

The Scranton Tribune

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When space will permit, The Tribune is always glad to print short letters from its readers bearing on current topics but its rule is that these must be signed, for publication, by the writer's real name.

SCRANTON, JULY 13, 1899.

Can the Builders' exchange, justify its refusal to hold a conference with the men on strike?

The Divorce Problem.

The state of Indiana has an uncommonly careful system of collecting vital statistics and its figures on marriage and divorce are approximately accurate. Ten years ago the number of divorces in Indiana was 10 per cent. of the marriages; today it is 11.16 for the entire state and in some counties it is as high as 22 per cent., all the cities reporting above the average. In 1898, 25,043 marriages were solemnized in the state and 2,896 divorces granted. Of these divorces, 2,103 were granted to the wife and 793 to the husband; or nearly three to one, a state of affairs tending to indicate that in the marriage co-partnership either woman's patience is less durable than man's or else she considers that she gets the worse part of the bargain.

While the percentages of divorces in the counties containing large cities are higher than in purely agricultural counties, averaging twice as much, it is an ominous fact that the increase in divorce percentages is almost uniform throughout the entire state. This is accounted for in part by the fact that the laws of Indiana make divorce easy. For example, less than a week ago the courts of Marion county, in which Indianapolis is situated, granted a divorce to a young woman who had been married less than one year. The wedding had been a brilliant affair, and both of the parties belonged to the most fashionable society in the city. The husband stayed out late at night, and on one occasion when the wife wished to discharge a servant he interposed to prevent it. This was the principal "crucial" treatment proved, but it was sufficient to secure the divorce.

But it is not so much easy divorce laws as it is easy consciences which are to blame for the growing disrespect for the sanctity of family life. We do not join with especial enthusiasm in the clamor for more stringent divorce laws. They cannot be made so stringent that a man or woman seriously bent on securing a dissolution of marriage (they cannot attain to the desired end. The difficulty lies deeper. It lies in the superabundance of frothy and flashy views of life and its responsibilities; in the diseased condition of social opinion which applauds the smart adulterer and inclines itself in the direction of ready acquiescence in social impurity so long as it isn't found out and dragged into scandalous publicity. One symptom of it is shown in the general support which ostensibly decent people extend to shady plays or books or pictures and in the eagerness with which they patronize and sustain salacious publications like the blackmaling Sunday smut sheet tolerated in this city.

The whole tendency of this kind of thing is to inspire boys and girls with erroneous ideas of social and domestic life; to poison their minds and morals; to fill their heads with nonsense and their hearts with unruly passions which too often lead to social misery and disgrace. In such an atmosphere multiplication of divorces is inevitable. Making stringent the divorce laws will not purify the stream at its source. There must be a general cleaning up.

Blunt old Captain Dyer, who commanded the Baltimore "Manila," doesn't mince his words. "The American soldiers," he says, "are enduring enough perils and hardships in the Philippines without being derided and denounced by a few Boston cranks."

Municipal Special Laws.

(Wilkes-Barre Record, Editorial.) The fact that the State Bar association, in session last week in this city, voted down the report of the committee favoring a change in the constitution so as to enable the enactment of special legislation for cities, boroughs and townships, does not necessarily give the quiescence to that movement. One of the principal arguments against such a constitutional amendment, as presented by ex-Attorney General Palmer and others before the Bar association, was that the outrageous and scandalous special legislation abuses previous to 1873 led to the calling of the convention that framed our present state constitution and caused that body to incorporate the clause absolutely prohibiting special legislation; all of which is true. But it is also true that the proposed amendment is so carefully protected by precautionary provisions that the abuses which necessitated the constitutional convention of 1873 would be impossible.

Under the former constitution the door was wide open to special legislation of all kinds; there was absolutely no restriction or limitation. It is not proposed to now again throw open the doors to the abuses formerly so justly complained of. The amendment proposed provides only that special legislation for municipalities may be enacted after the people of the city, borough or township directly interested shall, by popular vote, have endorsed such proposed legislation. There surely would be little danger of special legislation abuses under a law so carefully guarded as is proposed in this case.

By way of illustration, the needs of the several cities of this commonwealth differ greatly, nevertheless under existing conditions all cities belonging to the same class must have the same charter provisions. We fall to see what particular danger there would be to any public interest if Wilkes-Barre, for instance, were enabled to secure certain legislation which the people, by

popular vote, declare they need and desire, but which would be of no advantage whatever to Scranton or Reading, and consequently not desired by those cities. On the other hand, why should special legislation be desired by Scranton and Reading but not by the other cities of the same class neither need nor desire it? To give to each that which would be advantageous seems to us to be entirely in line with sound public policy as well as good common sense.

