

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, DECEMBER 7, 1898.

The Wilkes-Barre Record speaks of the bill of costs in the Langstaff contest, which means an extra 2-mill levy for county purposes, as a "monstrous bill" and says: "It is a question whether the courts are justified in permitting such latitude in contested elections as to impose burdens of such magnitude upon the people?" It is a question which can best be answered by the people when they next meet their looters at the polls.

The Doom of the Sky-Scraper.

The destruction of fire in New York the other day of two office buildings constructed more than a score of stories high has newly directed attention to the disadvantages of cloud-piercing architecture. The "sky-scraper," so-called, is an Americanism of which this country has small reason to be proud. It has been built ostensibly to withstand wind, earthquake and fire; but the only certain fact about these claims is that it takes more than wind to test them.

In the New York fire a 25-story structure, "absolutely fireproof," caught almost as easily as a tinder box and sent its flames over to a companion scraper some distance away. It was on Sunday, the buildings were deserted and there was no loss of life, but the fire developed the fact that had it been any other day there could not have been any estimating the loss. In the belief that the "fire-proof" shafts could not burn, they had been erected almost without provision for the contingency of a fire, and this discovery of their vulnerability is likely to cause a general revision of opinion and perhaps of law on the subject of their construction.

New York being built on an island, the conservation of space is, of course, of immense importance; but there are other conditions in the building of a city at least as important. New York, except in the neighborhood of Fifth avenue and Central Park, is almost as uninhabitable as an alkaline desert. A corrupt municipal administration has given over Brooklyn bridge to cable cars to the exclusion of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. This imprisons the working man in the slums. The only way which should be resorted to by city officials and trustees is given over to a den of infamy and quarantined poverty. The Bowery is the site of a street which might rival Broadway, but is lost through carelessness or the force of a bad habit. In fact, the whole city is cramped and spoiled by ignorance or foolish acquiescence in the unpleasant. Real estate in certain locations is priceless, not because it is central or convenient, but because business men are conventional or conservative. A broker out of Wall street in like a fish out of water, but there is no reason why the great crush of business in lower Broadway, Fulton street and Wall street should be for ever gasping skyward for light and air down town while there is room enough and to spare for a generation or two up town.

The sky-scraper, now that it has been positively proved to be not fireproof when it was dogmatically insisted upon that it was, will doubtless hereafter be abandoned as a foolish attempt to set at defiance some of the plain laws of nature.

Since Judge Gordon resigned on the plea that the salary of the bench is insufficient to support life in comfort, judges are underpaid. This fact, if it is a fact, does not seem to lessen the competition among those who are eager to don the cap and gown.

Value of Native Shipping.

It has often been said, but it will always bear repetition, that there is no single industry which is the product of so many different industries as shipbuilding. It has been computed that several hundred trades are interested in and contribute to the construction of a ship, from the turning over of the virgin ore in the mine, the timber in the forests or the coal in the earth, to the weaving of the hunting out of which the flag that floats at her stern is made.

It was Thomas Jefferson who, speaking of the value of the ship-building industry, said: "In time of general peace it multiplies competitors for employment in transportation, and so keeps that at its proper level; and in time of war, that is to say, when those nations which are our principal carriers, shall be at war with each other, if we have not within ourselves the means of transportation, our products must be transported in beluggered vessels, at the increased expense of war-freight and insurance, and the articles which will not bear that must perish on our hands."

Had Great Britain and France been embroiled in war over the Egyptian question, as at one time seemed imminent, this truth would have been forced home to us in a manner as unpleasant as it would have been expensive. The nations of Europe, and principally Great Britain, are the great shipbuilders and shipowners for the world's foreign carrying. They are the nations which are ever on the verge of war. Europe, it has well been said, is an armed camp. Great Britain, we know, bristles with warships and guns, as a porcupine does with quills. A flash, and the whole may at any time become involved in the most devastating war of all history, while the destruction of shipping would be something frightful, a blow from which the world would be decades and perhaps centuries in fully recovering, especially if prolonged.

There is no such danger constantly menacing the United States. Were it our ships that did our own and a large portion of the world's carrying, as indeed it might be, considering our resources, the skill of our shipbuilders

and the vast wealth of our people, the danger that threatens the world's commerce whenever a European war seems imminent would not exist. From every point of view, of national resources, of demonstrated ability, of a vast foreign commerce to carry and a larger one assured, of situation and condition, everything invites us to become self-reliant and wholly self-dependent in the matter of merchant shipping.

The threatened prosecution of the English Christian Scientists charged with responsibility for the death of Harold Frederic has been dropped. John Bull evidently for once took the rational view that pushing a case like that would only make matters worse.

The Nicaragua Canal.

