

The Scranton Tribune

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If the West Side board of trade has trustworthy figures to prove that a city repair plant would under existing conditions involve an economy in the necessary treatment of our city it should make them public without delay. It has these things as something for which the entire country has for years been searching in vain.

Fish or Cut Bait.

Citizens who favor prompt and effective street repairs; citizens who are tired of seeing big repair bills on vehicles and of hiring two horses and two drivers to do the work that one horse, with one driver, could do if the streets were in proper condition; citizens who are unwilling to have their interests trifled with by means of futile empty patches lasting a day and a night; business men who want the paving question settled on economic business principles; by means of a long-term, ironclad contract with a responsible contractor, pledging continuous and effective care of the asphalt, and who do not favor dragging this question into wasteful local political campaigns by means of a city repair plant operated intermittently in the interest of ward politicians and their relatives and dependents—every taxpayer of Scranton who can rise above small prejudices and take a broad view of this pressing issue should be all means attend the mass meeting called to assemble on Monday night in the rooms of the Board of Trade.

The question of street repairs has gone to a point where the city officials, and more especially the mayor, must fish or cut bait. Two years have been spent in useless fencing and quibbling. Meanwhile the streets have steadily grown worse until today they are in many places inferior to the old-fashioned ordinary roads that our pioneer forefathers used to construct by rolling logs at right angles to the driveway. This abominable condition of the streets is a sample of what councils would be likely to do if put in control of a city plant. Judging by the past, repairs would be made by fits and jerks and between times the public could go home.

The demagogical assertion of oracles of the brick paving trust that the contract executed by the city with the Barber Asphalt company, the low bidders in the recent open competition, is extravagant has been overwhelmingly refuted by plain facts and figures taken from official reports. We make the assertion now in full knowledge of the conditions prevalent in other cities, and challenge contradiction that at a price agreed upon in that contract—namely \$17.50 a year for ten years—the city of Scranton gets a bargain in paving renewal and continuous repairs better than that of any municipality in the United States in the same latitude, present condition of its pavement taken into due account. It remains simply for the city to enforce that contract and hold the contractors rightly to its existing terms.

Unless this is done, and done promptly, nobody can tell when the asphalt will be repaired, for if it is not done litigation will follow and delay will follow upon delay.

When it comes to self-praise the Business Men's league is evidently determined to occupy the front row.

The Case of Dr. Briggs.

The controversy which has been provoked by the attempt of Dr. Briggs to secure ordination into the ministry of the Protestant Episcopal church has assumed some personal aspects which are deplorable, as, for example, the accusation of a western bishop that Dr. Briggs is a "loud mouthed fellow," etc. When bishops descend to this plane of controversy it is unfortunate; nevertheless the principle involved in the discussion upon Dr. Briggs seems to us to be most vital and most of importance in these times, the whole future of a great religious denomination. Without pretending to theological knowledge or subtlety the issue appears from a standpoint of common sense to present directly for Christian answer the question, "Is the Bible a divinely inspired book, to be accepted by mankind as the Word of God, absolutely and without appeal; or is it a book of human origin, containing for each person only such a message of inspired truth as that person's intellect is capable of grasping?" Dr. Briggs, if we understand the drift of his teachings and beliefs, holds the Bible to be only in part divine and reserves for the individual sinner the right to choose which part he wishes to accept as divine. It is as if the criminal were to ask for an option as to which statute he should obey.

Putting the foundations of the Christian religion upon an intellectual basis which puts that religion upon a parallel with other subjects of mental culture concerning which the greatest minds will differ radically. It is worthy of note that throughout the world's history intellect alone has done nothing to make for human progress. Intellect is cold, dispassionate, analytical. Its whole tendency is negative. Facts are to be achieved. Intellect, backed by the sentiment of attachment to country, becomes patriotic. Intellect, backed by love, reverence and faith, becomes religion and leads men to untold lengths in their endeavors to benefit their fellow-men. Intellect without these warming influences is as the moon compared with the sun—an orb that is dead.

In attacking faith, however conscientiously; in moving for the substitution of purely intellectual instead of intellectual and emotional stand-

ards of Scripture interpretation, Dr. Briggs has contributed to the weakening of the Christian church's beneficent power over the masses; he has attempted to take from it some of the vitality which makes it more than a human institution, and he has by so much done harm to the whole circle of civilization. The church of Dr. Briggs cannot with its weakened authority hope to appeal successfully to the great body of the unconverted. What has it to offer them? It must tend to become less and less a reforming influence and more and more a purely intellectual and social influence, like a reading room, a lecture gallery or a club.

The Protestant Episcopal church, by accepting into its ministry a teacher of heresy like Dr. Briggs, able and excellent though he be as an individual, would do more to weaken its hold upon vital problems and duties than could be accomplished in generations of active agnosticism. It would itself offer a simple and sanction to skepticism and infidelity.

