

The Scranton Tribune

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All things considered, the best thing that the projectors of this women-for-street-car-conductors movement can do is to drop the foolish notion right where it is.

Regarding Currency Reform. Senator Platt of Connecticut has expressed the common sense of a much-exaggerated matter by pronouncing impracticable any attempt by the present administration to move toward currency reform until it has reasonable assurance that congress, and especially the senate, will aid instead of hinder and nullify its efforts.

A portion of the public is clamorous for currency reform and yet no two of those who thus make the welkin ring are agreed either in principle or in detail upon what kind of reform they want. Meanwhile, the currency that we have is doing admirably and if the agitators in kid gloves no less than the agitators in blouses would only give business a chance to recuperate in peace, we should soon all be happy. The Republican party cannot be driven by the shouting of its enemies into a fool fight against shadows. It has cut out enough to do during the next year or two in the readjustment of the revenues to a fair protective basis and in the handling of the delicate foreign complications inherited from the curious administration of Grover Cleveland. Currency reform is in no hurry. It will be time to set forth on that campaign when the experts come together in substantial agreement upon what they want reformed and how.

Talk of Forker knitting Hanna proceeds not from facts but from desire. Joseph Benson Forker is no saphead.

The Outlook in the Senate. With the near approach of the constitutional date for the re-assembly of congress the long-mooted proposition of cloture for the senate newly receives popular discussion. This time it appears that the silver men are uneasy. They have long enjoyed the obstructive possibilities conferred by the present rule of unlimited senatorial debate, and have recognized in that rule a resource for their cause even after reverses at the polls shall have diminished their number to a minority; but since the elections of last week, which practically assure a working Republican majority not later than 1899, they have grown suddenly apprehensive.

And it is with reason. If there is one policy for which the Republican party now stands, it is the policy of majority rule. This policy has been incorporated by it into the permanent traditions of the house, and it is as certain as anything in the future can be that one of the first steps which will follow the installation of a working Republican majority in the senate will be the adoption for all subsequent time of a rule enabling a majority after reasonable debate to enforce the previous question. The exigencies of the public service will probably not require of the senate so summary a rule of cloture as obtains today in the house. Nor is it desirable that the freedom of debate which has afforded been the senate's one commanding distinction should be curtailed in its essence.

But it is imperative for the senate's own perpetuity that this freedom shall not longer remain degenerate in the wildest license of filibuster and sheer fractionousness. Ample debate for the purpose of instruction is one thing; endless tattle for the purpose of obstruction is quite another. The consuming of time by unimpressive minorities not by high argument compelling thoughtful attention but by contemptible trick and artifice for the express end of "holding up" majority measures as the armed highwayman might at pistol point hold up a train full of passengers each intellectually and morally more than his peer, is as far removed from the traditional as the bluff and bluster of our minister at Madrid, General Sillies, and the jingling of our secretary of state, Hamilton Fish, Spain went on along its own way to the pacification of Cuba and severed not a hair's width because of Yankee pressure. Senator Castelar is in fact cynically, almost brutally frank in his contempt for the American government; and when one considers how vacillating and indecisive our Cuban policy has been, one cannot much blame him.

General Blanco cannot conquer the Cuban insurrection with a pie counter.

Is Its Mission Completed? We invite the attention of our readers to an editorial reprinted elsewhere from the New York Sun. It is worthy of thoughtful study and is worthy its conclusions are sound.

There are persons in each American community who herald it as a virtue that they are independents in politics. They profess to regard with a certain feeling of pity mixed with contempt those citizens who are partisans. They especially view with a show of exalted disdain those citizens who acknowledge allegiance in politics to the Republican party. They assume to be better than any party; so much better that they affect to regard steady cooperation with any party, and more particularly with the Republican party, as requiring of them forfeiture of their self respect. They will not lend their efforts to the bringing out from party management and methods the best results in government possible to be brought out with conditions as they exist; they will not take hold of the party system and at some personal sacrifice of time and energy and money strive to lift it to as high a degree of practical efficiency and beneficence as it can be lifted when the fact is recognized that the electorate in this country is not uniformly wise, upright and progressive; but they will stand back and criticize; they will be petulant, denunciatory and obstructive.

The name for this attitude of independence in Mugwumpery; and the Sun accurately describes what evils Mugwumpery has inflicted upon the

public affairs of our time. It has been, in preference, a superior influence; but in effect it has been invariably a deteriorating and a mischievous influence. It is responsible for Clevelandism, and that cost every American citizen dear. By being responsible for Clevelandism it made possible the opposite extreme of Bryanism, and that, also, has brought harm upon the entire circle of American enterprise. It is now threatening to introduce into the politics of the coming decade a third era—the era of non-partisanship, of whimsical personal rule by self-proclaimedly superior men, responsible to no organized body of their fellow-citizens; erratic, eccentric and given over wholly to their personal impulses. The system of government has enjoyed more than a century of wonderful growth in all directions of possible human achievement, is to be branded as obsolete, and in its stead we are to have, if these counsels prevail, a chaos of government by self-appointed leaders, pursuing new-fangled ideals of their own; no two in harmony, no two willing to make minor concessions for the sake of major results; no two, in other words, under that sense of discipline and wise restraint which makes of wisely directed party organization an irresistible power for good.

