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Speaker Reed's reported willingness to let the house have its own way in the matter of Hawaiian annexation in case the matter comes before it in the form of a resolution is wise. He may oppose annexation personally, but officially he is the servant of the house and will see the impropriety of trying to influence others' votes.

"The Next Step."

A distinguished Cuban, in a personal letter to the editor of The Tribune, after calling attention to a number of predictions heretofore made by him which were subsequently fulfilled almost to the letter, ventures another prophecy. The intelligent Spanish element in Cuba, as well as the Autonomist party of native Cubans—men so closely related by business or social ties to the Spanish element that they have withheld their co-operation from and largely lost sympathy with the insurgents—realize, he declares, that the autonomy overture has failed and that unless the insurgents are to be successful in their campaign for independence something daring must be done. Hence he predicts that ere two months have passed Spaniards in Cuba will join with Autonomist Cubans in advocating the annexation of Cuba to the United States, thus hoping to put it out of the power of the Cuban republicans to insist upon a restoration of stolen property, as would be their first move should they win recognition of the island's freedom.

This bridge need not be crossed until it is reached; but on the general subject of Cuban annexation it may be said that public opinion in the United States would hardly favor that course at this time. Years hence, when Cuba, having in freedom solved the problem of self-government and implanted among her mixed population the germs of a civilization modeled on American rather than Spanish lines, shall knock at our doors as the republic of Hawaii has knocked, begging admission in fulfilment of manifest destiny, there may be cordial welcome; but as yet that contingency is a dream of the remote future. American sympathy for the cause of the Cuban insurrection has not grown out of selfish purposes. It has been the spontaneous feeling of a people free for a people aspiring after much bondage to the same state. If annexation were submitted to a poll of the American people tomorrow it would be voted down, by an overwhelming majority—and not in contempt of Cuban resources or in disregard of the ultimate political benefits which annexation would involve, but largely in proof that our sympathy has not had annexation in view as a reward.

"The next step" for Cuba will not be annexation, voluntary or forcible. Cuba must be free, but, when free, she must, in fear and trembling, work out her own salvation. Of her ability to do this we entertain no doubt.

There is reason to believe that the Sagasta ministry in Spain will soon consist of statesmen out of a job. And that will mean Cuban freedom. We are fast nearing the end of the Cuban tragedy.

A National Board of Health.

Recent experiences showing the inefficiency of many local and state boards of health in those portions of the South which are most exposed to the yellow fever infection as well as the national character of the dangers arising from the introduction at any port of an infectious disease originating beyond our borders have revived and emphasized the demand for a national department of public health. A bill to create and organize such a department has already been drafted and will, it is expected, come up for prominent discussion before the present congress.

The bill puts the superintendency of the proposed department in the hands of a commissioner, appointive by the president for a six-year term, but subject to confirmation or rejection by the senate. The commissioner, by the provisions of the bill, is required to be a regularly educated physician, holding a diploma conferred upon him by a legally incorporated medical college in the United States, and he must have had at least ten years' experience in the practice of medicine, "and shall be learned in sanitary science and shall hold a membership in one or more reputable sanitary or medical associations in the United States." Although the department provided for, if the bill becomes a law, will be single-headed, its administration will not be the outgrowth of the commissioner's personal ideas solely. The commissioner whose salary is placed at $6,000 per year, is required by the terms of the bill to convene, on the first Tuesdays of April and October, an advisory council to be composed of the secretary or executive officer of each state and territorial board of health and one officer learned in the law who shall be detailed by the attorney-general of the United States. The sessions of the council are not to be continued beyond six days unless the president of the United States so authorizes. The council may be called together oftener than semi-annually by the commissioner, and the president may direct that it be convened when to him it appears necessary for the public protection.

In brief, the idea of the framers of this measure is that there is need of the intelligent exercise of federal authority over the various state and territorial health boards and sanitary officials to keep them up to a fair standard of efficiency, to supplement their efforts when local means are either exhausted or inadequate, and in a general way to insure that the interests and security of one state shall not be put in jeopardy by the negligence or poverty of another in the matter of sanitary precautions. This line of argument seems unanswerable. It remains to be seen whether congress can be made to act in the premises.

Two beautiful specimens of artistic journalism reach this office simultaneously. One is the Christmas number of the Philadelphia Times, issued last Sunday—a sixty-four page effort, eight pages of which form a sumptuous feast of colors. The other is a similar production by the Toronto Globe, done into a forty-four page magazine form. We incline to the opinion that the Yankee achievement is a shade the better, but both are exquisite, and show marvelous resources in enterprise and mechanical equipment.