Before Scranton undertakes to entertain Admiral Dewey it had better repair its streets. Otherwise the gallant admiral might imagine himself in a Spanish city.

An Instructive Biography.

The present tour of the Buffalo Bill Wild West show, announced to be the last so far as the people of America are concerned, the final exhibitions to be given in Paris during the Paris exposition after which Colonel Cody will permanently retire from the entertainment field, calls to mind the fact that an accurate biography of this celebrated plainsman and scout has at last been written. It is the work of his sister, Mrs. W. W. Moore, of Duluth; and it separates the facts in Colonel Cody's eventful career from the innumerable fictions which have accumulated around his well-known name.

Wm. F. Cody, apart from his personal merits, is of interest to Americans and especially to the younger generation, on account of the fact that he is the most conspicuous embodiment of an era in American development which, though fast receding into the distance, is nevertheless deserving of attentive study. It will soon become merely a memory—those pioneer days of the stage coach, the Indian trail, the canvas-topped caravans of homeseekers crossing the unpeopled expanse of the Great American Desert, the buffalo herds and the Indian war parties—a memory needing an accurate biography of such a man as Cody to get it vivid and preserve it for the future.

Our western plains have succumbed to civilization. Our new frontiers have been established far out to sea. The Codys of the future will do their hazardous pioneer work in Porto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines, under new conditions and wholly different surroundings. But while Cody is with us we can still honor the men and the spirit of the men who conquered our own great waste space and linked its natural wealth to the plough, the steam engine and the electric motor. These men were the first American expansionists.

Those who think that holes in the asphalt can be durably repaired by the use of concrete are recommended to study carefully the object lessons supplied on Linden street. Facts are always more convincing than theories.

American Tea.

Can the United States raise its own tea? This is a question which just now is receiving the earnest attention of the agricultural department at Washington. Our importations of tea average 70,000,000 pounds each year, and represent an expenditure of from \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000, not counting railroad freights and the profits of the middlemen and retailers. If this money or a good part of it could be kept at home, it would obviously be a considerable advantage.

Secretary Wilson, we learn from a Washington letter, printed in the Times-Herald, recently returned from a visit to the tea farm of Dr. Charles E. Shepard at Summerville, S. C., and he has been convinced by the success of that experiment that the United States can grow its own tea. These plants were introduced by the Agricultural department under Commissioner De Lue, but no effort has been made by the government to spread the industry. Dr. Shepard has about fifty acres in tea plants, from which he secured 3,500 pounds of superior black tea last year. He does not attempt to compete with the cheap products of the Orient, but produces a tea that sells readily for \$1 a pound. He utilizes manure and mechanically maintains a school for the black children. Secretary Wilson's investigations convince him there is a zone of territory through the South well adapted to the culture of tea. It will be his work to import choice varieties of plants from China, and to get men of learning to study the industry, with a view to giving American planters a thorough knowledge of tea culture. He will try to persuade southern land owners to embark in tea growing, and he will also strive to enlist capital by practical demonstrations of the practicability of the new field of endeavor.

It is not the secretary's expectation that American grown tea will be able to compete with the cheaper grades of the imported product, but he believes that the finer grades can be grown as successfully in the southern states as in China. It is to be hoped that his confidence will be justified by results.

It has been proposed to set apart one day in Washington's peace jubilee to be known as Sampson day, in honor of the successful commander of the North Atlantic squadron. The suggestion merits indorsement. Admiral Sampson unquestionably has not yet received the popular recognition of his efficient work in the war with Spain.

The death of a woman in Allegheny county from the effects of a "headache powder" has suggested that more stringent laws be passed to guard the sale of such nostrums. It is possible that there is need of such legislation;

but common sense is a safer remedy. The sufferer from a headache who wants to take drugs had better go directly to a competent physician and have the drugs administered intelligently.

It will be observed that Admiral Dewey has not accepted any of the dinner invitations unconditionally. He reserves the right to take to the woods before the condition of his digestive organs makes him a mark for the patent medicine photographers.

The Ethics of Silk Weaving.

