

The Scranton Tribune

Published Daily, Except Sunday, by The Tribune Publishing Company, at Fifty Cents a Month.

New York Office: 150 Nassau St., S. S. VREELAND, Sole Agent for Foreign Advertising.

ENTERED AT THE POSTOFFICE AT SCRANTON, PA., AS SECOND-CLASS MAIL MATTER.

TEN PAGES.

SCRANTON, DECEMBER 2, 1898.

Senator Magee's specific announcement that he will go into the Republican legislative caucus and support its nominee means that if Quay is cleared of the charges against him he will be re-elected, arms folded. Things are not going down John Wanamaker's way.

A Question of Justice.

It is better for all concerned that the assistants of Senator Quay should be permitted to present their entire budget of information in open court than that they should be enabled to charge that he had escaped from trial through a technicality. Judge Finletter's ruling dismissing the demurrers and fixing upon Dec. 12 as the date for the beginning of the trial is, therefore, very clearly a ruling in the interests of justice.

The indictments in themselves do not amount to much; it is the volume of innuendo back of them which must be cleared up, not less for Senator Quay's sake than for the honor of the commonwealth. It is not the public's business if Quay borrows money from a bank with which to speculate in stocks so long as the bank fronts with him on a fair business basis and so long as the speculation itself is legitimate. But it is the public's business if Quay's credit at the bank is upheld at the public's expense; and on this point the production of all the evidence in open court is demanded by every consideration of fair play. At the same time, the evidence and not preconceived opinions must decide the question of innocence or guilt. Between the Quay worshippers and the Quay haters, between the class who can believe nothing ill of Quay and the class who can believe nothing good of him, stands a great mass of citizens who occupy the honorable judicial attitude of withholding their opinions until the evidence is in.

It is not now a question of politics primarily but flatly and inevitably one of justice. Justice must be done no matter who shall suffer.

Senator Hoar says sovereignty is not a salable article. He forgets the times we have bought it from France, Mexico and Russia.

The Weather and the Prophets.

The loss of the Portland is attributed to the disobedience of her skipper in putting to sea when ordered not to do so. This appears to be almost incredible. Captains of passenger steamers realize the responsibility of leaving port in the teeth of a forecasted storm. They dread to do so when compelled, and shrink when possible. Captain Blanchard may have been an exception, although there is no more tangible evidence to that effect than the loss of his boat and this vague intimation of a disregard of orders. We shall never hear his side of the story.

However that may be, the Portland was only one of a large number of craft that have strewn the Atlantic coast with their wreckage during the continuance of this fearful gale. As all the wrecks were casting vessels, being almost within blasting distance of the shore, had the meteorological bureau given timely warning of the impending hurricane, it is impossible to conceive how all these ships, big and small, could have been incontinently caught in it. There seems to have been no such warning, or no anticipation of a tempest from the point from which it sprung. We had an intimation that a storm was travelling east of the Mississippi, an ordinary blizzard in fact which is normal at this season of the year. But it was not expected to affect the New England coast more severely than any other section of the continent over which it swept. This storm did not originate in the Rocky mountains, nor in that favorite home of the cyclone, the West Indies. Had it done so its prognostication would have been scientifically possible and its force and direction approximately determinable. The storm, instead, was one of those great billows of wind which sweep across the North Atlantic and the European continent from northwest to southeast in the latter part of November and the earlier days of December. Nearly two weeks ago it struck the British islands with unprecedented fury, part of it, as it traversed the Atlantic, sweeping through the straits of Gibraltar and along the Mediterranean until it spent itself on the unprotected shores of Italy, causing disaster; to shipping in that country scarcely less severe than here at home.

An occurrence like this which has its origin in the east, while our meteorologists have their heads turned towards the west, is not very creditable to their scientific pretensions. There appears to be a vast amount of unconscious delusion in weather forecasts. They are serviceable as records of actual meteorological phenomena which through connotation may be loosely relied upon to give an indication twenty-four hours in advance of the weather we may reasonably expect if things do not change meanwhile. This is highly valuable as far as it goes, but it goes only a very little way. To be sure, it leaves us independent of foolish lunar predictions and arbitrary empirical forecasts which our forefathers regarded with such fond assurance. We know that the appearance of the moon does not presage the condition of the weather. The atmospheric envelope of the globe does not reach to the moon, nor can the moon possibly influence it. The rainbow, we know, is not a sign of rain but is actually rain itself, and its prismatic hues are the result of refracted light on its particles and not the condition of the vapor in the rainbow. We nowadays know, also, that the atmosphere is made up of mixed gases, highly elastic,

and very dilatible by heat and of extreme mobility, momentarily varying all over the earth. Yet when this is said, the fact remains that meteorology is only an infant science. Its nurses are so inordinately proud of their bantling that they make little account of its extreme waywardness. They are over-fond, and the public itself over-credulous.

