

The Scranton Tribune

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When space will permit, The Tribune is always glad to print short letters from its friends bearing on current topics, but its rule is that these must be signed, for publication, by the writer's real name; and the condition precedent to acceptance is that all contributions of whatever nature, and by whomsoever sent, shall be subject to editorial revision.

TEN PAGES.

SCRANTON, DECEMBER 15, 1899.

The Filipino Junta at Hong Kong has evidently lost Aquinaldo and the rest of the government, and is depending entirely upon the efforts of correspondents of heated imagination for consolation.

Mr. Scranton's Letter.

WITH REFERENCE to the letter from Mr. W. W. Scranton, in another column, we have comparatively little to add to the comment made yesterday. Mr. Scranton's view of the law of responsibility for signed newspaper publications is different from that propounded by the courts and we prefer the opinion of the courts upon this subject.

As to the mayor, we renew our belief that his private financial accounts are not a fit subject of public debate at this time. While they might be proper for discussion if he were at present a candidate for office, at this moment he is the mayor of the city, holding the people's credentials and entitled, in private relations, to ordinary courtesy. We, too, have grave doubts as to the advisability of municipal ownership under the conditions which exist in the city of Scranton. But we have no wish to emphasize this argument by unfair illustration.

Whether or not the editor of this paper should have given notice to Mr. Scranton of the proposed changes in text in his submitted letter is a matter of judgment and we concede that this might properly have been done. The circumstances under which the letter was received and considered made this somewhat difficult and no thought was entertained by the editor that charges so obviously in the line of prudence and fairness, and made with honest motives, would be expected to have made the basis of personal attack. To prevent any misunderstanding in future, however, we wish to re-assert the remark of yesterday that contributors must expect the right of editorial revision to be exercised whenever the editor's judgment so prompts. Contributions will be accepted in future only on this condition.

The present editor may or may not be "temporary," but while he is the editor he will perform his full duty as he sees fit, and with this remark the discussion closes.

In order to prevent misapprehension, it may be well to state that the new South African consul, Mr. Hay, is not the author of "Little Breaches."

A Peculiar Legal Defect.

A PECULIAR defect in the statutory laws of this commonwealth was brought into prominence in the local court yesterday for, we think, the first time in any county. The facts were these:

One Peter Petrusk had been bondsman for a certain Alexander Smith, who had fled to Missouri, leaving Petrusk liable for the forfeited bail. To secure Smith's return, Petrusk gave information before an alderman and made oath in the district attorney's office that Smith, before departing, had burglarized Petrusk's house and stolen \$500. Upon this information, duly supported by affidavit, Smith was arrested and Petrusk was subsequently indicted for perjury.

Upon trial the point was raised by Petrusk's attorney that perjury in Pennsylvania can consist of false swearing only in violation of a Pennsylvania statute or to the material obstruction of a process of court. The requirement of an oath to information calling for requisition proceedings is established by act of congress but not by any statute in this commonwealth, hence the quarter sessions court of Lackawanna county had no jurisdiction and the judge was compelled to instruct the jury to acquit.

The loophole here left for abuse of local privileges is large. Under this state of the law in this commonwealth any man having a grudge against another need only await until that other degrades into another state to trump up a mass of falsehood under oath, causing the man's arrest, his detention pending the arrival of extradition papers and his return in custody, all to a most unjust purpose. We understand that District Attorney Jones will draft a law for submission to the next legislature giving statutory force to the rules of the state department at Harrisburg governing applications for extradition. The need of such a law is obvious and the matter should not be permitted to fall into oblivion.

Mr. Bryan is in danger of becoming known as the lone speechmaker.

Factory Inspection.

