

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, DECEMBER 22, 1898.

Down South they want the next Republican presidential ticket to be McKinley and Wheeler. A better plan would be for the Democrats to nominate Wheeler and then the country would be assured of a good president whichever way the cat should jump.

A Cure for Truancy.

An interesting point in connection with the enforcement of the compulsory education law has arisen in Lancaster. The New Era of that city notes the frequency with which non-compliance with the law is excused by parents who say they are too poor to clothe their children so that the latter will be presentable in school, and the superintendent of the Lancaster schools has investigated a number of these claims and found them well founded. To overcome this difficulty he has begun a systematic collection from well-to-do persons of donations of clothing and money, and announces that he will try to clothe by private beneficence every truant whose truancy is due to genuine poverty.

This is undoubtedly the way to solve this problem. It has been proposed by some educators that the state, which now provides free schooling and free text books, also provide free lunches and free clothing for pupils whose parents are destitute. The humane sentiment behind the proposition is entitled to respect but it may be questioned if the state has not gone as far in the direction of educational liberality as in common fairness it should. The state must not go so far in this direction as to undermine the spirit of self-help among either individuals or communities.

But there is no reason why the pupils already in our schools should not be converted, outside of school hours, into a volunteer army of canvassers for the benefit of other children who do not by reason of poverty now attend the public schools. We have had in this city a recent illustration of the effectiveness of such a canvass in the name of humanity. The vast collection for the poor made in the Scranton schools for Thanksgiving day showed that the little folks, when enlisted in works of benevolence, are irrefragable. If this zeal could be directed to the work of overcoming the truancy which comes from dire poverty the gain to all concerned would be immediate and palpable.

It is not easy to see for what purpose the war investigating commission is prolonging its sessions. Only one witness has been heard by it and its testimony has practical value; and it is not probable that Colonel Roosevelt's suggestions will be needed.

History Will Repeat.

To an English writer who in a foreign magazine charged this country with incompetence in its dealing with the South after the close of the civil war and who from this alleged incompetence made deductions unfavorable to the prospects of an American colonial system, reply in ample fashion is made by the New York Sun, which thus calls the Englishman to account: "The authority of the Federal government was extended forthwith over a region which had put its theories of the constitution to the ordeal of war, and had been overcome. The revolting states were restored to the Union with the full rights and privileges which they had enjoyed previous to the conflict. By rapid steps they and their people received their full relative power in our political system. And the civil war had freed about four million negro slaves, yet that tremendous social and political revolution occurred without producing other than sporadic outbreaks of disorder. Southern industry, dependent on the emancipated race, was revived without any wide and serious disturbance of the relations between the blacks and whites. The cotton crop, the great agricultural industry of the South, decreased largely during the four years succeeding the war, as was inevitable after the waste and strain and social transformation of that conflict, but it was still great enough to prove the continuing enterprise of the people and the orderly condition of society. In the four years from 1858 to 1862, inclusive, it was in the aggregate 15,391,219 bales, as against 2,248,793 bales in the first four years succeeding the war, but the latter amount was great in itself, and considering the destruction of capital in the south by the war was astonishing. Five years after the war the cotton crop began to reach its old proportions and speedily it doubled the greatest production of the past. Meanwhile southern wealth increased rapidly in all directions. Railways were rebuilt, reorganized and extended and improved, until now the southern railway systems have come up with the best equipped and best managed in the Union. The white population of the southern states increased from about eight millions in 1860 to about fifteen and one-half millions in 1870, and the colored from about four millions to nearly seven millions. Can our foreign critic find in history an example where problems so tremendous as those imposed on the American people by the civil war were solved so successfully within a period so short?"

He cannot. He has simply fallen into the common error of accepting passing complaints as proofs of failure. There were scandals and mistakes in reconstruction days; there will be scandals and mistakes during American reconstruction of Porto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines. These will be vociferously exploited and exaggerated by the opponents of expansion. The burden of whose song will be, "We told you so." Professional pessimists,

Mugwumps, American cavaliers at America, will write doleful treatises on the decline and impending fall of the great republic, just as they wrote them during the transition period following the civil war; but hereafter, as in the past, the actual progress achieved by American institutions and enterprises will be amazing, silently but surely giving the lie to all these prophecies of evil and working steadily for the expanding honor and glory of the flag. A third of a century hence the historian of that day will draw as flattering a picture of the results of colonial expansion as our esteemed New York contemporary, in the foregoing quotation, draws of the results of civil reconstruction growing out of the war of the rebellion.