Some of our state exchanges are in the throes of editorial controversy upon the moral influence of the silk mill, and the question as to whether the weaving of silk has a tendency to make a young man or woman immoral is being discussed with considerable gravity. As an outlet for deep thought that might otherwise become tangled upon subjects of a more complicated nature, the morality or immorality of the silk mill is probably as useful a theme for consideration as any other. The editorial thinker who can define the hexagonal whereabouts of the hexagonal wherabouts of the unseen can doubtless find much in the way of mental gymnastics in deliberating upon the morals of the rising generation. It may be that the silk worm of today once sported in voluptuous luxury in ages past, as an attendant of Cleopatra or a lady friend of King Solomon, and has started anew on the road of theosophical progression preparing to some day again appear on earth in regal splendor arrayed in the fabric that it now so industriously spins. It may be that the tiny inhabitant of the cocoon imparts to the almost invisible thread the influence of a past existence of vice which is unconsciously absorbed and causes her to forget the hum and clatter of machinery and dream of lotus blossoms and red wine. Who knows? But it would seem to the ordinary visitor to a silk mill that the awful racket made by the revolving wheels and the odors of bleaching acids and grease would be sufficient promptly to subdue any such influences, should they put in an appearance. The profound editors throughout the state may demonstrate that it is otherwise. If they do not they may at least succeed in exhibiting their own folly.

It is now gravely stated that the cruiser Chicago was not sent to Tangier to demand payment of American claims against the government of Morocco. The cruiser simply stopped there on a trip around Africa, and the appearance of her guns made the sultan feel liberal.

The friends of Brigadier General Funston who insist upon dragging that intrepid soldier and fighter into politics are more to be feared by him than Agumab's entire army. Let us not forget that few good soldiers have made a shining success in politics.

Both New York and San Francisco have put forth so many reasons why Dewey should first land at their ports that it may be necessary for the admiral to land at New Orleans and sail up the Mississippi for a distance in order to avoid trouble.

It is but fair to Governor Thomas, of Colorado, to say that he repudiates the interviews which credited him with threatening to sue the national administration for its tardiness in mustering out the Colorado volunteers.

Four men were killed during the settlement of a doctor's bill at Okolona, Miss. The bills of Mississippi doctors seem to be more dangerous than their medicine.

How Congress Will Seem Without Reed.

McFarland, in Philadelphia Record. AN AUTOCRAT, an aristocrat, in the best sense, Mr. Reed deserved the title of "great commoner" more than any other man for he has exerted all his great powers to maintain and extend the authority and influence of the body immediately representing the people, and has withstood the encroachments of the senate and the much greater encroachments of the executive. Mr. Reed deprecates the growing power of the executive, regardless of personal or partisan considerations. Mr. Reed thinks it most significant that the makers of the constitution provided in the very first article, before everything else, for "the congress," and, moreover, that the article provided for the house of representatives before it provided for the senate. No old-fashioned Democrat could be more concerned at the concentration of federal power in the executive than the man who was nicknamed the "American czar." Yet, so strong is the force of temperance that, if Mr. Reed were president, I suppose he would govern like Cleveland, rather than like McKinley, but with the breadth of view and the comprehension of congressional conditions that only long service in the house can give.

When Mr. Reed came to congress, 22 years ago, he had a state reputation as a successful lawyer of great general and in the legislature, as well as in the office of city attorney of Portland, where, as in other places, he accomplished things which had not been done before. But here he was for the time being unknown, and, having been placed on a committee that met but not, seemed likely to remain in the eclipse of the famous Maine man then in the zenith. Mr. Reed, as he has often said, did not want to come to congress. Indeed, he had never wanted any office except these in the line of his profession, and he felt then, as now, that no man can love the life of a congressman unless he likes to get up early in the morning and run errands for his constituents around the white house and the departments most of the time, and this he certainly never did. It is rather strange that he stayed here, but the genius in the big, awkward body behind the large moon-face which then had so much less expression than now had some intimation of the opportunities ahead, and in spite of his pampered indolence (which did not prevent his being industrious as most men) he improved the first chance he got, which was on

the Potter committee, and unavailable for the more prominent Republicans, so well that he made his mark where all the houses could see it. From that time on he climbed, slowly, but steadily, to the leadership of the house. The great intellectual force appeared first in committee work, and then as he began to take part in debate his masterful personality impressed the house, which saw in him perhaps the most effective debater of our time. His wisdom, so solid and substantial, his parliamentary learning, so comprehensive and concise; his wit, so quick and keen, all employed with such dexterity and grace, gave him an early mastery.

In ten years he had reached the forefront of the battle. His election as speaker was simply the ratification of the natural selection of the house, even though he had none of the popular ways of his rival, Mr. McKinley. Although it is ten years since the beginning of his first speakership, it was so remarkable that it is still familiar. Speaker Reed returned the business methods of the house so thoroughly that new rules were accepted in the next congress by the men who had denounced them, and although there has been a movement for decreasing the power of the speaker, it is not so much directed against the Reed rules as against the rule adopted years before, in the Forty-sixth congress, giving the speaker absolute control of the question as to who shall have the floor to speak or make motions. It was the manner of the man in doing things—his autocratic, haughty and contemptuous manner, which rose with opposition and fought irresistibly, that made his rules seem more arbitrary than they were and maddened the opposition to blind fury. Mr. Reed did not plan it all in advance, as is generally supposed, and he would have come at it in more conciliatory fashion and with less sweeping results if it had not been for the way he was fought from the floor. The Democrats showed from the first a disposition to take the advantage of the very big, heavy, Republican majority, and roused Reed's indignation and widened his purpose.

