

The Scranton Tribune

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American aid for starving Cubans ought to be the signal for American intervention to stop the inhuman contest which carries starvation with it as one of its chief weapons.

A Flash in the Pan.

The attempt to create a disturbance in the Republican party because Secretary Gage has reaffirmed the party's adherence to the gold standard pending the time when international agreement will make safe the general resumption of silver coinage has been most successful in the Democratic camp.

The campaign of 1896 tied two things so far as the McKinley administration is concerned: (1) that the tariff which raises revenue for the federal government must at the same time protect American industry; and (2) that the gold standard will be maintained so long as there is serious doubt as to the expediency of unlimited silver coinage.

The Republican party was divided to use its influence in favor of international bimetalism and a free coinage, with a result not at present encouraging. Consequently it stands primarily and unequivocally committed to the gold standard, and incidentally it will do what it can for currency reform.

It remains as a monthly feature of the postal savings bank movement that nobody has yet devised a satisfactory way for the government to utilize the contemplated deposits so as to earn the requisite interest. Until this obstacle can be overcome, postal savings banks will necessarily be impracticable.

Primary Reform. A committee of the Republican League of Buffalo, after discussing most of the laws and the plans already bearing on the subject, has formulated a scheme of its own to further caucus reform.

The Buffalo plan retains the delegate system and proposes to have the voters of all parties register for the general election, enroll for their caucus and choose their delegates to conventions on the first two days of registration and in the polling booths, under the supervision of the county inspectors and by means of a blank ballot provided by the state.

Party committees are required to give notice twenty days before the first registration day of the names proposed for delegates to the various party conventions. It is further provided that any ten party electors living in the same election district may certify to the party committee the names of a set of delegates. No voter is required to declare his party affiliations at the caucus, and the acts of registering and enrolling may be performed on registration days subsequent to the first two. Eligibility to vote at a caucus shall not be based alone on a past record of affiliation with a party, but also on a declared intention to act with that party in the future.

Provision is made for printing on the ballot information as to the candidate or principle for which any delegate may stand. There is to be a blank column in which the voter may write the name of any man of his choice whose name is not printed on the ballot. The ballot of each party is to be given a separate and distinct color. All conventions are to be held in the two weeks intervening between the first two and the last two registration days. No alternates are to be permitted. The present Erie county system is to be followed by giving each delegate as many votes in the convention as there were party votes in his election district, but no delegate may split his votes between the candidates.

The foregoing measure is spoken of approvingly by the Buffalo Express, a journal which has made a determined battle for more representative party primaries. It differs but slightly from the Kentucky plan of holding primaries precisely as elections are held, with the same machinery, laws and penalties and under equal accountability to the courts. In practice, it would probably reveal points of weakness, especially in abuse of the clause governing eligibility to participate. But if as a result of its adoption public opinion should be stimulated for a time into a proper interest in the reform of political authority, the outcome would be a gain. Whatever brings good men out to the primaries and occasions honest and intelligent voting is to be commended, even though it be true that this live interest does not need a change in the laws to insure superior results.

The English bimetalist, Moreton Frewen, concludes an interesting letter in this fashion: "The attraction of your triumphant democracy for us who live in these effete monarchies is in its magnificent despotism. Mr. Cleveland borrowed four times the sum the German Kaiser hopes to get from the Reichstag for naval expenditures, and he spent it that he might avoid asking congress for supplies. He did not, in his now classic phrase, want 'congress on his hands.' Our mere Czars and Kaisers, and other little folk, are obliged to adopt all sorts of ridiculous constitutional devices. When will your great nation be logical and sensible?" This last question is somewhat difficult to answer, but concern-

ing Mr. Cleveland's actions even Mr. Frewen will admit that the American people paid him off and discharged him at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Two Georges.

It is possible that the newspapers have dealt somewhat roughly with George W. Smalley because of the reported utterance by him, at the Brooklyn banquet of the New England society, of sentiments not to the average American's liking. He cited, it will be recalled, the increasing disposition of the European powers to resent America's growth and enter into commercial treaties as a reason why public opinion in this country should not continually leave brick bats at England, the one country in Europe from which sympathy and possibly assistance under certain contingencies might be expected or won. If Mr. Smalley was honest in his utterance—and we dare say he was; other men, other Americans, men of unquestionable honesty, have said in substance the same thing—he ought to be heard in patience, even though the tenor of his counsel should afterward be dismissed as undesirable.

