed they have provoked be on their heads." This is probably the secret thought of the Spanish minister, Senor Depuy de Lome, only he is too shrewd a diplomatist to give his feelings away.

It is not apparent that any one has stopped to ask with much detail how the charity that has been voted by congress is to be dispensed in Cuba. It is easy to appropriate the $50,000, but how to get it into the hands of those for whom it is intended or, rather, how to get into their mouths the food it will purchase, is quite another thing. Speaking in his message of the destitution in Cuba, the president says: "This applies particularly to the rural districts of the central and eastern parts. The agricultural classes have been forced from their farms into the nearest towns where they are without work or money." The money is to be dispensed under the direction of the secretary of state, and it is suggested that at his discretion it may be used for the transportation of citizens who desire to return to the United States but are without the means to do so.

I have made a deal of inquiry among those who should be best able to give an opinion, and it seems to be the impression that trouble will result from an attempt to distribute food or medicines. An outbreak of Spanish opinion, resentful and rabid, is expected as soon as it is known at Havana and Madrid that the appropriation is an accomplished fact. The field for expenditure designated by the president is in the heart of the region devastated by the war. It has been a part of the policy of General Weyler to starve the inhabitants of that region by herding them in the towns, his purpose being to make them submissive and to prevent them from producing anything that could be used for the aid and comfort of the insurgents. It is a direct interference with a chief feature of the plan of the Spanish general-in-chief, and which has been endorsed by the government at Madrid.

It is the conviction, therfore, of those whose minds have been directed to this phase of the matter, that no difference how Secretary Sherman may elect to distribute the $50,000 that it may do the most good, whether under direction of consuls, aided by the Red Cross people or by special agents, there will be interference with the operations of the government representatives, and that serious trouble will ensue. It may be said that while this is not desired by the administration, it is just what is expected, and that the president and his advisers have looked forward to the production of a crisis by this act of humanity. All the predictions may not be made good, but it is not to be doubted that in the very highest official circles it is believed that the time is near at hand when, at the very least, the recognition of the Cubans as a war force will be promulgated regardless of consequences.

During the interval kindly presented to the Democrats by the senate committee on finance, before calling up the tariff bill for formal consideration, the Democrats are working with might and main in collusion with Populists and silver Republicans to unite on the most drastic amendments to the measure, and possibly they may be so numerous and far-reaching that they may be put in the form of a substitute. A determined attempt is being made to unite a majority upon the proposition to give an export bounty on farm products as a counter irritant to the protection that is afforded to manufacturers and as a sop to the farming interests generally. No one seems to be able to say just how this would benefit the small farmer, as little or no exporting would be done by individuals. No one is able to show that prices to the immediate producer would be advanced in the least by an export bounty, but that makes no difference to the Tillmans of the senate. It is the name, and not the fact, which they are after.

The work of harmonizing the anti-Republican forces is not proceeding as successfully as the leaders could wish. There is a division of opinion among them upon all of the new propositions. Many of the older faction of Democrats are opposed to the export bounty, and are almost certain to hold out against it to the end. Some are with the finance committee on the sugar schedule, others are with the sugar producing senators in favor of the house schedule. Others think the schedule of the Wilson law is proper, though it was written all over with the trail of the trust. In fact the Democrats are divided in their opinions in relation to all of the provisions which have wrought destruction to harmony in the Republican ranks, and when the bill comes to a final vote it is probable the country will see a new and curious alignment on the tariff question.

Much eagerness is manifested among Pennsylvanians to hear whether the conferences which are now on in the east, to be followed by others, it is said, in the west, between Senator Quay and his friends, will result in any legislation other than has been contemplated in the interests of municipal reform. None of the Philadelphians here will admit for a moment the possibility of Quay's consenting to any such legislation as is proposed in the "ripper" bill, as it has been dubbed much to the confusion of outside etymologists. One eastern member of congress assures me that he has the positive promise of Governor Hasting that none of the much discussed bills will receive his signature if passed. This congressman is also convinced that Quay will adhere to his promise to Philadelphians who were here a week or so ago, that he would in no way favor legislation that was considered by Philadelphians to be inimical to their interests. He is certain that new legislation for Pittsburg alone will be drafted, or that there will be no legislation at all in that direction.