Corporal James Tanner, ex-commander-in-chief of the Grand Army and commissioner of pensions under the administration of General Harrison, lends off with the suggestion that crippled ex-Confederates be admitted to the soldiers' homes. This is indeed an era of reconciliation.

Bourbonism.

In many ways Senator Morgan, of Alabama, is one of the ablest of the American statesmen of his time; but he would be a greater one if it were not for certain unnecessary and intemperate prejudices.

On Monday during a debate in the senate upon the subject of the Nicaragua canal, Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts, announced, very moderately and very sensibly, that he favored the canal project, but that he thought it ought to be built by the United States government after payment of a fair price to the Maritime Canal company for the actual value of its property and concessionary rights and after friendly negotiations with Great Britain had removed whatever of legal difficulty now intervened by reason of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty. "We should," he continued, "at once proceed to let Great Britain know that we desire to build the canal and that we desire her consent, and we would get her consent, with a stipulation that the canal should be used on the same terms that the Suez canal is now used—by all mankind in time of peace, and neutral in time of war, except against a nation making war on this country or upon Nicaragua or Costa Rica. I hope that for this bill will be substituted a measure requiring the president to proceed to remove the obstacle in regard to Great Britain, in which I anticipate no difficulty whatever; to remove the obstacle, if there be one, in the rights of the company and get the necessary powers for this government to go to work and build the canal."

This proposition sounds reasonable and judicious; it savors of an intent to be honorable and above board; but it provoked the senator from Alabama into a retort of which this is the published report: "Mr. Morgan scoffed at the idea of the United States government going 'that in hand' and the permission of Great Britain to build the canal. 'It,' said he, 'I would appoint a commissioner to the court of St. James for such a purpose I would go to my grave before I would present that paper. The people of the United States are not going to accept that as the attitude in which they shall be placed. If Great Britain had come forward ten years ago and said, 'You shall not build this canal without my consent,' there would not be a man in the United States who would be out of the sound of the kettle drum summoning us to arms. Senators would have us crouch at the feet of Great Britain, but I will never vote for a bill that has got such a provision in it."

The fact behind this ebullition of Bourbon prejudice is that we are committed by a treaty to share with Great Britain in the control of a trans-isthmian waterway unless Great Britain consents to release us from this obligation. The treaty was a piece of stupid diplomacy for which the present generation of American statesmen are in no wise responsible. Mr. Blaine, when secretary of state, made a good argument to prove that Great Britain by certain acts had abrogated it; and if Mr. Cleveland had not subsequently repudiated Mr. Blaine's argument and recognized the treaty as still binding we might today regard it as a dead letter. Under the circumstances, however, we cannot now do this without appearing before the world as a deliberate breaker of contracts. We must at least exhaust friendly means of negotiation before sounding the kettle drums and belching forth red fire.

In the light of recent events the talk credited to Senator Morgan reads like the braying of an ass. Admiral Dewey seems to have retained his laurels at the end of a three weeks' visit from General Merritt, but whether he will be able to bear up under Hobson remains to be seen.

Our Merchant Marine.

The most important new bill introduced during the present session of congress is that presented the other day in the senate by Mr. Hanna and in the house by Mr. Payne, "to promote commerce and increase the foreign trade of the United States and to provide auxiliary cruisers, transports and seamen for the government's use when necessary." This bill is a practical and carefully considered first step toward the creation of an adequate American merchant marine.

The bill provides a graduated plan of compensation to the owners of vessels carrying the American flag and engaged in foreign commerce, the amount depending on the tonnage of the vessel and the speed, graduated all the way from the slowest sailing vessels to steamships of 10,000 tons burden capable of making twenty-three knots an hour and upward. To secure such compensation at least one-fourth of the ship's navigating crew must be citizens of the United States. Provision is made for the admission to American registry of all American-owned ships within the stipulation that the government can use these vessels in time of war as it recently used the New York, Paris, St. Louis and St. Paul, by payment of a specified rental. A certain number of American boys are to be carried on each American vessel as apprentices and instructed in the art of navigation. Ships registered under this act are to

carry mails, if required, without other compensation.