THE RECENT fire in Reading which resulted in the death of one woman and serious injury to several girls employed in a factory may be the agent of much future benefit if the warning is heeded by the factory inspectors and those who employ large numbers of operatives in necessarily crowded quarters. The system adopted by many mill owners of having windows and locking doors during working hours is dangerous under any circumstances and tends to increase the

rors of a panic that is liable to occur at any time in a manufacturing establishment crowded with women and girls. It is the duty of the factory inspector to see that laws in this respect, as well as those relating to exits and fire escapes, are properly observed. The inspector who announces his coming with a blast of trumpets, or the official who looks upon his duties as a political plume in the way of pleasure trips about his district, can generally be relied upon by factory superintendents to look with indulgence upon any shortcomings in the way of protection for employees that is seldom needed. But the earnest official who appears at unexpected periods and has only the safety of the lives practically in his care in view when visiting shops that are filled with overworking busy operatives, is often unpopular.

In the postal and internal revenue departments of the civil service, the inspectors arrive at unexpected moments night or day and the official in charge of government funds must be prepared to give an account of his stewardship at any time without warning or opportunity to arrange any seeming discrepancy. If the same care was observed in every case in looking after the welfare of the humble employee of the factory and workshop that is taken in protecting the cash of the government, it is believed that loss of life would be very rare in cases of disaster by fire.

General Funston makes a mistake in avowing that he will return and hunt his stragglers when through fighting Filipinos. The most elusive and treacherous of the dusky opponents of the American soldiers in the Philippines are honorable and easy to locate when compared to the satanic slanders, who, like the fiendish firebug under cover of darkness, applies the torch to combustibles here and there and disappears before the results of his work become apparent. General Funston evidently speaks hastily when he expresses a determination to inflict punishment upon the despicable element that has attempted to stain his escutcheon. It is not worth the effort.

The Proper Cure.

IF, AS LATEST advices indicate, the Philippine insurrection has been reduced to a few bands of roving robbers who kill and plunder at will, the solution of the problem cannot be far off in case proper measures of dealing with the insurgents be adopted. Heretofore, the Filipino warrior had only to drop his gun in the bushes, throw up his hands and come into the American camp with the cry of "Amigo" on his tongue's end and be forgiven and fed until he saw fit to again steal away and join his dusky comrades. The leniency of the American officials in dealing with the turbulent followers of Aguinaldo has had, no doubt, a mischievous effect in producing a wrong impression upon the treacherous Tagals, who cannot understand considerate treatment that has not been prompted by fear. The new policy of dealing with these restless bandits in the way of inflicting swift and severe punishment upon them in future will without doubt have a more wholesome effect than all the peace overtures that could be made.

The insurgents who still resist the good offices of the United States government are not patriots in any sense of the word and never were. They do not desire independence, civilization, or law and order. They hope only for a chaotic state of government which will allow them to plunder and persecute at will their weaker brethren in the archipelago. Good government and a system of service that affords protection alike to the austere and humble is a state of affairs to be dreaded. It is useless to attempt to tame this element of barbarism by good advice or moral suasion. They must first be made to understand that the laws of the United States are accompanied by penalties that will be administered with firmness and despatch. When the Filipino bandit begins to realize that his career as an exponent of Atkinsonism is sure to terminate at the end of a rope he will no doubt be more willing to turn his attention to the development of his country.

If Brother Roberts could induce his neighbors in Utah to keep quiet, he would be able to make a much better showing.

Unfair to the Ladies.

THE PROHIBITIONISTS have started an innovation with regard to their national convention at Chicago which may prove to be a boom bang. Many of the members have meditated long and earnestly over the admission of women on the floor of their convention with the result that an open protest is now made against the precedent already established of allowing feminine representation. This step is taken on the plea that a more decided effort should be made to give the party weight in national affairs. It is claimed that more influence and, therefore, more votes can be gained by not giving up so much space in the convention to the women, and a determined stand is to be made in favor of the change of programme.

This is truly a significant incident. The prohibition party chiefly owes its existence to the intemperate, enthusiastic work of women. The Women's Christian Temperance union was the principle lever which hoisted prohibition as a partisan power upon the pinnacle of the most popular period in its history. It was largely the women who urged on the movement culminating in the abortive attempt to secure a constitutional amendment prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor in the United States. It has been by the personal intensity of aim characteristic of the sex that the prohibitionists have been enabled to command the attention and to assert the sway they have held over public sentiment.

