

The Scranton Tribune

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SCRANTON, MAY 18, 1899.

Mayor Moir is right in one thing! There is no controversy between him and Mr. Connell. The points at issue are now between the mayor and his private secretary and between both and the public.

Now Up to the Mayor.

There will be general sympathy for Mayor Moir if it is true that his private secretary has without authority involved the mayor in a would be deal with the Barber company. From the mayor's demand upon Mr. Connell it is to be inferred that he asked in good faith for the facts in the case. These he now has. They indicate clearly the need of a better understanding between the mayor and his confidential agent.

The mayor must inevitably suffer in the public estimation if by reason of the private secretary's indiscretion the mayor is involved or is not in the appearance of having been involved in a secret deal utterly at variance with the mayor's public professions. The public can hardly be expected to draw fine distinctions between the principal and the agent. A private secretary who says he comes from the mayor will usually be taken at his word. This certainly will be the case if, after the discovery of his assumption of such authority, he is retained in his place.

The question is now up to the mayor. He and Hutton must settle it between themselves.

The worrying over the Barber "octopus" seems to be greatest among those who have least at stake.

Figs!

The people demand that the streets be repaved, without the aid of the corporation which can afford to spend out of its plundering thousands to debauch public servants, to destroy civic virtue, and to wreck the very foundation of popular institutions—Republican.

File all the obloquy possible on the Barber "octopus"; call it every mean name in the dictionary; blame it for every evil existing in municipal circles; punch it, pummel it, riddle and erenate it; make all the transient political capital that it is possible to make among a portion of the population by theatrical lambasting of corporations and the fact will still remain that the city has entered into a contract with the Barber Asphalt company to repave the streets; that this contract was "lost" for political purposes; that the late mayor vetoed the appropriation illegally; that the present mayor is in honor bound to obey the more than two-thirds vote of council which, complying with his request for instructions, directed him to sign the new contract drawn up to replace the one that was "lost," and that unless the contract with the Barber people is carried out by the city in good faith there can be no secret reason of any consequence in Scranton for many a day, the hopes of the brick trust notwithstanding. The only way there now is to get the asphalt streets repaved is to go on with this contract. That is the cold, flat truth of the matter. Believing and snuffing cannot change it one iota. The question is simply whether the streets shall be repaved at once or whether a legal battle of indefinite duration shall intervene to postpone the necessary work, with the citizens suffering meantime and the city liable for costly damages.

If the Barber company is debauching public servants, destroying civic virtue and wrecking the foundations of popular institutions why did the present mayor vote last year to give it the contract? Why did not the Republican at that time expose the debauchery and pillory the debauchers? Why did Moir's private secretary go to this great mechanism of civic iniquity to make a deal with it in behalf of his man Walker? In the name of the prophet, figs!

One of those fine days "Oom Paul" Kruger will twist the British lion's tail once too often, and then there will be work for the coroner.

That Franchise Tax.

Governor Roosevelt has consented to accept three amendments to the Ford franchise tax bill. He is willing that the new tax shall not become operative until Oct. 1, so that necessary preparations can be made for it. He also wishes the state tax commission instead of the local authorities to have supervision and control of the levying of the assessments, his idea being that this arrangement would be more likely to secure uniformity and avoid favoritism. The other point assented to by the governor is that where a corporation already pays a local tax on its franchise the amount of this tax shall be deducted from its assessment by the state. The governor's idea in making the franchise tax a state tax rather than a local tax is that the state would be more certain to collect such a tax equitably. He does not propose that the state shall keep this revenue. An amount will be deducted sufficient to pay the expenses of the state tax commission in administering the law and the remainder turned over to the various communities in which the taxed franchises lie.

The governor has until May 27 in which to hold the original Ford bill under advisement. He has convened the legislature to meet in extra session May 22. If between May 22 and May 27 the desired amendments are enacted, well and good; if not, the bill will be signed in its original condition. Under no circumstances will Roosevelt sign any amendments calculated to emasculate the original bill or throw doubt on its validity. The hero of the charge up San Juan hill is showing the same direct and unwavering courage in this

formidable and memorable civic battle, and in the later instance as in the earlier he is bound to be victorious.

Private Secretary Hutton's admission that he called to ask a favor from the "paid hireling of a corporation which is well known to have repeatedly attempted to debauch our public servants" doesn't look as well as it might. The mayor's confidential agent should avoid even the appearance of evil.

On Its Own Merits.

The Philadelphia Inquirer opportunely notes the disagreement of the prophets in the "insurgent" camp who are pretending to foretell what is going to happen in the next Republican state convention.