It is quite evident that a majority of the coasting ships which were caught at sea in such lamentable numbers in the recent storm would not have ventured out were it not for their dependence on the accuracy and foresight of the weather prophets. It is true that a larger number of these schooners were wrecked while lying at anchor or driven on shore from their moorings. But the extent of the calamity shows utter unpreparedness to encounter it, or utter lack of anticipatory knowledge of its approach, which was calculable enough, it seems to us, to have afforded contingent warning. There is no scientific investigation more interesting, more productive of cosmopolitan results, or more favorable to an introduction to the profound secrets of nature than the study of meteorology, but this storm proves conclusively that for once the students of it were caught napping.

We have not yet occupied Havana yet the government at Washington has already placed a credit of \$50,000 for the first clearing of Havana's filthy streets. There is no "manana" business about Uncle Sam.

The Wealth of the Soil.

A most interesting detailed analysis of the present condition of American agriculture has been made by the Chicago Times-Herald, after studying which we can readily understand why the west and northwest are literally booming. The crop of 1898 is figured as follows: Corn, 1,888,129,000 bushels, 44,777,000 bushels more than last year and a figure exceeded only twice in seven years; wheat, 702,561,000 bushels, 113,563,000 bushels more than last year and the largest yield on record; oats 798,555,000 bushels, a record exceeded but twice in our history; rye, 35,549,000 bushels, nearly 4,000,000 bushels more than last year; barley, 52,400,000 bushels, above the average; potatoes, 292,648,000 bushels, an improvement of fifteen per cent. on last year; flax seed, 17,217,000 bushels, 60 per cent. better than last year; cotton, 11,500,000 bales, 400,000 bales more than last year and the largest yield recorded; and average yields of apples, hay and broom corn, the exact figures being apples, 27,681,000 bushels; hay, 88,600,000 tons; broom corn, 21,287,000 tons.

Now as to prices. Cotton of course has fallen because of over-production. Wheat, too, is lower than during the latter boom period a year ago, but it is 10 to 15 cents above the prices ruling three and four years ago when the yield was much smaller. On the basis of cash quotations in Chicago the Times-Herald thus figures the range of prices during the past four years with 1895 taken as the standard of comparison:

Table with columns for commodity (Corn, Wheat, Oats, etc.), year (1895, 1896, 1897, 1898), and price per unit.

It will be noted that with the exception of hay and hogs every product is materially higher than in 1895. The variation in hay is due to the fact that the crop of 1895 was abnormally small and the crop of 1898 abnormally large, while in the case of hogs the present supply is little short of 50 per cent larger than in 1895.

Aside from large crops and good prices there is, our contemporary adds, "another factor with an important bearing on the present improved financial position of the farmer. While prices of the products of his labor have steadily advanced since 1895, the prices of those things for which he must exchange his products have just as steadily fallen, so that the products of the farm as a whole exchange for an increasing amount of those things or necessities and of luxury which the farmer buys. No other producing class so fully secures the benefit of the gradual cheapening of articles of daily consumption through improved methods of manufacture and distribution, because no other important class finds the money value of its products advancing coincident with price decline in other directions. Selecting five staple articles, two of universal food use, coffee and sugar, oil for lighting, leather, the basis of footwear, harness and other farm use, and steel billets, the controlling factor in the price paid for farm machinery, and taking the wholesale price for the first week in November of each year, the following table results. As in the case of farm products in the preceding table columns are added showing the percentage relation of the price of each article at each date to the price in 1895. The showing is as follows:

Table showing percentage relation of prices for various commodities (Coffee, Sugar, Oil, etc.) from 1895 to 1898.