Some interesting facts in relation to the last Russian census are contained in an article in the Contemporary Review. The census was taken in one day, Feb. 9 last, and required the services of 150,000 census takers. The population of the Russian empire is returned as 129,211,114, of whom 94,188,752 inhabit the czar's European domain. There are nineteen Russian cities having more than 100,000 inhabitants each and thirty-five having between 50,000 and 100,000. There is four times as large a proportion of blindness in European Russia as in the United States, and it is calculated that by reason of poor sanitary conditions nearly 2,000,000 Russians die annually whose lives complete civilization would spare. For all that, a population of 175,000,000 is predicted ere 1926 and it is evident that the government of the czar is a power to be reckoned with.

Our Public Schools.

Some facts in the annual report of the state superintendent of public instruction, Dr. Schaeffer, are deserving of prominence. In the past year Pennsylvania has spent on her public schools a total of $20,731,566.11, divided as follows: Maintenance, $15,929,582.75; building purposes, $3,688,604.36; text books and supplies, $1,113,379.02. This is a per capita expenditure for free schools and schooling of $3.33 or $16 per annum for each adult male—that is to say about one-third of the state's drink bill and about equal to its outlay for tobacco.

On the subject of compulsory attendance Dr. Schaeffer says: "Of superlative importance are the amendments to the law making attendance at school compulsory. By these amendments the opening of the schools is specified as the time when pupils of the required age shall begin school unless otherwise ordered by the school board; provision is made for a more careful enumeration of the pupils and for the adding of omitted names; the age limit is extended to 16 years in the case of youth not regularly engaged in some useful employment; and power is given directors to provide in special schools for the proper care, maintenance and instruction of those who prove incorrigible by the methods and discipline of the ordinary school. The required time of attendance is changed from sixteen weeks to 70 per cent. of the entire term. In districts having the minimum term of six months this will add only four days to the required time. The chief significance of the change is seen in the cities and larger boroughs. In districts having a term of seven months the amendment adds eighteen days, in eight month districts, forty-six days, and in ten month districts sixty days to the eighty days required by the former law. These amendments will take many a child from the streets and bring it under the beneficent influence of the school and thus go far toward making illiteracy impossible among our people. The effect of these changes will, of course, be very small where public sentiment does not aid the directors in the enforcement of the law. Probably the most important duty now is to create public opinion in favor of punishing parents and guardians whose negligence deprives the child of its right to an education."

The report contains the following table of statistics:

Number of school districts in the state	2,481
Number of schools	26,799
Number of superintendents	149
Number of male teachers	8,961
Number of female teachers	18,528
Average salaries of male teachers per month	$43 72
Average salaries of female teachers per month	$38 11
Average length of school term, in months	7.92
Number of pupils	1,109,852
Cost of school houses	$3,688,604 36
Teachers' wages	$10,049,812 45
Cost of school text-books	$792,943 39
State appropriation for the school year ended June 1, 1896	$5,500,000 00
Estimated value of school property	$48,917,092 50

Can any one explain satisfactorily why there should be a difference of $5.61 between the average monthly pay of women teachers and that of men? There is no such discrepancy in the quality of the work done.

The proposed National university will not conflict but will in reality supplement the three universities already established at Washington. It is the intention to make it an institution for post-graduate study wholly, with tuition free. In other words, it is to be the crown and flower of the free school system—a nation's fitting expression of its debt to liberal knowledge.

As to Railway Pooling.

The newspapers and magazines these days contain a voluminous discussion from many standpoints of the question, Should congress pass an act authorizing the formation of railway pools, and if so, under what conditions? Most of it, there is reason to believe, is directly inspired by the railroads which are now making the most desperate effort in recent years to secure from congress legislation of their own designing. The champions of the railroads point to the comparatively low rates charged in this country for freight and passenger transportation, cite the scant earnings of the carriers, dwell on the demoralization existing in the railway world since the Supreme court held that traffic pools were violations of the Sherman anti-trust act, and conclude by urging congress to enact the Foraker bill, which not only legalizes pooling but also leaves the public virtually at the railways' mercy.

This is ex parte argument, not without much justice but fatal in its conclusion because asking more than it would be safe for congress to allow. On the other hand, the professional demagogues and self-proclaimed anti-monopolists go to the opposite extreme by asserting that it is to the people's interest to have rates of transportation cut by competition below the level of a fair earning capacity on the part of the railroads, since this will keep the corporation influence under the people's thumb. The fallacy of this kind of talk is shown in the fact that the railways directly and indirectly furnish the employment which is the basis of the support of nearly one-seventh of our whole population. Thus whatever tends to rob the railroads of a fair margin of profit reacts inevitably upon the army of railway employes and dependents and illustrates the principle governing the case of the man who cuts off his nose to spite his ugly face.