It is, therefore, very noticeable that at this late day it should suddenly be realized that the place heretofore held by women in the conventions can be

better utilized by substituting men. The peculiar strength of the tie between women and the prohibition party has chiefly depended on the fact that this was the only partisan political organization which recognized women as on a par with men, and apparently considered their services indispensable. The prohibition orator always made a great hit when he appealed to the sentimental propensity of the halcyon days when women may vote and when, therefore, intemperance will be promptly suppressed. The suffrage cry has been the prohibition lecturer's strong card. Just how he will assume the new movement toward the exclusion of women in the national deliberations of the party with the professions of their indispensability in the past is a trifle difficult to foresee.

The appointment of General Leonard Wood as governor of Cuba is but another demonstration of the wisdom and spirit of conservatism which pervades the administration at Washington. Notwithstanding the fact that it has been apparent for many months that General Wood was the most available man for the position requiring so much resolution and diplomacy, the president has been deliberate in making the change, preferring to weigh the matter thoroughly before selecting a successor to General Brooks. General Wood's career at Santiago has proved his ability to deal with vexatious problems that continually arise in the reconstruction of Cuba, and it is safe to predict that under his wise direction the discordant elements of the island will be educated rapidly to the condition that will make self-government advisable.

Wall street has always been considered the pulse of the business world and has been looked upon to give first indications of depression in trade or increase in values. The fact that Wall street values should shrink to the extent of \$50,000,000 recently and have no visible effect upon business elsewhere is proof that this country, in a commercial way, is getting beyond the control of Wall street. With the gold standard established in a manner to meet currency demands of trade that has increased so rapidly through American expansion, it will in future probably be impossible for any clique of money sharks in Wall street to form combinations that will produce any sort of panic outside of the circle of speculators "on 'change."

Sessions held by the State grangers at Lock Haven this week have been interesting and instructive. Conditions which were instrumental in the organization of the society do not today exist to an extent that makes grangerism a necessity as protection for the farmer and farming interests. Yet as a social organization and means of interchange of ideas upon most profitable features of husbandry the grange will ever prove a beneficial institution.

A burlesque actress went insane at Rochester the other day. This seems to be a reversal of the order of things. It is the man on the front row who usually has the most cause to go insane.

Italy wants nothing but good-will from China and her ends are therefore apt to be gained at less expense than will attend the fulfillment of the ambitions of other foreign powers.

It is a trifle unkind in the base ball magnates to claim the attention of the country before congress is fairly in running order.

The Carbonado newspaper war is waged with a bitterness unparalleled this side of Waco, Tex.

Some of the get-rich-easy promoters are getting into prison easy.

LETTER FROM MR. SCRANTON.

Editor of The Tribune— Sir: Today's editorial in The Tribune on "Mr. Scranton's Refuted" has greatly edified me. In common, I think, with most people, I hold that, while an editor has a perfect right to refuse to print any letter he sees fit, it is not exactly the thing, after accepting a signed letter from a responsible party, to cut out, without notice to the writer, a paragraph, which spoils the point he is trying to make; yet, in omitting what I said about Mayor Moir, that is exactly what The Tribune editor did. The Tribune is not responsible for what I may say over my own signature. If I say anything objectionable about any one, I alone am responsible, and I ask no man or paper to assume responsibility for me.

The Tribune says the question before the community is whether water rates are too high. True. The question of municipal ownership is also equally before the community and, of this, Mayor Moir, owing to his position, is the most prominent advocate. Now Mayor Moir is a public man, and I dissent entirely from the view taken by The Tribune's temporary editor that such characteristics of a public man's private life as are likely to affect his public action, are not fit subjects for examination and discussion. If a man is a thief and comes up for a matter for which he is not to be spoken of? If a man is a notorious drunkard and comes up for a policeman, is it not to be mentioned? If a man is a forgetful man, is it not to be mentioned? The question of municipal ownership is also equally before the community and, of this, Mayor Moir, owing to his position, is the most prominent advocate. 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