It will be seen that the general trend of average price is as distinctly downward in the case of these articles the farmer buys as it is upward in the

NEWS AND COMMENT

Philippine words as a rule are jaw-breakers. In the Chicago Record John F. McCutcheon, its Manila correspondent, writes this help to decipher them: "Cavite" is pronounced as it spelled "Kav-ite"; "the island at the entrance to the bay, is Kor-teck-odor, with the "r" softened a little bit, as if you started to say "reck," but quit on the second accent. Mariveles does not rhyme with "steals," but with "felles," and Malacanán, the suburb where the governor-general lived in Manila, sounds like Malacayán. Luzon is simply Luzon, but it doesn't rhyme with "boonin." Liguayan is pronounced as if it were rhyming with "sighin." Bolinao is Bolo-lon-ow, like "how." Caribao, the water buffalo and principal beast of burden here, ends the same way—that is, Caribow. Cullion, the captured garibout, whose captain didn't know war had been declared, sounds as if it were spelled "Cull-yow." The "Cal" rhyming with "eat" and the "yow" rhyming with "how." Miss Danao belongs to the same class, just as if it had always been spelled "Mindonow" and there had never been an "o" in it. "Negros," the great sugar island, is the one pronouncing it keeping in mind the simple fact that the "ne" is spoken as if it were "may." The importance of "Negros" to pronounce, is called "Pan-nish," with the accent on the "nigh." Leyte is "Lay-ty," and Guimaras is Gimmee-ras, with the accent on the end. Butuan in Mindanao, where the gold comes from, is very much disguised. Let's would one think that in every day life in these parts it is called "Boo-toon-an," with the accent on the "oo." Ifigan, also in Mindanao, is Hii-gaan, strongly suggesting had health in an Irish family. Igdillo is Kelo-ko-lo. Camarines is Cam-mar-em-ies, and Albay is "Albay." Mar-late and Masbate are in the same class, former being Malatay and the latter Mas-batay. Antique, one of the provinces of Panay, is called "Antieky." Benguet in Luzon, is just plain Ben-get. Bayambang is Hy-um-bang, Taganan and Zamboanga, the southernmost of the Philippines, are Tag-ol-las and Viss-eye-ee. The great volcano of Taal, in Batangas, is called "Fowel," and the big lake in Luzon is called "Lay-zona de Bay," although it is correctly written Laguna de Bay.

Charles W. Stone, of Warren, says if McKinley should not want a second term he (Stone) will be for Dewey. The country no doubt would be with him if it were not for that important "if."

A Relic of Barbarism.

Writing in the Marine Review, Frank Morris, navy auditor of the treasury department, condemns unparaphrasing the whole system of prize money and bounties which the statutes give to the officers and men of the navy who make captures of prizes in time of war, and asserts that it is nothing more nor less than legalized piracy while, as a means of conferring rewards, it is notoriously inequitable. Mr. Morris adds:

"It is well known in service circles in Washington that this question of prize money is at the bottom of all this jealousy between Sampson and Schley. True enough, the law states specially that one-twentieth of all prize moneys shall go to the officer in command of the squadron to which the vessel making the capture or not, but it must be remembered that it was for some time an open question whether Schley and the vessels of the former 'white squadron' were technically a portion of the fleet commanded by Admiral Sampson, no declaration on the subject having been made either by the president or Secretary Long. Determination of this point was the real object of the appointment of the naval board, the value of whose findings regarding the Santiago fight was so little appreciated by the general public. Had Schley's friends been able to carry their point with reference to the authority vested in the respective commanders, as well as the contention that the New York with Admiral Sampson on board was not within signal distance at the opening of the fight, Schley's prize money would have been heavily increased and Sampson's would have been correspondingly decreased. However, they failed and Sampson will receive a share of all moneys."

It is unnecessary now to revise this particular discussion but brief reference to it is not out of place as showing how the prize money system tends to introduce a disturbing element in naval circles by corrupting duty and discipline with the strong motive of cupidity. In his recent report Secretary Long spoke plainly about the intense pressure put upon him by many bureau officers who wanted assignments to the front. Their work at the department was not less important and necessary than that done by the commanding officers on blockade; but it offered no such opportunities for distinction or profit. While it would be unfair to say that cupidity or the desire to share in the spoils of war was the chief impelling motive of this clamor for active assignments it doubtless would be within the truth to say that it had something to do with causing it. The high tone of the naval service, which is a national pride, would not be furthered by the elimination of the whole system of lottery prize awards, which is distinctly a relic of barbarism.

It is said that the amount that Americans have paid to foreign shipowners since the Civil war exceeds, twice over, the total cost of that war, and the amount credited to foreign shipowners by the most well informed American experts is, nowadays, three hundred million dollars annually—about as much as the total customs and internal revenue receipts of the United States government. The restoration of our merchant marine by liberal congressional encouragement is therefore one of the vital and pressing needs of the time.

There cannot hereafter be doubt that Tom Platt is the star harmonizer. His scheme of silencing his factional opponents by putting them all into office is certainly calculated to promote fraternal amity and good feeling.