The common sense of the pooling problem is most admirably and clearly set forth in an article by Interstate Commerce Commissioner Prouty in the December Forum. In this paper Mr. Prouty discusses authoritatively the matter in all its bearings upon the welfare of the people, and reaches the conclusion that while the pooling privilege under existing conditions is necessary to the welfare of the railroads, the power to regulate pooling in prevention of extortion and gross injustice must be lodged by congress in the hands of the Interstate Commerce commission, by means of an act whose language will be so clear and direct that no court can subsequently emasculate its obvious intent.

If straws show which way the wind blows, there must be in congress a regular gale of opposition to the Grover Cleveland brand of civil service reform. The best thing that the McKinley administration can do is to avoid getting caught in it.

The welcome news comes that the $100 type writer is likely in 1898 to go the way of the $100 bicycle. A fair price for the $100 type writer would be $50. Its factory cost is only about $12.

Something That Beats Weylerism

From the New York Sun.

Havana, Dec. 9.—Don Agustin Latorre, military commander of the city of Puerto Principe, has exposed with a few strokes of his pen the hypocrisy of Spain's alleged policy of mildness under General Blanco. The barbarous decree of Latorre, a part of which was cabled on Wednesday to the Sun, exceeds in cruelty anything that General Weyler ever devised to exterminate non-combatants, women and children. Its full text, published in Havana by La Lucha, inspires the greatest horror, and, according to the most trustworthy information from Puerto Principe, it is carried out with relentless vigor. Two hundred families already have fled from Nuevitas panic-stricken, to take refuge in Puerto Principe. The decree was believed at first to be merely a threat, but when a few days ago a poor woman was shot in Nuevitas for the sole crime of leaving her home, without permission of Latorre, to buy provisions for her family, then terror spread in the city, and the general exodus began. Maria Mendoza was the name of the woman. She was a widow 45 years of age. To her was applied Article II. of the decree.

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The city of Nuevitas is no more in danger of an attack now than before Don Agustin Latorre took its military command. Many bands of insurgents belonging to the army of General Lope Recio roam around the city and attack the trains from Nuevitas to Puerto Principe as in the time of General Weyler, but there is no regular siege and no cause for shooting the defenseless inhabitants. The killing of the woman Mendoza was a barbarous assassination, and it has been followed by the shooting of six male residents of the city not charged with more serious offenses. Not even the resource of seeking protection in a foreign consulate is left to the inhabitants of Nuevitas. Latorre has revoked in his decree all codes of international law, and all the most sacred rights of foreigners to be considered as neutrals in times of war. The foreign consuls are forbidden to raise their national flags on their houses. Such a thing seems hardly credible in the nineteenth century, but here are the exact words literally translated, of the decree as published in La Lucha:

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The military commander of Nuevitas, Don Augustin Latorre y Rivas, orders:

Article 1—Any person who, meaning to cause alarm, shall fire firecrackers or firearms within the town at a time when it is threatened by the enemy shall be shot.

Article 2—The same penalty shall be imposed upon any resident, without distinction of sex or age, who shall go out from his home or even stand at the door. From this prohibition are excused the employes of my government and the volunteers and the firemen. Long continued danger to the city from the enemy will be made known to the families, for them to choose one only of their members to go out at a given hour to procure provisions, such person to return home as speedily as possible.

Article 3—It is also forbidden, with the same penalty of death, to any resident or head of employe of any kind of office to hoist any flag which is not that of Spain. If any foreign consul shall have objection to make to this order, he shall tell me his reasons, and then I will decide about his case in the way I shall deem best.

Article 4—It is absolutely forbidden that any family shall take refuge in the forts and barracks excepting the families of the volunteers and employes of the government, who will show an express order from me. If in any fort or barrack families of the residents of this city shall attempt to take refuge, the soldiers shall use their arms to repulse the refugees.

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A gentleman residing in Puerto Principe writes to the Sun's correspondent, inclosing a copy of the decree, which he says is highly praised there by the uncompromising Spaniards. He adds: "Weyler never dared to punish in his decrees the representatives of foreign nations, or to say openly that women and children should be shot. The situation created here by Latorre's bloody attitude is beyond description. Terror prevails among the poor families who conceived a hope for the safety of their lives after the departure of the Butcher. More than 150 young men, nearly persuaded by the Autonomist leaders to accept peace, have left the capital of the province full of indignation, joining the forces of Lopez Recio. Whenever a Cuban desires to believe in Spain's good faith when she promises reforms and justice, a fresh barbarity of the Spaniards betrays their real feelings and makes impossible any compromise with them."