The constitutional convention of 1873 was controlled and the constitution framed by eminent, wise and fearless men. They struck at the worst of the abuses that prevailed under the former constitution, not the least of which was special legislation. It is not now proposed to undo the work of the convention, but to modify it so as to meet existing conditions in a certain particular. It is not intended to revive abuses, but to rectify a too sweeping prohibitory provision. It seems to us that there is nothing unreasonable in this, but, on the contrary, that which is commendable and necessary. At any rate we hope to see the effort renewed to secure the amendment at the next session of the legislature.

Time certainly does work out wonderful revenges. Not quite a year ago Secretary Alger, stung by the Santiago road robin, dug up a private letter from Colonel Roosevelt and made public a garbled extract from it in the hope of killing Roosevelt's popularity among the volunteers. Now Roosevelt, next to McKinley, is the most admired and influential official in the country; when he is invited to a conference at the White House Alger is left out; and Alger's inevitable retirement casts its shadow before.

An Extraordinary Situation in the Blue Grass State.

The situation existing in the Democratic party in Kentucky is extraordinary. The following public call has been issued by prominent Democrats representing every county in the state:

"All Democrats who believe it the duty of the majority of the party fairly expressed to rule and who are willing to subordinate their personal preferences and all minor matters to that will in order to secure the triumph of those great principles which will promote the prosperity and welfare of the whole people, the success of popular government and the maintenance of liberty, and who believe that the Louisville convention was dominated by force, fraud and treachery, and by a combination of shrewd, selfish, machine politicians, who substituted their will for that of a majority of the party, and who are not bound by this action, are invited to meet with us at the court house in Mount Sterling on Monday next to take such counsel and consult as to their political duty under the circumstances and as to the proper steps that should be taken to avoid overwhelming defeat this year and to secure success next."

The facts behind this movement are these: When the recent Democratic state convention met in Louisville, 200 delegates were instructed for State Senator William Goebel, of Covington, for governor, 350 for William J. Stone, and about 540 for Wat P. Hardin, the previous nominee. There were also 300 contested seats. Hardin was the majority choice of the party, he being a free silver man, while Goebel is an anti-Bryantist said to be in league with Senator Gorman, of Maryland, and John R. McLean, of Cincinnati. According to a signed statement issued by Stone after the convention's adjournment, when Goebel and Stone saw that Hardin was in the lead Goebel proposed to Stone a combination. The terms of this combination were that if Stone would let Goebel name the permanent organization of the convention, thus disposing of the contested seats, and also agree to let Goebel select two persons that Stone would have the power to appoint to office if elected governor, Goebel and his friends would throw their strength to Stone and nominate him. Pursuant to this understanding Stone's friends gave Goebel the organization and then Goebel threw Stone and nominated himself. He did this by unseating Hardin men and seating creatures of his own, although in many instances the men thus unseated had in the primaries received 5 votes to 1 for their opponents.

But this is not the only charge against Goebel. Last year he was instrumental in securing the adoption of a new election law which is so flagrantly unfair in its discrimination against Republicans that many of the old line Democrats, who although firm Republicans were still men who believe in fair play, were alienated. This law created a state board of election commissioners who in turn name the election commissioners for each county, the county commissioners in their turn naming all election officers. The county board may at any time remove any election officer. The county election board constitutes the canvassing board of the election returns in each county, awarding or withholding certificates. In this manner its members will pass upon the action of their own appointees, and, as may be seen, the opportunity for correcting a local fraud will be very small, for the county board is in fact responsible for the existence of the precinct boards. The precinct boards are allowed two days after election in which to make returns of the vote cast, and then they hand the ballots over to the county election commissioners, who count them and make out the certificates of election. Although these various boards all are supposed to have virtuous representations, the Goebel law provides that a majority shall constitute a quorum with power to do business. The minority, in other words, is absolutely powerless to prevent fraud.

Another section of the Goebel law provides that when the election of a governor or lieutenant-governor is contested, a board for determining the contest shall be formed in the manner following: On the third day after the organization of the general assembly which meets next after the election, the senate shall select, by lot, three of its members, and the house of representatives shall select, by lot, eight of its members, and the eleven so selected shall constitute a board, seven of whom shall have power to act. Where it shall appear that the candidates receiving the highest number of votes given have received an equal

number of votes, the right of office shall be determined by lot, under the direction of the board. Where the person returned is found not to have been legally qualified to receive the office at the time of his election a new election shall be ordered to fill the office. The decision of the board shall not, however, be final nor conclusive. Such decision shall be reported to the two houses of the general assembly for the further action of the general assembly, and the general assembly shall then determine such contest. In other words, as the New York Sun points out, so long as there is no contest—that is, when the Democratic candidate for governor gets a certificate of election—the determination of the state board of commissioners is conclusive, but whenever he does not get such certificate, whenever, on the face of the returns, even though compiled under Democratic authority and by Democratic officials, a Republican is elected, then the whole matter is referred to a special committee, the members of which are chosen by lot, and if by any chance they should fail to do what is expected of them, why, there is still an appeal to the general assembly. It is to the credit of the decent Democrats of the Blue Grass state that they don't want a cheat of this type to be foisted upon them as governor, even though he bears the title of a Democrat.