"Some weeks ago," it says, "the insurgents proclaimed that Judge Archibald of Lackawanna was what they designated as the Quay candidate for Supreme court justice. This nomination, they then alleged, was to be made as the result of an old deal. The fact is that Judge Archibald has been an aspirant for the Supreme bench for a number of years and he has on several occasions, without the backing of the state leaders, demonstrated that he has a strong personal following, not only in his home county of Lackawanna, but in other sections of the state. He is probably stronger today than at any time in his career. But when they found that their assaults on Judge Archibald were calculated to make him friends rather than weaken him, the insurgent managers, who seem to be devoting most of their time to making slates for the Quay men, changed their tactics and started the story that Colonel Quay was dead set upon promoting Justice W. D. Porter, of Allegheny, from the Superior court to the Supreme bench. Ever since then there has been a discordant jangling of the insurgent organs. Some of them are still on the old song that 'Archibald is slated,' while others are harping on the Porter proposition."

So far as Judge Archibald's candidacy is concerned, it is traveling very satisfactorily on its own legs. The judge is the choice of Northeastern Pennsylvania and he has friends and admirers enough in other portions of the commonwealth to give him flattering support in more remote localities. It is a candidate to stand or fall on its merits and we do not expect it to fall.

Governor Stone's recent alleged "blow at education" seems to have caused greater squirming in the camps of school text book sharks and in the dens of editorial anti-administration demagogues than in circles where an actual reduction in school fund would be felt.

The Divorce Problem.

In a recent contribution to the press Cardinal Gibbons outlined and defended with characteristic ability the position of the Catholic church upon the subject of divorce, which is that marriage, once entered into, cannot be dissolved for any reason save death. After an argument touching the Scriptural precedent for this position the cardinal proceeded to consider the divorce problem in its social significance and incidentally gave some interesting statistics. He pointed out, for example, the existence in the various states of twenty-two different causes for divorce, and noted that in two states—Illinois and Maine—the whole matter of granting or withholding a divorce is left to the discretion of the judge. He added:

"There was a total of 328,716 divorces in the United States in the twenty years 1867-1886. Of these there were 122,121 in the last half of the period and 206,595 in the last half. That is to say, the divorces in the latter half were 69 per cent more than those in the first half. The population between 1870 and 1880 increased only 30 per cent. The divorces in 1870 were 10,962 and in 1880 were 19,655; and they are in 1888 more than two and one-half times what they were in 1867. I have not at hand the figures for the last decade, but there is no reason to believe that they show any decrease in the awful industry of the divorce courts. From the figures I have quoted it is painfully manifest that the cancer of divorce is rapidly spreading over the community and poisoning the foundations of the nation. Let the imagination picture to itself the fearful woe daily caused by this rock of scandal and the number of families that are cast adrift on the ocean of life. Great stress is justly laid by moralists on the observance of the Sunday. But what mockery is the external repose of the Christian Sabbath to homes from which domestic peace is banished by war, where the mother's heart is broken, the father's spirit crushed, and where the children cannot cling to one of their parents without exciting the jealousy or hatred of the other. And these melancholy scenes are followed by the final act in the drama when the family ties are dissolved, and hearts that had vowed eternal love and union are separated to meet no more. This social plague calls for a radical cure; and the remedy can be found only in the abolition of our mischievous legislation regarding divorce and in an honest application of the teachings of the Gospel."

Commenting upon the cardinal's declaration the Times-Herald well says: "People who eagerly desire a reform differ among themselves as to a remedy. Some of these insist, like the cardinal on the one cause and ban against remarriage. They would have a rule absolute. Others, while deploring the ease with which separation is procured along with the right to remarry, are not so certain about the single cause. They will reflect, for example, upon the case of a woman who is bound with more galling bonds than those of a slave to a habitual drunkard. Here there may not be only humiliation and a mental anguish that is frightful to endure, but a distinct bodily peril. In the long list of drunkards, foolish, filthy, stupid, we at length come to the class that are ugly and brutal. When a woman is tied to a creature of this class it is literally true to say that earth to her is a hell. It is a hell also to her children. In that household there can be no rest, no joy, no hope save in death or the divorce court. Surely

it is not right that so many lives should be sacrificed for an indefinite period by a passionate, cruel and tyrannous wretch who in many cases has not the grace to feel remorse. When affection has been crushed out by continued ill treatment, and fear and loathing have taken its place, it is time to set the woman free, to give her a chance at happiness even to the extent of marrying again if her first experience has not been all sufficient. This is one instance aside from adultery in which divorce seems only fair, just and reasonable, and there are others which might be cited. But the total of satisfactory causes falls far short of twenty-two, which the cardinal finds in the statutes of the states. It is these pretexts which do the harm by inviting discontent and mutual rebellion and encouraging estrangements."