But this brings up the larger question whether the time has come in the evolution of our beloved republic to disregard the admonition of Washington against entangling foreign alliances, and on this point we must bear witness to the remarkable presence and sagacity shown in that justly famous portion of the Farewell Address. As between George Washington and George Washington Smalley the bulk of the American people, without discountenance to either, may be pardoned for choosing to follow the advice of the former. No fact is clearer in the light of history than that aid from England, when rendered by another power, must be well paid for. This was illustrated no longer ago than during our late rebellion, when British assistance for the Southern Confederacy came along the hardest lines of business negotiation rather than along those of honest and spontaneous popular sentiment.

The seceding states had cotton and wanted money and munitions of war. England had money, war munitions and cotton spindles, but wanted raw cotton. The deal was easy, but England held the preferable end. If ever an emergency should arise requiring the office of our government that they secure the interposition of England to save the United States from spoliation at the hands of a continental coalition, there is warrant in history for believing that they could readily secure this help, if able to pay the price; but probably the price would denote a hard bargain, and one disclosing indefensible weakness in our own internal economy.

No, the time for a foreign alliance has not yet come to these United States and we hope that it may never come. Events may take or shake us out of that splendid isolation once the proudest boast of the republic's founders, necessitating enlarged responsibility and correspondingly increased activity in the world's affairs; but throughout the orbit of its destiny our nation must order its footsteps with precisely the same justice and care as if it expected forever to stand isolated and alone. If by the fairness and honor of our attitude we shall hereafter win foreign allies, so much the better, but these should not be won through that game of unscrupulous combinations nowadays so unscrupulously played by European diplomats ostensibly in behalf of the peace of the world but in reality for its spoliation and appropriation piecemeal among the belligerent powers. If England has to be won by taxing and supplication, by silence when she is wrong and by fawning flattery on the few occasions in foreign affairs when she chances to be right, well might American manhood prepare to face the future as it has met and conquered the far more formidable and perplexing past—single handed and undismayed, with malice toward none and charity for all but with an emphasis indomitable upon the power of righteousness to withstand the devil and all his huns.

The letter of Commander Stevens, which we print on another page, is fair and final. To its statements every honest citizen will subscribe. The only aim of those who question the recent large increases in the government's pension disbursements is to be assured that the money thus spent is put to the use intended by congress and the people. If there are no frauds there will be no complaint. Not a penny is begrudged which goes to compensate actual sacrifices or loss. But in the abundance of testimony from apparently well-informed sources that fraud in discoverable proportion exists, certainly no harm can come from reasonable investigation conducted by those in sympathy with honest liberality to sufferers from the civil war.

On Jan. 1 The Tribune almanac and political handbook for 1898 will be placed in the hands of the carriers and on the news-stands. It will contain the usual complement of election statistics, official data concerning city, county, state and national governments, civic, religious and charitable societies, etc., and, in short, a concise survey of most of the information of which the average reader of newspapers during the ensuing year will have occasion to refer. The already established character of this annual publication ought to secure for the forthcoming issue a cordial welcome. To the carriers it is sold at cost; the retail price will be 25 cents.

The charge is reiterated that the Republican state committee has been distributing literature in behalf of the gubernatorial candidacy of Colonel Stone of Albany. The state committee certainly would not be guilty of such impropriety in behalf of any candidate prior to the nominating convention, but if any agent of that committee has been abusing his trust there should be no hesitancy in calling him to account.

The Philadelphia Ledger announces the belief that if the pension rolls were purged of frauds and of persons who have no equitable claim on the United States the total amount expended for pensions could be easily reduced 50 per cent. This estimate is prob-

ably very much too large. But whether they constitute fifty per cent, or not more than one-fiftieth of one per cent, the frauds should go.

If sharp opposition shall arise against the gubernatorial candidacy of Colonel Stone it will not be personal, but rather an inevitable development from the methods used in his interest. The workers in command of his candidacy are apparently the Bourbons of Pennsylvania politics, who neither care nor forget.