The crisis came suddenly one day when he saw that he must take the new course on the question then pending in the house or abandon all his hopes for improving the rules and practice in the house. He had not had time to talk with a few Republicans whom he considered doubtful on the question, and three of whom could change the majority and defeat him, but he felt that he was right and that they would soon see it, and anyway that party loyalty would probably bind them to support him. So he sprang the new ruling on the surprised house, met the tremendous opposition, and so carried the rule unflinchingly, and so committed the Republicans that not one of them could escape. From that time on Speaker Reed was absolute master of the situation, and he went further than he had intended in developing his reforms. It was a most characteristic American thing that Mr. Reed had done, and it was not strange that it gradually made him a presidential candidate, although his popularity has always been of a very different sort than that of President McKinley. It has been greatest among the intellectual classes, and greatest of all among newspaper men, who are at once the best and severest critics of statesmen.

It is not too much to say that Mr. Reed was the most interesting man in Washington, as well as the greatest intellectually, by the confession of his associates in public life and that no one will ever take his place. All the candidates for the stateship put together would not equal him, although they are all men of more than average ability and attainments, and some of them of long and successful experience in congress. But they would be the first to recognize that Mr. Reed stands unique. There is a great deal of human nature in Mr. Reed, and he has his weak points like everybody else, but his strong qualities are those that most men admire most greatly and include some of the finest traits of our race. Just because he is human, however, he doubtless acted from mixed motives in leaving Washington for New York, and it is amusing to see the explanations furnished for him, even by those who know him, on the theory that it was some one reason which determined that he was to go.

He is a good man, as he himself has said over and over again, even though he has had a comfortable income for the last year or two, and without doubt the opportunity to secure a modest fortune for his wife and daughter, to whom he is devoted in a way that cannot be put into cold print, was an important consideration. Doubtless, too, he felt that he had done all that he could hope to do as speaker of the house under present conditions, and that he was weary of the situation in which he was forbidden both by party etiquette and parliamentary precedent to speak on the floor or even through articles in the magazines or interviews in the newspapers against party policies which he strongly disapproved. Doubtless, too, he realized that New York city was a very much better place for a presidential candidate than Portland, Me., and that it was quite possible that in 1904, if not sooner, the lightning might strike him in his new law offices.

It is not difficult to imagine a sudden and now unexpected turn of circumstances which would make him a formidable presidential candidate next year, and it is entirely easy to see him in imagination the Republican candidate four years later, for at that time he will be as young as most men at 54, with his splendid constitution, spirits and habits. The only thing to emphasize is that he has left Washington triumphant and not defeated.

AMUSEMENTS AND MORALS.

From a Champaign, Ill., Dispatch to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. The Rt. Rev. George F. Seymour, bishop of the diocese of Springfield, has just distributed among the parishes in his diocese, a pamphlet on "Amusements in Their Relation to Religion." The bishop says: "It is not necessary to abstain from laughter, to make merry with our friends, to play games. These things may be wrong because we make them wrong, but in themselves they are not wrong. Summing up the case of dancing, he says: "Dancing is not inherently evil, nor more than money is, or the drama, or the music. It is made so often by abuse. There are lascivious dances and there are bad people who dance, and there are occasions when one ought not to dance. So, precisely, are there bad songs, and improper plays, and vice purposes to which money is put, but these are not arguments against the legitimate use of money, the drama, or the music. So, precisely, with dancing, it comes under the same category, and one can not more consistently condemn dancing than he can condemn money, or music, or the drama. "As regards the clergy in their relation

to the theater and dancing and amusements generally," says the bishop, "we are heartily in sympathy with St. Paul, who says 'all things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.' 'Holy things for holy men,' is the safe, sound principle. The theater is, ordinarily, no place for the priest of Christ, not because it is indecent, or lewd, or immoral, for if it be such it is no place for any one, but because it is unsuited to his vocation who ministers the sacraments, and whose offices are needed by the bedside of the sick at the hour of death and by the open grave. For the same reasons the priest ought to take no part in the social dance. It is not befitting the dignity and sobriety which become him who preaches the blessed Gospel and celebrates the holy eucharist. Our plea is not for the theater, or dancing, or amusements, but for the young, that they may not be misled as to the distinction between good and evil, and so plunge recklessly into sin, and for our people, that they may not have their moral vision confused and so lose their way between right and wrong."

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