And yet, all this time, the fact is undeniable that the Republican party, taken as Mr. Lincoln would say "coming and going," is the one party that we have which is efficient for the large trusts of administration and adequate to the serious demands of conservative statesmanship. As a party it is not perfect. Criticism for improvement is an inalienable prerogative of its membership. But has a period been reached in human evolution when it may safely be kicked over, to make way for the indeterminate, invertebrate thing which Mugwumpery offers as a substitute?

Happily for Mark Hanna, senators are not elected by the yellow kid press.

As Spain Views Us.

In a most interesting letter to the New York Herald that eminent Spanish statesman of his race, Senor Castelar, indulges in some readable comments on American diplomacy. In his eyes our attempts at coping with the expert diplomats of Europe are amusing—very. Our ministers are garrulous, tactless and pertinaciously bombastic; to borrow a comparison from the literature of his own land, they are a cross between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza—they make the astute and machivellian foreign ministers of Europe exceedingly tired.

"Many persons," says Senor Castelar, "believe that the Americans bear upon the points of their lances the doctrine of Monroe. That is good. It does not matter to them one fig. They do not call the tried and proved programme law, right, jurisprudence or anything equivalent for the religious respect felt by all Anglo-Saxons for the literal meaning of their statutes. They call it doctrine—the doctrine of Monroe. Why do they call it doctrine? To interpret it according to the occasion, the circumstances, the interests. It does not suit them that the French should open the Panama route. They straightway invoke the Monroe doctrine. Do they themselves wish to open the route by Nicaragua? They, not having sufficient money, they concede one whole half of the canal to the English, in spite of the Monroe doctrine. A good case they make of Monroe. The name is not omitted from one platform," as they say; from a convenience, as we say. Neither do they lose themselves for the republicanism form. It pleases them and they prefer it to all others, but they will not break a single lance for it. They have never at any time lent any aid to republicanism. Kossuth used to tell me that he found in America a personal triumph similar to the triumph of a Roman general. For his crusade and his democratic war he did not find one dollar. They preferred, for their gold, to hear the singer, Jenny Lind, rather than to harvest by it Europe to republicanism. And although they always protested against tyrants the United States was the first power to recognize the two empires of America—the empire of Irturbide in Mexico and that of Braganza in Rio Janeiro."

This candid critic has no fears that the United States will do more than talk in favor of freedom for Cuba. He cites the course of our government during Grant's administration, when during the speaker of our congress, the bluff and bluster of our minister at Madrid, General Sillies, and the jingling of our secretary of state, Hamilton Fish, Spain went on along its own way to the pacification of Cuba and severed not a hair's width because of Yankee pressure. Senor Castelar is in fact cynically, almost brutally frank in his contempt for the American government; and when one considers how vacillating and indecisive our Cuban policy has been, one cannot much blame him.

It is noteworthy in this connection that the leading Cubans in this country agree with him, at least so far as believing that the independence of Cuba will have to be won in spite of the government at Washington. Public opinion is all right. The sympathies of the American people are not astray. But a gag seems in some unaccountable manner to have been put upon the officials that one would expect to obey rather than parry the pronounced popular will. The jugglers at Madrid rig up a fake scheme for blinding our eyes which they call Cuban administrative reform. They hum temporarily the martial brutality of Weyler and play a role of seeming contrition—and our government apparently falls headlong into the trap, while the fakery at Madrid doubtless smicker in their sleeves. This appears to be the present status of the whole Cuban problem. Appearances are proverbially deceptive. We hope they are in this case.

Following the action of the commissioner of patents in discharging the patent attorney firm of John Wedderburn & Co. from practice before the United States patent office, the postmaster general has now denied the use of the mails to this firm. Its downfall is therefore complete, and doubtless other fraud orders will follow. The present

administration is to be commended for its vigilance and its nerve. No side game, however well backed by cash and pull, should "go" with Uncle Sam.

The situation in which General Julio Sanguilly finds himself is certainly not enviable. When released from Spanish detention in Havana through the intervention of the American state department upon the strength of his naturalization as an American citizen, he signed a pledge not to return to Cuban territory during the remainder of the present insurrection. But he is a regularly commissioned officer in the Cuban army, holding from General Gomez the rank of major general, and Gomez has ordered him to report at headquarters for duty by Dec. 10 or else be dishonorably dismissed from the service. Gomez knew the circumstances and therefore his order is a scant courtesy to Sanguilly and to the American government. But it is military law, and whichever way he turns Sanguilly is in for trouble. What do our readers think he ought to do?