The movement for greater uniformity in statutes governing divorce merits support; and so does the not less important movement to visit social condemnation upon those who fly to the divorce courts on trivial provocations and do their best to turn family relations into a mockery and a jest.

Unrest in the Transvaal still continues and will continue until there is a change in the order of things in the territory controlled by the Boers. It will be impossible for the English-speaking residents of Johannesburg, who are largely in the majority, to submit much longer to the tyranny of the Boers. Taxation without representation can never be successfully imposed upon any class of people who have ever tasted the sweets of freedom in a civilized land.

WHY NOT BE FAIR?

Editor of The Tribune—Sir: It seems to me that the Barber asphalt contract question is receiving more comment than is really called for, but free speech and a free press are the rights of the citizen and no doubt should have a proper amount of exercise. Still, the whole matter is simply a plain business proposition and should be treated in a business way. The city wanted her asphalt streets repaved. She devised her own plan and embodied it in an ordinance. Her engineers prepared the plans and specifications as to the time, method and material. She advertised for proposals to do the work and from the various bids received she selected and adopted the bid of the Barber company. Nothing remains but the formal execution of the papers necessary to witness the agreement.

In carrying out this contract it will be necessary for the company in the next ninety days to expend about \$50,000. Not a dollar of this is collected from the city until the city's own officers have examined the work and certified that it is satisfactory. The city's officers were the free choice of her citizens and taxpayers. They were selected on account of their integrity and business ability. Surely the city may trust her own agents to guard her best interests. If not, then republican government is a failure.

The Barber company is not an "octopus" or "snake." Like every laboring man, business man, firm or corporation, it is doing business in the expectation of making a profit. The city was under no obligation to accept its bid, but having accepted it, it is entitled to the same courteous and gentlemanly treatment that one business man accords to another. Why not be fair?

—Ira H. Burns, Scranton, May 17.

THE RIGHT KIND OF MAN.

From the Philadelphia Ledger. We need in public life more men of the standard of Theodore Roosevelt. We may not agree with all of his views on public questions, but he is bravely, aggressively honest. He speaks his mind fearlessly, and disdains duplicity. While thoroughly aroused to the vicious surroundings, he is by no means impatient. Earnest, practical and appreciative of things as they are, he is hopeful in the pursuit of things as they should be. The demagogue and the hypocrite have no use for Roosevelt, but the American people admire him and his success in life, though honorable endeavor alone, should be an inspiration to American youth.

GIVE US, O! GOD, TO KNOW, O, Great Jehovah! make it plain, To them that look to Thee, and fain Would wisely worship at Thy feet; O! give us, Great God, to know, Why must fair Progress travel so, To bring forth what for right, is meet? O! give us, God, to know!

Through Time, so far as mortal man, May backward, straining, barely scan, He sees the road of Progress barred, By bigotry; and bending low, The martyr deals his hindering blow, To check the forward march, and guard, Why? give us, God, to know.

The Nazarene, who came to give Salvation, that the soul might live, Met lash and spear, and cross, and thorn, To win Thy kingdom here below. His way was made a way of woe, Why, thus to us, should peace be born? O! give us, God, to know!

When in the throes of civil strife, This young republic fought for life; Behind the field a carping gang, In right's pretense, a lurking foe, Stood in the light of battle's glow, And snarling, gnashed their fang to fang, Why? give us, God, to know.

Ah, thus Thou movest on the storm, Thine awful wonders to perform; And, humbly, we accept Thy way, When even our national heroes would lay Columbia stummed and low, That he, abashed, shall rue the day, O! give us, God, to know! —William L. Visscher, in Times-Herald.

REXFORD'S.

SCRANTON, May 18. Seems a shame not to call your attention to the way we are selling silverware. You might as well buy right, so don't forget us when you are ready. Rogers, Reed & Barton and Meriden goods that need no praise.

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In December, 1864, after Admiral Farragut had been ordered home on account of ill health, he attended a great public reception in his honor in New York. On that occasion a purse of \$50,000 was presented to him for the purchase of a residence in that city. A few years ago a home was presented to Mrs. Garfield in Cleveland by Ohio friends and admirers of her late husband.

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