Cable advices from Madrid assert that Spain is about to engage the United States in another verbal duel, apparently in observance of the belief that if it can get the Washington authorities to backing they will be less likely to bite.

If the report is true that the American newspaper correspondent, Sylvester Seavey, has been induced by Blanco to carry prohibited overtures to Gomez, he had better first make arrangements to increase his life insurance.

"The best Republican," remarks the Philadelphia Press, "is the one who can afford to tell the truth." There will be many Republicans this year who will speak their mind, whether they can afford to or not.

Opponents of the Santa Claus myth can not vociferate as loudly as they please. It is just fact to conclude that it is a myth.

The new and greater city will not, however, attract attention solely from its size and richness and the importance of the elements which go to make up the whole. It will awaken in addition a profound interest on account of the new problems of municipal government which are to be tried and of the character of the city which the future of city management in this country rests. In many respects the features of the new government will be experimental. They will test the American people's capacity for free government to the utmost and furnish an object lesson which will be lost upon the whole of other cities. Under these circumstances it is to be regretted that the new experiment does not start out under the best auspices and that the machinery will be set in motion by an organization which in past time has brought disgrace on the government of cities by popular suffrage.

The new charter for Greater New York city is a voluminous and complicated one and it will need a few years to see its provisions well understood and put in smooth working order. There will be a municipal legislature made up of two houses. The upper house will be known as the council and its members will be elected from council districts formed by grouping the state senatorial districts into larger ones which will be divided. They will be chosen in groups of three on the general ticket and for a term of four years. The lower house of the council will be known as the board of aldermen and one of its sixty-one members will be elected for a term of two years from each of the sixty-one city districts, into which the city will be divided. The municipal legislature will be composed of the council and the board of aldermen, and the city controller, chosen in the same way and for similar terms, will constitute the executive part of the new municipal government.

The departments which will take part in the management of the city's affairs are many and will be known as the departments of finance, law, police, water, highways, street cleaning, sewers, public buildings, lighting, supplies, bridges, parks, building, charter, correction, fire, docks, ferries, taxes and assessments, education and health. These departments are to be managed by boards, all of which, except the board of the finance department, the mayor has the right to appoint during the first six months of his term. Most of the departments have not only executive but also ordinance making powers and the municipal legislature is correspondingly restricted in the control it will exercise over them. For instance the park board will have the right to make all the ordinances which concern the control and management of the parks, and the dock board has similar powers.

The making up of the annual budget is peculiar. Each department will set out its own estimates which will go to the board of estimate and appropriation, which will add or subtract from the items as it chooses. The estimates then go to the municipal legislature, which must meet in joint session for their consideration, and which has the power to reduce or throw out any of the items, but cannot add to them. They then go to the mayor who can restore any of the appropriations in the amount by the municipal legislature and his action can be overridden only by a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to both council and board of aldermen. The complicated method by which appropriations must be made for running the government of the city, it will be subsequently in great measure a government of departments.

In commenting on this system Albert Shaw says: "This is government, not by the municipal parliament, not by an autocratic mayor, nor yet by the familiar American system of an executive and legislative counterbalancing each other. But it is bureaucratic pure and simple," and its success or failure will, he thinks, depend upon the development of a public and true civic spirit. Meanwhile the public will watch the experiment with great interest.

A SPECIMEN CASE. From the Philadelphia Ledger. The extravagance of the present pension laws is illustrated by a case just made public. A native of Norway was married in 1852. He emigrated to the United States in 1861, enlisted the following year in a Wisconsin regiment and died in the service in 1863. His widow, who has never left Norway, applied for a pension in 1884 and she has been awarded one with arrears, aggregating over \$1,000, from the date of her husband's death. From July 1, 1889, until June 1, 1898, the law made pensions begin from the date of the filing of the application. Since then the pension granted to a widow commences from the date of the soldier's death.