The earnestness of President McKinley's desire to refrain from embarrassing Spain may be inferred from the fact that he has permitted, so far as we know, without protest, another postponement of the trial of the American citizens captured on board the Competitor, who, after what was clearly an illegal and unwarranted arrest, were first sentenced to death and later kept for eighteen months in a jail cell, being now doomed to indefinite additional imprisonment, all because the administration at Washington does not wish to crowd Spain. If those Competitor prisoners had been subjects of Great Britain, would Spain have been permitted to dally with them thus? Probably not.

By a vote of 91 to 3 the Georgia house of representatives has enacted a law prohibiting public games of football. If the law condemns prize fighting we cannot see why it should be expected to legalize far more dangerous forms of sport.

Dr. Swallow's eagerness to serve his country in the role of a candidate for office shows that even reformers have their share of human nature.

If Maryland chooses a Bonaparte as senator it is a safe guess he will reverse for Wellington the significance of the earlier Waterloo.

Of a truth is America setting the pace for the world. Even the Austrian parliament is trying to imitate our congress.

Mugwumpery as a National Danger

From the New York Sun. The political fecklessness which has distinguished the American people during the last thirteen years, or since the death of Blaine and the first election of Cleveland, has had its logical consequence in the most serious disturbance of business conditions from which this country has ever suffered. It has also been accompanied by untoward popular manifestations of querulous conviction which are a not less logical result of such moribund political sentiment and conviction.

The prime cause of this mischievous fecklessness was the unseasonable reaction to the wholesome conservative influence which became known as Mugwumpery when it was at its height in 1884. It began in the Republican party, and was not impelled by any political principle, but was due almost entirely to the personal animosity against Mr. Blaine, and it also exerted its force in behalf of Mr. Cleveland, on personal grounds merely. Newspapers and individuals previously supporting the Republican party turned around squarely in a day and advocated strenuously the nomination of Mr. Cleveland for the Democratic party, and they had been steadily opposed from the very organization of the Republican party, or at least from the time of the election of Lincoln. This radical change in the Republican policy at the time of the nomination of Mr. Blaine in 1884 was stoutly supported General Garfield in 1880 on substantially the same platform and the same theory of government represented by Mr. Blaine in 1884 and they had opposed General Hancock in 1880 on a platform identical in spirit and intent with that on which was placed Mr. Cleveland, when they supported so hotly in 1884.

That is, this revolt was not on political principle, but simply against the party organization of the Republicans because it did not consult their personal prejudice in the nomination of a candidate, and they went over to Mr. Cleveland because of purely personal reasons only. Thus was begun the assault on party organization which has since suffered so grievously. Thus was started the querulous disposition to kick against party government, of which the Cleveland administration was the period of sickle and mercurial politics, injurious to every American interest, confusing and perplexing to trade and manufactures, and productive throughout the world of a reputation for instability very damaging to the American republic.

In 1888, the country turned about squarely and elected General Harrison over Mr. Cleveland, going back precipitately to the protection of the country. It again reversed its position squarely, rejecting General Harrison after a most successful administration, so far as a country had any such thing, and electing Mr. Cleveland on the most extreme anti-protection declaration ever made by any American party. Mr. Cleveland's platform even denounced protection as unconstitutional. We do not need to recall the dismal and disgraceful record of his administration, except to say that, in spite of his professions, the Democratic party passed a strictly and avowedly protective tariff, but so bunglingly constructed that it brought disaster to every business interest. Mr. Cleveland went out of power amid the ruin of the industry and enterprise of the country.

In 1896 the Democratic party itself turned a complete somersault. It flung out of its shoulders all responsibility for the Cleveland administration, and took a new and radical departure on the questions of currency and judicial authority, which forthwith plunged the country into even worse distress. After a campaign of unexampled earnestness, during which all property was terrified as never before in American history, Mr. McKinley was elected by a vote of about 7,000,000 to 6,500,000 for Bryan. Thus we escaped ruin, but it was a close shave. During that campaign the Mugwumps' terror kept them in line with the Republican party. In order to save their property they could do nothing else; but as soon as the Republicans were moved successfully in the election they began to plot anew against party organization, and they have been plotting ever since. Meantime it was demonstrated that the destructive principles of the Chicago platform had become the established political faith of the Democratic party throughout the Union, and that the Mugwumps' continued as a menace to business and even the stability of our social system.

The political revolution that platform society has still aggressive and threatening, and it took advantage of the elections of last week to strengthen and extend its lines with an eye to gaining control of the congress in 1898 and the presidency in 1900.

Naturally and obviously the place where resistance to that assault should have been most determined was New York, for the menace is more especially against the conservative interests of that great center of American wealth and civilization. Last year, accordingly, they united in giving a majority against Mr. Bryan and Republicanism to the Mugwumps. This year, however, Mugwumpery intervened with its old tricks. It pretended that Bryanism had nothing to do with the campaign, only issue was what it called "bossism." In other words its objective was the party organization of the Republicans, the only party through which any real and sane Bryanism can be waged now or at any time hereafter until it has been crushed absolutely, for nothing is more obvious than that the Chicago platform is to be the continuing standard of the Democratic party. As a consequence of this Mugwump devility, Bryanism has won a great victory in this city and state, where it was defeated so roundly only a year ago. 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