It is claimed by the sponsor of this bill and by others who have made a study of the problem of reviving our merchant marine that the enactment of legislation along these lines would speedily fill every American ship-yard with work and call into existence a merchant fleet second only to England's, if in time it should not surpass that. The United States is the great trading nation of the world. It is continually increasing its sales in every open market. The Atlantic has long been burdened with its growing commerce; the Pacific is destined to be with in the not remote future. The hundreds of millions of dollars that we are paying yearly in freights to foreign vessel owners ought to be paid to American owners as a part of its circulating wealth, instead of being sent abroad as a constant drain upon our resources. The remedy is solely one of legislation; and the time has come for congress to act.

The supply of Christmas trees will largely exceed the demand this year as usual, and hundreds of trees will be thrown away unsold. When one thinks of the green tracts that are made desolate each year to supply the dealers in Christmas trees and the people who decorate their porches with greens during the holiday season, it is a cause for wonder that this country is not already treeless, barren waste that it is sure to become if the tree-hacking business is kept up. Christmas trees are all right; in fact, we must have them, but there is such a thing as overdoing a good thing. It is time, in this matter, to consider the future as well as the present.

The Brooklyn Eagle claims to have been the first newspaper in the United States to appreciate the significance of Dewey's victory at Manila and to start the ball rolling for expansion. But the Eagle is mistaken. To the New York Sun belongs this honor, and also the honor of having led the argument for expansion from start to finish. The Sun's treatment of this problem is the crowning glory of its eventful and brilliant career.

Since the conclusion of the peace negotiations at Paris the people in search of foreign news are taking more interest in James Gordon Bennett's daily cablegrams in reference to the fluctuations of the wind.

It is to be regretted that General Shafter's opinion of the Cubans was not given while General Garcia lived. An accurate Cuban opinion of General Shafter will probably never be expressed.

The Carlists of Spain seem to be very slow to take the hints continually thrown out to them that the vacation season has arrived.

Full settlement of the recent affair should not be made until it has been ascertained that Billy Mason desires peace.

It looks as though the long expected business boom for Scranton had arrived.

Sectionalism in the United States has gone to join the silver issue.

NEWS AND COMMENT

Writes H. L. West in the Washington Post: "Mention has been made in previous dispatches of the cordiality of the president's reception in the south. This was to have been expected, and is not nearly so significant in indicating an era of good feeling as the treatment which has been accorded the soldiers who are encamped in southern camps. It is especially painful to question the officers and men of northern regiments stationed in the south as to their reception and without dissent in southern camps. The cordiality is sincere and unbounded. It would be almost true to say that if the soldiers are not soon removed to Cuba they will be killed with kindness. The homes of the southern people have been thrown open to the northern men, who are invited with great cordiality to all social functions. Manifestations of good will have taken practical form. At Savannah on Thanksgiving Day the ladies of the city gave a beautiful dinner to the 1,200 men in the Seventh Army corps, 1,200 turkey legs being contributed, while the best society of the city waited upon the men at the table. In Augusta great preparations have been made to entertain the officers and men on Christmas Day and in every household two or three soldiers will find welcome places at the family table. The scenes which were witnessed in Washington during the early months of the war, for instance, have been, I am told, utterly unknown in Savannah. Mason, Augustus, and between the soldiers and the people there is the most cordial feeling. The departure of the troops for Cuba, will be an occasion of genuine regret."

War department officials are said to be much surprised and gratified over the great reduction in the death rate among the troops in the Philippines, Cuba and Porto Rico. In the past week only two deaths occurred among the forces in and around Manila. It was the result of an accident. The other was from typhoid fever. Major General Henry, in command of the forces in Porto Rico, reported on Monday that Sergeant Thomas D. Varley, of Company C, Eleventh Infantry, died of typhoid fever on Saturday. It was the first death of a soldier in Porto Rico for a week. General Otis' dispatch said that no deaths had occurred on Sunday. The death rate in the province of Santiago de Cuba has also been reduced to one or two a week, and there have been no reports of deaths among the American soldiers in other parts of Cuba for several days. The military authorities are unable to tell the reason for this remarkably low rate of deaths among soldiers in the field. It is said by old campaigners and students of military history that nothing like it has been known to exist among troops engaged in field service. The rate is lower than that of healthy men in their own country, with every facility for keeping them healthy and contented. There are 7,000 United States soldiers in Porto Rico, more than 20,000 in the Philippines, and several thousand more in Cuba, including those in Santiago province. The most remarkable decrease is in the Philippines, where the death rate last week was ten thousandths of 1 per cent. for the total number of troops.