The allowance of this pension is strictly in accordance with law, but the result is imprudent, not only with respect to such cases, but with respect to other provisions for pensions. The com-

missioner of pensions recommends the passage of a law providing that no pension shall be granted to the widow of any soldier who shall hereafter marry. A woman who marries a soldier pensioned under the disability act of 1890 is not entitled to pension as a widow unless she was married to the soldier prior to the passage of the act in question, whereas the woman who marries a soldier pensioned under the general law and thereafter becomes a widow is entitled to a widow's pension.

New Evidence That Might Makes Right.

From the Philadelphia Press. GERMANY. It is plain, proposes to keep all that it has taken and to take all that it can keep in China. The United States will wisely follow its old and traditional policy of protecting its own interests and taking not lot or part in territorial wars. It is not our way. As President McKinley justly said, our moral sense revolts from such acts. Unthought, we have entered no land.

But no American can disregard the most hideous fact that the citizens of many opens a new chapter of international spoliation. The practice of the last two centuries had drawn a sharp, distinct line between savage, barbarous lands, like those in Africa, and Asiatic countries, with organized governments. Lands with mere tribes and no governments were held to be open to civilized occupation. In dealing with Asiatic lands a nation was permitted to take summary measures to protect its citizens and redress their wrongs. This right was exercised by England against Japan when an open defiance was given to her. But a seizure of Asiatic territory was held to rest on a different basis. It could only come through war, and an open defiance was given to her. In India, England has followed this rule. France had ancient titles for its conquest thirty years ago of Cambodia and more recently of Madagascar, a land midway in organization between Africa and Asia.

No seizure of territory as flagrant as predatory and imperialist that just made Germany in China has taken place for half a century anywhere, and it cannot be matched on this case, an Asiatic power since the Napoleonic wars. In organization, in the protection given to its and property and in the power to resist attack, nearly all the South American powers stand where the Asiatic powers do. Chile and Argentina are really only two which could make a fight, in the world of nations, as the world of nations has, this new doctrine that a strong European power can help itself to territory when and where it pleases, to weak power is weak anywhere and no strong power, unless its strength is always ready in lightning shape. Now that Germany's highway robbery is sanctioned and accepted by European Americans must understand and see that no land is safe, no coast protected and no port free from possible seizure, unless there is somewhere a power both ready and strong on guard and able to guard.

This is our first national duty. The Western Hemisphere south of its would have been parcelled out long since, beginning with Mexico, if we had not forced the French out of that country and stood by while an imperial highwayman was shot at Queretaro. Our own ports may any day be subject to brutal seizure, if we are not defended by sea and land. No European country regards right in these matters, as each has shown in the past ten years. Force is the only agent they regard, and by force alone the two American continents can be protected from international spoliation.

Genesis of a Real Municipal Empire.

From the Philadelphia Press. A FEW days now the name of New York will be pronounced over New York and Brooklyn and they will be known as one city and one government. There are other participants to the union which will bring more territory than these two cities, but not so much population, to the new municipality. The whole of Richmond and Queens county and part of Westchester county will be included. Altogether it will be a city imperial in size and population and second only in London. The area will be a little over 377 square miles, or 19,800 acres, the population is estimated at 3,250,000 and the assessed valuation of real estate is \$2,307,656,657 and of personal property \$61,000,000. This is a population larger than the original thirteen colonies combined at the time of the Revolutionary War and the property valuation is many times greater.

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A PROOF OF PROSPERITY.

From the Philadelphia Press. From all over the country the testimony comes that the observance of Christmas is more hearty, enthusiastic and abundant than has been known for several years past. There was a happier and more cheerful spirit evident and more hopefulness of the future, and when merchants came to balance accounts it will doubtless be found that the business done was larger than ever known before. This situation would not exist if industries were not more prosperous and there was more money to spend which comes from more and steadier employment. There is no better gauge of the people's temper than Christmas, and the Christmas of 1897 says that the American people are rapidly recovering from the long period of depression and have started the nation on a new career of prosperity which promises to be more fruitful than any similar period in its history.

Consistency.

From the Detroit Journal. "Why," asked the Bold Spirit, "do you wear that?" "It's what everybody wears," answered the woman. "But why don't you wear this?" the Bold Spirit persisted. "Oh, because everybody is wearing it," objected the woman. "A rule may work both ways and still be poor; labor does not invariably bring riches."

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