Hon. Jack Robinson is the recipient of no end of sympathy from his old associates in the house, on account of his bad luck in seeing positions which he sought pass into the hands of others, but the Hon. Jack frankly admits that he would prefer an office rather than a world-ful of sympathy. The trouble with Robinson is that he has always had a surplusage of confidence. He asked for offices he could not get, and is disappointed because he could not accomplish the impossible. He has been severely chastened by his failure to secure either the post of assistant secretary of the navy or of the treasury, and has about concluded to abandon office seeking or to ask for some very modest place, like governor of Pennsylvania for instance.

That governorship, by the way, promises to afford the liveliest race that has ever been run in Pennsylvania for a nomination. No less than eight congressmen and three ex-congressmen are said to be in the field so far, with the rural districts to hear from. The beauty of it is that they are all good men, and all but one or two are warm friends of Quay. The senator looks with delight on the prospect, as he will not be asked to decide among so many of his personal friends, but will let them run as they please.

NO CHANCE FOR HIM.

From the Times-Herald.

A Chicago undertaker who has lately been in Washington for several weeks, nursing the hope that he may secure a consular job, has given up the fight and come home.

"Washington is no place for a man in my line of business," he says. "The town is running over with fellows who died long ago, but who won't lie still long enough to be buried."

THE NUB OF THE SUBJECT.

From the Philadelphia Press.

There is no reason why every dollar of the state funds should not earn interest all the time, no matter in what bank it is deposited. The money of the city of Philadelphia and the city of Pittsburg does this, and it would be humiliating to have to confess that the great commonwealth of Pennsylvania could not manage as well.

YES, AND STOPPING THE WHOLE INFERNAL BUSINESS.

From the Times-Herald.

If Spain denies to men and women who have done no wrong the privilege of earning their daily bread and eating it in peace there is no treaty, human law or divine command to prevent the United States from interfering in behalf of its own people.

WHERE ARE YOUR EYES?

From the Honesdale Independent.

The only feature of the cut labeled E. B. Hardenbergh in last Saturday's Scranton Tribune that in any way resembled our popular senator was the mustache.

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Dress Goods Doings

Always something of special interest to talk about here. The value of the following lots are completely divorced from the prices. Overstocked makers take the loss this time. 40 to 50 cent values lumped into one and all sold now at 25 cents.

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Ladies' Storm Serge Skirts of the finest quality, lined throughout with the best Taffeta Silk, would be cheap at $10.00. Our price..... $6.98

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50 cent Ingrain Carpets 35 cents.
65 cent best of all Wool Ingrain Carpets, 45 cents
70 cent Tapestry Brussels Carpets, 45 cents
75 cent Best Quality Brussels Carpets, 59 cents
Body Brussels, Velvets and Moquettes from 70 cents upwards.
Heavy China Straw Mattings 10 cents.
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We offer this week, to reduce stock, extraordinary values in Curtains:

40 pairs Nottingham Lace, 69c. a pair; from 85c.
20 pairs Nottingham Lace, 88c. a pair; from $1.10.
18 pairs Nottingham Lace, $1.15 a pair; from $1.37½.
20 pairs Nottingham Lace, $1.38 a pair; from $1.75.
15 pairs Nottingham Lace, $1.65 a pair; from $2.00.
12 pairs Nottingham Lace, $1.95 a pair; from $2.30.
20 pairs Irish Point, ecru and white, $3.75 a pair; from $4.50.
10 pairs Irish Point, ecru and white, $4.55 a pair; from $5.50.
12 pairs Irish Point, ecru and white, $5.50 a pair; from $6.25.
10 pairs Irish Point, ecru and white, $6.50 a pair; from $7.50.
10 pairs Irish Point, ecru and white, $8.37½ a pair; from $10.00.
12 pairs Brussels Net, $5.50 a pair; from $6.75.
12 pairs Brussels Net, $6.75 a pair; from $7.85.
12 pairs Brussels Net, $7.75 a pair; from $9.25.
12 pairs Brussels Net, $8.50 a pair; from $10.00.
12 pairs Brussels Net, $10.25 a pair; from $12.00.

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