The comment of the press is almost unanimous in criticism of Hero Hobson's kissing exploits. Says the Washington Post: "We think we may safely say that Hobson is rapidly diminishing his own proportions and alienating the respect of the American people by this barnstorming tour of his. His persistent posting before audiences in different parts of the country, and—worse of all—his nauseous occlusion of the semi-hysterical women who throng to see his kissing exploits—these aspects of the case are making in the properties of peace. He is making

himself both cheap and tiresome. He is dissipating the worth of military achievement and clothing it with the cheap hallmarks of theatrical display. The country is sick of the whole tawdry, melodramatic performance, and sensible and thoughtful men are wondering why the navy department permits such melancholy nonsense. If Mr. Hobson had modeled himself upon Captain Clark, of the Oregon, who, after accomplishing one of the most brilliant exploits of this or any other war, retired from public view, he would have today a much firmer hold upon the respect and approval of the American people. Since he has chosen another and less admirable course, however, the navy department would do well to consult the dignity of the service and to call him in."

There are some congressional districts in the United States writes Hon. H. Butler in the Pittsburgh Times: "Texas has one district with thirty-seven counties. To go from his home, in San Antonio, to Wendell, in the west end of his district, means for Representative James Slayden a journey of 500 miles, while to reach the confines of Ector county, by the roundabout way that must be traveled, would necessitate a trip of almost twice that much. Mr. Slayden's district is as big as from Pittsburgh to Chicago. But even Mr. Slayden's district has to take a back seat when one that adjoins it on the north is brought to notice, for the Thirtieth district is composed of eighty counties and not run any risk of its representative, can wander away from his home in Wilbarger county a distance of from 500 to 700 miles in three or four directions and not run any risk of getting over into a neighbor district to do his electing. If a line were drawn from that York to Chicago, and another line drawn from that York to New Orleans, it would about cover the extreme dimensions of this big district, which, be it remembered in shape, could not include so much territory as the entire area described. Still, the Thirtieth Texas district is not so big in one way as some other has. It has but 100,000 inhabitants. Mr. Dalzell's district in Pennsylvania has half more people than Mr. Stephens' big ballwick in Texas, and Mr. Dalzell can run from one end to the other of his territory in half an hour while Mr. Stephens would have to give up two or three days to the same thing in his own."

Says Secretary of Agriculture Wilson: "A very interesting hint comes to the people of the United States from Tuskegee at the present time. We will be responsible to the world and the Maker for 10,000,000 of colored people in the several islands now under our flag. The very best service that can be done by the United States to the colored people is to teach their people to work, just as Booker Washington is teaching the colored people of Tuskegee to work. We have not had much success with the colored people, because he would not work. We are working people ourselves. A man has scarcely respectable standing in the United States who does not contribute by his labor or his hands to the welfare of the republic. But the colored man will work, and just as rapidly as the people of those islands can be helped in this direction success will come to the efforts of the United States in trying to do them good. Just in what way congress may deem wise to manage these islands no one should tell. Perhaps congressmen cannot tell themselves yet. But education toward the industries is what the people of the islands are all needing."

The legislative committee empowered to draft a bill regulating railroad charges in Kansas has completed its work. The bill drafted reduces freight rates 20 per cent. Express companies' charges are reduced 25 per cent., and telegraph tolls are reduced at least 40 per cent.

The local census of the city of Berlin just completed shows that the population, which in 1885 was about 1,600,000, now has passed the 1,800,000 mark.

WHAT WE SHIP TO AFRICA.

From Leslie's Weekly. The wonderful expansion of our export trade is revealed by the official statement of the market we are finding in far-off Africa. In 1884 our exports to Africa were about \$5,000,000. During the past fiscal year they have risen to \$17,000,000, including corn, wheat, canned beef, lard, butter, tobacco, furniture, leather, boots and shoes, hardware, cotton clothes, agricultural implements, clocks and watches, and a host of other goods. Bicycles, and scientific instruments. Surely, we are reaching out for the trade of the world.



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