Ward R. Bliss, the Delaware county "insurgent," announces his belief that Colonel Quay would now be elected senator if a special session of the legislature should be convened. Very likely. It is equally probable that he will be seated on the strength of the governor's appointment. Quay is not worrying.

The lesson to be derived from the accident to the Paris is that it would be prudent to have at least two officers reckon the course of a ship and compare notes, especially when the route is an unfamiliar one. In guarding against errors in calculation two heads ought to be better than one.

Christian Endeavor Delegate Boyd, of St. Louis, who made a speech at Detroit the other day in defense of lynching, may be a proper sample of the Sunday school boy of the South, but it is not likely that he will induce many of the northern delegates to adopt his creed.

M. Zola is kept busy these days trying to head off the yarns published in various American newspapers who cannot realize that the author's championship of Dreyfus was prompted by any other instinct than a desire for notoriety.

One of the things which the next congress should do is to provide one kind of stamps for both postage and internal revenue use; or at least put revenue stamps on sale at post offices.

Colonel Kohlsaat, we infer from the columns of his esteemed newspaper, has conceived a strong affection for the recent colonel of the Rough Riders. That emotion is infectious.

If Adjutant General Corbin is to be the president's chief military adviser he should be put in command of the army. The commanding general should not be an ornament.

The Sultan of Sulu has agreed to take his position from the United States government and live in peace on his particular reservation. The Sultan of Sulu is wise.

Canada a Standing Menace to England

From the New York Sun.

THE blocking of an agreement with the British government on a modus vivendi preliminary to a final settlement of the Alaska boundary dispute, due to obstacles imposed by Canada, affords an instance and an evidence of the perils to peace between England and this country which are involved in the existence of the Canadian Dominion. So far as Lord Salisbury and Mr. Choate are concerned, there is every reason to believe that an amicable agreement upon a temporary boundary line would have been reached several weeks ago, but the Canadian government would not consent to it, and consequently the question still remains open, with dangerous possibilities. In saying this we do not mean to imply that this Alaska boundary dispute is likely of itself and at present to destroy our amicable relations with Great Britain; but so long as it continues unsettled it will be a cause of controversy which may lead to unpleasant results in the future.

The attitude of Canada in these particular negotiations is indicative of a state of feeling generally toward this country which suggests the ultimate possibility of such trouble for Great Britain. The cause of this present dispute, of course, is the discovery of gold in Alaska, and it shows that wherever the interests of Canada come seriously in conflict with those of this country the Canadian government is likely to make use of any dispute which it may hope to sustain by demanding the sovereign protection upon which rests its whole reliance. It feels that it can always turn to England to fight its battles for it.

Thus Canada is always a possible source of danger for England. Its territory lies along the whole length of our northern boundary and is the only territory belonging to a European power which is contiguous to us. If the relations of Canada to us were invariably and genuinely harmonious and sympathetic it would be a different matter, but actually, as it is, the dispute over the Alaska boundary and other causes of difference have demonstrated, there is no such sentiment toward this country in Canada, but rather a captious feeling. As a separate and competing country, it is not reasonable to expect that its spirit should be affectionate. We have grown into one of the greatest powers in the world, with a population of seventy-five millions and enormous wealth and resources, while Canada has remained almost stagnant, with a population of only five millions, insignificant revenues, and comparative poverty. Naturally, envy and jealousy of American prosperity have arisen; but Canada, in spite of its own intrinsic weakness, can boast

that it is a part of the great British empire, and that it gets thence a gigantic power of protection upon which to rely for its defence. It is a boy, but a big father is at hand to fight its battles.

The only existing cause of possible trouble between us and Great Britain is, therefore, Canada; the British dependency which stretches along our whole northern boundary; a foreign possession, offering innumerable occasions for irritation and resentment, because of that contiguity through thousands of miles. Apart from Canada, our relations with Great Britain are now such as, apparently, to preclude the possibility of friction between the two countries. They are more than peaceful; they are cordial and sympathetic to a degree that is conducive to the peace of the whole world. Except for Canada, the United States and England would now be in cordial agreement upon a temporary adjustment of the Alaska dispute, and there would be no prospect of future trouble in the question. A final settlement satisfactory to both countries has been reached hereafter, so far as they are concerned, it is simply a difference as to a determinable question of fact between two nations which are cordial in their friendship and heartily desire to remain so.