The president's references to the Nicaragua canal problem, particularly his explanation of the numerous legal kinks and twists which have happened or are likely to happen if the chameleon-like little republics of the isthmus are to be permitted to have a sovereign voice in this matter, will go far to confirm the wisdom of an opinion ventured recently by Congressman Hepburn, of Iowa, who has charge of canal legislation in the house. Mr. Hepburn said:

"This canal should be built on soil of our own—soil belonging to the United States and belonging to this country forever. To start right we must possess the soil. There must be no shadow of right for any other nation to interfere in the future with the management of the canal any more than they could interfere with the navigation of the Delaware river. This is the first point to be settled, and it must be settled right. We cannot make appropriations of American money to build a canal on soil other than our own."

It is probable that the canal, when built, will have to be held neutral in time of war, as the Suez canal is now. This would be an international necessity as well as a practical saving since the best way to defend a canal against use by an enemy's fleet would be to meet that fleet and destroy it before it reached the canal. With the canal so near our base of supplies and with our navy to be enlarged to first-class proportions, we should not need to be apprehensive that neutrality of the canal in war would be a source of danger. But Congressman Hepburn is clearly right in declaring flatly that the one indispensable requisite to the building of this important water-way by American public money is that the soil through which it is to be extended and for a safe distance on both sides shall be American territory absolutely.

We must take possession of this soil, by peaceful negotiation if possible, by right of eminent domain if necessary. If we cannot do this, we can condemn, submitting to arbitration the matter of compensation, precisely as a railway company prevents the caprices of a small property-owner from blocking a great public enterprise.

Colonel Roosevelt has replied to a presidential hint by saying that during the next two years he doesn't propose to give a thought to his personal political future. He probably will not have to. His is the kind of future that are classified under the head of irrevocable destiny.

Signs of Good Times.

The Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph finds much to inspire hope in the immense eastbound shipments from Chicago last week which exceeded 100,000 tons, compared with 45,000 tons for the corresponding week last year. Nearly every road reporting gross earnings these days shows gains not only over the same period of 1897, but in many instances over the best previous record. This is all very gratifying to the general public, because of the evidence it furnishes of the activity in business, but it was not until this week that the shareholders of the roads could participate in the general good feeling over the situation. It is known that freight rates are greatly demoralized, and it is feared that the traffic was not returning its due proportion of profits. This fear is being removed by the reports of October operations now being made.

Last week five of the great systems have made their reports of the results for the month. The Union Pacific shows a net gain of \$308,000, the St. Paul a gain of \$206,000, the Burlington a gain of \$193,000, the Atchafalpa a gain of \$232,000, and the Pennsylvania a gain of \$190,000. Here is a total net increase on five roads of more than a million and a quarter dollars for one month. What is equally encouraging is that the outlook is fully as bright as ever, and the owners of the properties are reasonably assured a fair return upon their investment. This is not all. The prosperity of the railroads will be felt in other lines of industry. It is already being felt in the large orders being placed for rolling stock and track material.

While conditions may not justify all that Wall street is claiming for them, they certainly tend to make the approaching holiday season an unusually joyous one.

Says Governor-elect Stone: "I am opposed to political prosecutions such as the case now pending against Senator Quay. They always benefit the accused more than the prosecution. The prosecution of Dr. Swallow was a mistake. It made a political martyr of him and gave him \$5,000 votes in 1897 that he otherwise would not have had, and 100,000 votes in 1898 that he otherwise would not have received. The prosecution of Senator Quay will fail of its purpose, and he will be re-elected to the United States senate." The governor-elect is a shrewd prophet.

Engineer Knaack, an American, who is in prison in Berlin for having expressed his ability to box the kaiser's ears, pleads irresponsibility, and states that he was drunk at the time the threat and other disparaging remarks about the emperor were made. The matter will scarcely be considered of sufficient importance to become a question for international consideration, as the man who indulges in German liquor must abide by its results, but it does seem hard to take the money of a tourist for a brew that produces such sentiments and then imprison the victim

for indiscreet remarks. The case of Knaack will doubtless hereafter induce travelers with a thirst to skip the Fatherland when witnessing the sights of Europe.

Before the war investigation commission Quartermaster Lee excuses himself for refusing to issue a tent for sick soldiers at Camp Thomas by the statement that the tents were rucked up and difficult to get at. Quartermaster Lee's explanation of his conduct makes it all the more apparent that General Beaver made no mistake when he intimated that Lee should have been taken by the neck and thrown out of camp.

Currency Reform Walker, of Massachusetts, has no use for the message because the president didn't boom his fact. It is interesting to note that at the last general election Mr. Walker was elected to stay at home.

The recent attempt to form a turkey trust resulted in dismal failure. The turkey is too wary a bird to be cornered.