Every candidate for a city office hereafter should be asked whether or no he approves of the use of soft coal as a nuisance-breeding feature of Scranton industry. This nuisance must go.

The time having nearly arrived when our hot Tagale friend, Don Felipe Aguinaldo, will have to fish or cut bait, future news from Manila will be awaited with interest.

The sure way for Canada to gain free access to American markets, without which she has only a second-rate future, is to join in the annexation grand march.

Jiménez Castellano, the new captain general who succeeded Blanco, hopes to remain in office long enough to get his picture in the illustrated papers.

David Martin having come out in favor of ballot reform, there is some hope.

There will be the ring of the genuine about future peace Jubilees.

THE OPPORTUNE TIME.

We have perfected our railroad systems so that hereafter their growth is sure to be gradual; the development of our interior resources has also reached a state approaching perfection, and, as a consequence of this, the enterprise of the nation is for the moment staid, and the avenues for the use of our great staples of manufacture are in a measure glutted, with the result of our surplus finding larger and larger markets abroad. This is the time of all times for the nation to turn its attention to the unbuilding of American shipping, which will not only afford a vent for our surplus steel industries, but will prove a source of defense for the nation, if it shall ever again become involved in a foreign war.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Senator Bruce's Chinese railway concession authorizes the construction of a trunk line from Hankow to Hong Kong, 1,900 miles, with branch roads and feeders favoring a fertile country having a population in excess of 200,000,000. All the material, including ties, will have to be shipped from this country, because of the scarcity of timber, and the absence of steel rail mills in China. The timber supply will be sent by sailing vessels from Oregon, and the rails and other construction material from the Pennsylvania mills. Negotiations are now in progress which may yet give to Mr. Bruce and his associates practical control of the entire railway system of China. The importance of all this to American trade in the far east, especially in view of our acquisition of the Philippines, is obvious.

Here is a description from an old English periodical which a New York Sun correspondent thinks would apply to E. L. Godkin of the New York Evening Post: "A Tory can be no higher than the assumption of a question. He has a prejudice in favor of certain things and against certain persons. This is all he knows of the matter. He, therefore, gives you assertions for argument and abuse for wit. If you ask a reason for his opinions he calls you names, and if you ask why he does so he proves that he is in the right by repeating them a thousand times." As a definition of the typical American stump-speech this is worthy of preservation.

Uncle Sam's uniform may not be a thing of beauty but it has its advantages. Writes McCutcheon from Manila: "It does an American citizen good to see how superior in physique and how strong in health the development of the soldiers of his country are. They are usually so much taller than the Spanish and insurgent soldiers that there is no comparison. Their uniforms are made by the Americans are somewhat ugly and unattractive looking, but there is always that suggestion of health and strength about them that offsets to aesthetic ideas which is not noticed."

The western members of the Fifty-sixth congress who say they saved the day propose to get if they can the fat of life in the organization of the house. If this expectation is realized, the witty and able Major McDowell, of Sharon, will soon be out of a job, much to every Pennsylvanian's regret. But it probably will not be realized.

Ex-Congressman Williams, well known in Scranton, is credited with having said that the easiest way for Uncle Sam to solve the Aguinaldo problem is to offer that ingenious young gentleman \$50,000 to take a permanent vacation. If Mr. Williams said this he was very likely joking.

AN AMAZED BRITON.

The Hon. J. Henniker Heaton is a distinguished member of the British parliament. He is known world-wide because of his able and persistent advocacy of cheaper international postage, in the study of which question the methods employed by foreign nations to extend their commerce and their shipping, through postal grants, have been under his critical and keen review. A few years ago he discussed the subject of postal reform in the columns of the North American Review, during the course of which he made this remarkable statement: "As a consequence of refusing \$5,000,000 a year in subsidies to native shipowners, or \$100,000,000 the United States had to pay in the same period no less than \$2,000,000,000 for freight on their merchandise." This well-posted statesman knew very well indeed that his own government would never help such a proposition to pass by, and he was paying only proper heed to an amazing exhibition of American neglect when he made the frank outburst which we have quoted.

NONE TOO SOON.

From the Lebanon Report.

The Scranton Tribune is daily calling the attention of the people of that city to the necessity of choosing a man as the next mayor who shall have brains, a comprehensive knowledge of the actual condition, the needs and the possibilities of the city, of sufficient back-bone to fight the necessary reforms through and without any vicious attacks on the city with bad laws. All that the Tribune says is, with a change of name, entirely applicable to Lebanon, and, while the time for election is three months distant, it is not too soon to begin casting around for a man such as is outlined above.

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