Now, what advantage is there for England that compensates for this peril invited by the existence of the Canadian Dominion? If the disaster of a conflict occurred, of what value would Canada be to England? It would rather be a source of weakness, for obviously we could overrun it immediately. Every competent military opinion in this country, and perhaps in England also, agrees as to that matter. So long, too, as our relations with Great Britain are wholly friendly and both sides desire earnestly to perpetuate the complete accord, Canada is no longer necessary to England for any defensive purpose whatever. While continuing as an English dependency along our whole northern boundary, it furnishes constant occasion to disputes with us which, utterly unimportant as they might be to the parent state, would endanger a rupture of the peaceful relations between the two countries. For this terrible responsibility Great Britain gets from Canada, not in return for any financial or political gain. The gain to Canada of annexation to this republic would be vast for itself, but the gain to England in having removed this only obstacle to permanently peaceful and cordial relations with the United States would be incalculably greater.

NO MENACE TO OTHERS.

Ex-American diplomat Harrison at Paris. American diplomacy has been, I think, peculiarly sentimental. Our moral intervention for the oppressed and our late intervention by arms have been in the interests of liberty, not gain. We see opening before us the wide door of commerce throughout the world, and it must not be thought unnatural, in spite of differences of creed, if a peculiar friendliness is felt by us for those of our own language and race across the channel, but no one has suggested that for this either Great Britain or the United States should assume all the quarrels and animosities of others. The friendship of the United States for England is not enmity for the rest of the world.

SAID IN FUN.

Taken at Her Word. "Mrs. F. J. Gillington-Giggs is awfully mad at the newspapers; she says they treated her so shabbily." "Did they?" Such a prominent society woman, too." "Yes; she told them they must not say anything about her reception, and they didn't."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

The Why. Curate—I never saw such a set of idlers as I had to preach to this morning. Mabel (one of the congregation)—I suppose that is why you kept calling them "dearly beloved brethren."—Tit-Bits.

Sent His Wife. Minister—I am sorry I didn't see you at church yesterday, Tammus. Tammus—Well, ye see, we slean a bad day; it wint to turn out a dog in. But I sent the wife, sir.—Tit-Bits.

Weaving a Spell. He—I am rather in favor of the English than the American mode of spelling. She—Yes, indeed. "Take 'barbour,' for instance; having 'u' in it makes all the difference in the world."—Tit-Bits.

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Throwing It in His Teeth. He—To hear you tell it one would think I never told a single truth before we were married. She—Well, you did prevaricate to a considerable extent, but I'll give you credit for having told me the truth once. He—Indeed! And when was that, pray? She—When you proposed. Don't you remember you said you were unworthy of me?—Chicago News.

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More Than Should Be There. William Dean Howells rises to say that genius is simply hard work. What a lot of genius there must be in the penitentiaries!—Kansas City Times.

MASCAGNI'S ROYAL CRITIC.

From the Philadelphia Post. Mascagni, the famous composer of "Cavalleria Rusticana," a few years ago was called to entertain the royal court in Rome. He did so and delighted his audience. When he had finished playing he started a conversation with a little princess who had stood near the piano during the recital and had shown every sign of deep interest. As a matter of fact, she had been instructed by her mother to say, if the question should be asked, "that Mascagni was the greatest musician in all Italy." The composer asked her which of the great living masters she liked best, and the proud mother turned toward the child to hear the pretty little speech which had been taught to her. Instead of the compliment came the withering remark: "There are no great masters living. They are all dead."

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THE LONG GREEN

lawn around the house, or the little patch of grass in the dooryard, require constant attention to look beautiful. Don't borrow your neighbor's lawn mower which you find isn't sharp, and then say sharp things about it which makes your wife sad, but come in here and buy a lawn mower that will cut like a razor and runs as easy as a bicycle. The labor saved will amply repay you for the small outlay. And such things as Pruning Shears and Grass Clippers that will give satisfaction are here too.

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R-I-P-A-N-S.

For the last year and six months I had been troubled with the mites, and had two physicians, who prescribed a blood tonic and to lather the mites with saleratus. The tonic did me no good, so I gave up all medicine and used nothing but the saleratus. The mites were so itching and painful that I did not have one good night's sleep while I was troubled with them. I had them so bad that I wore gloves at night in order not to scratch them, and took so long for them to heal, I also had to go to the expense of having a rug in order not to ruin the carpet in the bedrooms when taking the saleratus bath, which I would have to take three and four times a night, and I tell you it was a awful trouble every night. At first when the mites appeared they were as large and had the same appearance as a peanut, and then they were more easily cooled and disappeared quick, but when I started to take the Tablets they were as small as a pea and stung more and were hard to cool off. I don't know how to praise Ripans Tablets enough, and it seems like a new life to me, for the mites have mostly all disappeared and some nights I have not any. I am now on my eighth 5-cent package, and shall continue to take R-I-P-A-N-S until they establish a permanent cure. To recommend them to all my friends is the best I can do for Ripans Tablets. I am thirty-seven years of age, and have been attending bar for twenty years.

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