The sky-scraper building that burned in New York the other night was fire-proof—until it became ignited.

The president is entitled to congratulations upon the fact that his message did not please Dick Bland.

Real estate speculators will take note that Queen L.I. offers her plot at the rate of \$6 an acre.

Mr. Bryan is said to be as willing to talk as ever, but nobody wants to listen.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Henry A. Janvier, of Bridgeton, N. J., who has just returned from China, had an experience in that country which he will not soon forget. He is a practical machinist and draughtsman and he went to China to set a mill for the Chinese government. Mr. Janvier left Bridgeton on Dec. 27, 1897, and San Francisco Jan. 8, 1898, via ship China for Shanghai, arriving there Feb. 7, says the Philadelphia Inquirer. He did not reach Chentu, the place where the mill was to be established, until April 4. This latter part of his journey was the most interesting, as well as the most dangerous. The government furnished a guard of eight soldiers who rode with him day and night. The party went from Ichang to Chentu in boats propelled by men. The river was dangerous in the extreme. The current was strong, the shores lined with rocks and waterfalls and rapids were shot over with lightning-like rapidity. States infested the river banks, but, thanks to his guard, Mr. Janvier was not molested. In going around the waterfalls and rapids the travelers were carried in sedan chairs. As they approached villages scores of the inhabitants would rush out and gather about them, jostling them around. On three occasions they were compelled to halt and were obliged to keep the crowd away. Chentu is a city of about 70,000 inhabitants and only one person there, excepting a few missionaries, can speak English. The city is situated on the Min river, in the western part of Szechuen province, and about 2,000 miles from the coast. On arriving there Mr. Janvier was taken to the arsenal, where the machinery was to be erected. All the time he was there he was not allowed to leave this arsenal alone, for fear he would be maltreated or killed by the ignorant natives. When he did go out he was placed in a chair and guarded by the eight soldiers. The soldiers guarded him while he worked and while he slept, never leaving him alone. It took a long time to get the machinery in working order, but Mr. Janvier finally succeeded and the Chinese officials were pleased with it as a child with a new toy. Mr. Janvier left Chentu July 15. When he left Shanghai on Aug. 15 his value had risen to the ship Pararamatta. The value contained 40 Mexican dollars, besides his outfit. The Chinese government had promised to reimburse him for the loss.

Colonel Clark E. Carr, of Galveston, Ill., president of the American Maltz Propaganda, an organization which, as its name indicates, has for its chief purpose in life to have the articles manufactured from Indian corn upon exhibition at Paris—corn meal, flour, hominy, hulled corn, starch, sugar, syrup, caramels, and other things made from this American cereal by mill and manufactory, and glucose works—and giving the world to realize and appreciate the importance of our great cereal. Hard by this display, illustrating the limitless possibilities of the wonderful product, we propose to establish an Indian corn kitchen, where the peoples coming from all lands can themselves be served with well-cooked corn bread, soups and johnnycake and hot cake and popped corn and all the innumerable articles which we relate, and thus bring to the world to appreciate the value of Indian corn for the table as we appreciate it. Then we propose to keep on hand corn meal and corn flour and other food articles of this nature, so that all who choose may take some away with them, and with these articles come then, a leaflet printed in their own language, containing recipes for the preparation of them, and telling them how to obtain a further supply when wanted. The prejudice of Europe against corn is a human food is intense; but like all prejudices it is not invulnerable.

The first impressions of Americans concerning Cubans being almost invariably unjust, it is interesting to note an exception in the case of Sergeant Duffy, of Washington, an Fourth United States volunteer, now stationed at Manzanillo. He writes: "The poor little starving Cuban children stand around the tables while the soldiers eat their rations and beg piteously for food. The men cannot refuse their requests, and it would be hard-hearted man, indeed, who could ignore the earnest appeals of a pretty little half-starved Cuban girl. There are little lots of five and six and children of nine and ten who stand around our men in groups of twos and threes, and often the kind-hearted soldier himself goes hungry, in order that he may supply their wants. We have three Cubans working in our kitchen, and they make themselves useful carrying water, splitting wood and doing other chores. They demand no pay, but are perfectly satisfied to work from daylight until sunset for the meals and water. The president of the Cuban republic visited us today. He is quite an aristocratic-looking man, and was well received by the citizens of Manzanillo. We turned out a battalion of soldiers in his honor. I think General Maso is fully capable, from what I have seen of him, of filling the position he holds."