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The consular agents in Nuevitas of the United States, England, France and Germany have written to the consul generals of those nations in Havana explaining the gravity of the situation and protesting against article 3 of Latorre's decree. In Havana it is believed that some international protest will be made to Spain.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

From the Illustrated American.

Christianity as consummate manliness has never lacked exemplars; Rev. Charles Kingsley was such a one. Hence there is no need to be startled at the recent spectacle in Boston of a crack base ball player appearing before a Young Men's Christian association and preaching a sermon. In his pulpit talk Edward M. Lewis, pitcher of the champion Boston team, dwelt on this point of militant manliness: "Christ was not effeminate. He was a manly Christ. His muscles were firm. He suffered on the cross without shedding a tear. He was all courage. This is the Christ I find in my Bible and you can find him, too, if you look as I have looked."

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Such practical doctrine, pitched hard at the bat of infidelity, which is often mere intellectual indolence, necessarily has a potent effect. It may cause the sensitive antennae of old-fashioned ecclesiastical propriety to curl up at first, but evidently the world needs and demands it. For Christianity is not a philosophic generality, appealing as a mathematical proposition to the reason, but a direct personal appeal. And its claim to attention does not bulk on its promises of bliss obtainable hereafter. "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness which he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." "Alive"—it is in this life that the salvation is promised.

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This point was likewise recently illustrated in Carnegie hall. It was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the mission founded by Jerry McAuley, a tough, a drunkard, a thief; and there were present on the occasion several persons who had been materially, as well as spiritually, saved. The recountal of their experiences is not necessary, though its picturesqueness tempts to reproduction and comment from the human-nature point. Particularly is there a natural response of heart to the personal experience told by one of the mission superintendents: "I am a typical representative of rescue mission work myself. You should have seen me fifteen years ago, when I went into the Cremorne mission. I was just out of the lock-up and on the verge of delirium tremens. I heard Jerry McAuley say that night that he had once been a drunken bum like myself, but had been saved. When Jerry called on those who wanted to be saved to raise their hands mine was the first up, though I'd rather have gone out on the street and fought a dozen men than do it. Jerry made us all walk to where he stood, and then he prayed. 'Dear Jesus, pity these poor fellows,' he said. 'They're in a hole; help them out.' Then Mrs. Jerry turned in and said: 'Lord, you saved me; do the same for these poor fellows,' and from that moment I felt I was saved."

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Yet by far the most important part of this meeting in its bearings on the t[illegible] of applied or practical Christianity was contained in the remarks of President Frank Moss, of the police board. Courts and police protect society, he admits, but serve to harden the criminals. They rule by fear. They do not save the souls of men "alive."

PENSIONS.

From the Philadelphia Ledger.

The pension laws certainly need revision, with the purpose of making the pension list a roll of honor and dealing generously with all soldiers disabled in the service, while cutting off all able-bodied men having no just claim upon the government's bounty. The pension appropriations have reached an enormous amount, but it is not the amount that is so objectionable as the fact that a very large part of the sum appropriated is squandered upon unworthy cases. The soldiers themselves should take this matter up and help to purge the list of unworthy pensioners, lest the whole system should some day be broken to the great injury of the tens of thousands of deserving pensioners who need the government's aid or support.

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No Lack of Sympathy.

From the Washington Star.

Opposition to the extravagances that have been heretofore committed in the name of patriotism and national gratitude is no longer to be set down blindly to the score of a lack of sympathy with the sentiment that created the magnificent armies of the north in the early sixties. It does not suffice to cry down with the charge of narrow thankiessness the voice of reason that merely asserts that there is too much laxity in the granting of pensions and in the framing of pension laws. The evils that form the basis of the complaints now sounding in the ears of the people are not a necessary part of the scheme of rewarding the men who fought and suffered for their country. They arise from various causes, and the demand is for their repression on lines that will in no wise injure the legitimate interests of the old soldiers or those who are logically dependent upon them.

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The Real Motive.

From the Philadelphia Ledger.

There is no feeling antagonistic to the pensioning of worthy and deserving veterans. Corrupt claim agents and dishonest politicians are attempting to persuade the old soldiers that the outcry against pension frauds is an attack upon the veterans. This is a malicious lie. The protest that is going up from patriotic people in every quarter is against the robbery of the government by unworthy claimants. The pension question has too long been made the foot ball of partisan politics. Such a stalwart Republican partisan as Senator Gallinger tells the exact truth when he says that the abuses against the pension system should be halted and the pension list made a roll of honor instead of a menace to economical government.

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