New York is in the thick of an interesting telephone fight. For years the established rate was \$20 a year for unlimited service. Recently a new company was incorporated with the understanding that it would give the same service for \$100. The new company expects by Feb. 1 to have 60,000 subscribers and to operate thirty different exchanges. One of the novel inducements extended in patronage of the new concern is to be a system of free coupons, or tokens, good for use at any pay station in the service. A reduction from \$20 to \$10 calls for it to be made to \$6 for 60 calls, with additional calls as low as 4 cents each. Private exchanges of five or more instruments are to have a message rate as low as 2 cents

a call. It is proposed to supply a private line residence service for \$10 a year, and a group of residence service with unlimited service, for \$12 a year. An arrangement is to be made with message service subscribers by which they will receive a share of the pay station tolls.

The United States constitute the richest nation on the globe. Muthall furnishes these figures: United States, \$1,750,000,000; Great Britain, \$7,800,000,000; France, \$4,500,000,000; Germany, \$4,200,000,000; Russia, \$2,125,000,000; Austria, \$2,200,000,000; Italy, \$1,500,000,000; Spain, \$1,300,000,000. These computations are based upon values as shown by real estate records, buildings, merchandise and railways, as well as the circulating medium in each nation. As will be seen, our wealth is more than seven times greater than that of Spain, double that of Germany, two and a half times greater than that of Russia, nearly double that of France, equal to the combined wealth of Russia, Italy, Austria and Spain, and \$2,750,000,000 larger than that of Great Britain.

A San Francisco friend of Admiral Dewey, who sent him an account of Hobson's oculatory experience and the prophecies of Dewey's fate, upon returning, received this answer from the admiral: "The clippings you send do not seem possible. The threats you make persuade me to remain forever in Manila."

HARMONIOUS BOSTON.

From the Troy Times. Yesterday was a great day for the organ grinders permanently or temporarily residing in Boston. It was the day when their right to earn a livelihood by the laborious process of turning a crank was to be determined. Some time ago the city of culture decided that its people should not be troubled by the noise of musical instruments, and a board of music commissioners was created whose duty it should be to see that all musical instruments played in public should be in tune. Yesterday some 350 hand organs and street pianos were lugged by their owners to a park fortuitously rather remote from human habitation, and all sorts of tunes were ground out for the edification of the official censors. If a single B flat were sounded where B natural should have been forthcoming the possessor of the instrument was ordered to have it tuned properly, and his license will be withheld until this has been done. The commissioners having put the organs through their paces will now proceed to test the efficiency of German bands and string orchestras. This work should properly be done in some building far outside the limits or else in padded cells, or being done more privately. The American people against Italian immigrants than have even the murderous deeds of the Mafia. We can tolerate athletes because they are used only recreationally, but the hand organ discord is a weapon that is almost as deadly and is directed against thousands instead of single individuals. If Boston is to be a city of peace and order there will be a clamor from all over the country for the adoption of similar ordinances.

ESSENTIAL.

From the Philadelphia Times. This country boasts of possessing the freest and most honest government on earth, and it is now to make the experiment of extending these blessings to alien peoples. This experiment is being made in the form of a military and failure would do much to discredit a republican form of government. It is essential, therefore, that in the making of this political specimen and the greedy speculator shall be given no share, but that both of these malign forces shall be held at bay even at the point of the bayonet if necessary. Let our now colonies be governed by the military as long as may be necessary to restore order, insure tranquility and a fair field and no favor to all classes of their inhabitants, and by corrupt politicians and greedy promoters, never.

CAUSE OF WISCONSIN'S MISHAP

From the Chicago Journal. We don't know why the Wisconsin, after having been successfully launched, should proceed to unlaunch herself by sliding on a mud bank in San Francisco Bay and there resting all the persuasiveness of a match hammer to get her off. But we suspect that the poem by Iza Prince, read at the launching, had something to do with it. The poem was delivered by Mayor Phelan, of San Francisco, and it exhorted the good ship to stand firmly as Wisconsin's pin-head bill or "something equal to good," and the ship is certainly standing firm.

TRANSPORTATION COMES HIGH.

From the Des Moines Register. The government pays out annually an average of \$50,000,000 for the transportation of mail matter and mail cars. This is at the rate of 8 cents per pound on an average haul of 50 miles, or 88 per cent for all the mail matter carried by railroads. For the same service the railroads charge the express companies less than one-tenth of the amount charged the government, and it has never been ascertained anywhere that the railroads were losing money in carrying express matter.

UPON THE WAY.

What will it matter in a little while That for a day We met and gave a word, a touch, a smile, Upon the way? What will it matter whether hearts were brave And lives were true, That you gave me the sympathy I crave, As I gave you? These trifles! Can it be they make or mar? A human life? Are souls as lightly waved as rashes are By love or strife? Yes, you! a look the fainting heart may break Or make it whole; And just one word if said for love's sweet sake, May save a soul. —Exchange.

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