

The Scranton Tribune

Published Daily, Except Sunday, by The Tribune Publishing Company, at Fifty Cents a Month.

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New York Office: 130 Nassau St. S. S. WRELLAND, Sole Agent for Foreign Advertising.

Entered at the Postoffice at Scranton, Pa., as Second-Class Mail Matter.

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 shall be subject to editorial revision.

TWELVE PAGES.

SCRANTON, MARCH 10, 1900.

Which is the worse, for a councilman to take a bribe or for an "honorable business man" to offer it?

Stand by the President.

ONE FUNDAMENTAL fact must not be lost sight of in the excitement of political discussion concerning the administration's Puerto Rican policy. The constitution of the United States was not framed to fit all conditions of human existence but to fit a particular area and set of conditions. The people for whom it was framed were people who had back of them centuries of exceptional preparation for good self-government on the basis of liberty wisely regulated by law; they were not in the infant class of citizenship. To say that the constitution projects itself automatically wherever the flag goes is to reduce self-government to a farce unless it can be assured in advance that the flag will never go where the constitution will not immediately and completely fit.

The Republican party's position in this controversy is that the constitution does not go in letter to unfit people under strange conditions, but that it goes to them in spirit until such time as they shall be uplifted and fitted for the letter. Let us illustrate. If the Democratic contention is correct that the constitution immediately followed the flag, then every male Filipino over 21 years of age is today an American citizen, with a potential right to vote at presidential elections and to live under every law and custom prevalent in the federal government of the United States. But everybody knows that conditions in Luzon are in no sense parallel to conditions in New York or Pennsylvania; that laws which fit the one do not and could not immediately, if ever, fit the other. If the constitution is now in force in the letter in the Philippines, as the Democrats contend, the Dingley tariff rates should prevail at Manila, the Chinese inhabitants of the archipelago could not be stopped from coming into this country and the products of Malay labor, on the low wage basis characteristic of Oriental countries, would have to be admitted in our ports duty free, to compete without hindrance with the products of our well-paid domestic labor. This is what the letter of the constitution would require in every acquisition of new territory if the Democratic contention were to be accepted by the Republican administration as sound in principle. Such an acceptance would inevitably necessitate one of two alternatives: either the abandonment of the Philippines as being a burden impossible to carry, or the overthrow of our home protective policy and the bringing of our economic and political system down to the Malay level.

The Republican party, as led by William McKinley, does not admit that either of these results is necessary; it says in effect: "We will extend to the new territories all the salient principles of the constitution of the United States—equal rights and privilege before the law, protection in life, property and opportunity; free education; free religion and training for better citizenship; but we will reserve the right to make and adjust the laws of each special territory that they will fit the special conditions of that territory and of the peculiar peoples who inhabit it. If in the Philippines free trade is for the best interests of the Filipinos, we will enact free trade, but not until our right to do this regardless of the conditions in other territory is affirmed by a ruling from the Supreme court. So as to Puerto Rico. We will give to the people of Puerto Rico every opportunity to develop their agriculture, industry and peaceful commerce under a merely nominal and temporary revenue law which returns to them for their own benefit all the revenue thus raised; but we will not, before the Supreme court declares itself on the constitutional issue raised, do that which might be construed by that court as tending to acquiescence in the Democratic interpretation."

The inescapable fact of this whole jumbled discussion is that the boot must be fitted to the foot in carrying out the expansion programme, otherwise expansion becomes impossible. Better that the people of Puerto Rico should for two years submit, as some pert critics of the president flippantly remark, "to a 15 per cent. discount in their citizenship," which sacrifices none of their privileges of self-improvement, than that the whole structure of expansion, so laboriously built up by the heroism and sacrifice of our soldiers and sailors, should be converted into a pile of reproachful ruins.

The Democratic usurpers in Kentucky are passing a lot of laws conceived in prejudice and spite which will return to plague their authors if the courts do not nullify them. The hip-pocket style of law-making is an expensive luxury.

Senator Culom, whose state is in the storm center of disaffection over the Puerto Rican tariff bill, and who is to go for re-election before the legislature to be elected this year, takes a commendably philosophic view of the matter. On sentimental grounds he favors the immediate admission of Puerto Rico to free trade privileges,

but," he adds, "I am a member of a political party which is charged with great responsibility, and it is only through party harmony and cohesion that results can be secured. I hope my party will decide to settle this matter in accordance with my views. But if it does not, and adopts some other course, I shall feel it to be my duty to stand by my party." This is very good and timely advice to the Republican brethren who, under a misapprehension of the facts, are breathing threats of party demolition.

corpis is allowed full sway there seems no reason why the czar's dream of disarmament should not yet become a reality.

The modesty of the Topoka minister in proclaiming his ability to run a daily paper "as Jesus would" is fully paralleled by his fidelity to the doctrine of not letting his right hand know what his left hand doeth.

The Most Effective Way.

THE MOVEMENT undertaken by the Holy Name society of St. Peter's cathedral parish to bring influences to bear for the cleansing of the theatrical performances given in this city is in purpose most laudable and will undoubtedly accomplish good. The strongest force in our government is the force of aroused public sentiment and when this is put forth in any direction it is irresistible.

The best way to cleanse the theater is to cleanse the citizen who attends it and thus cause him to require of those who purvey amusements that vicious or degrading influences shall be eliminated. The manager of a theater is in much the same relationship toward the public as the manager of a bookstore or hotel; he fits his wares to the public demand. The suppression here and there of a vicious book, periodical or play is a gain for public morals only so far as it tends to limit the corruption of the public taste. But it is only one means to an end. The end is to create such a standard of individual character as will resist the temptations of vice and enable men and women to go through life unspotted.

During the tender period of youth parental watchfulness must be strict and jealous, and it is chiefly on account of the danger of contamination which suggestive plays and books and pictures inflict upon the young that they should be banned. It is a proper part of the police work of government to co-operate with parental watchfulness in removing these snares from the pathway of youth. When we come to adults, however, the need for paternal government diminishes. The man or woman who can be kept good only in a negative way, by the keeping away of temptations, is not of much account to the welfare of society. Character which is not upbuilt to resist vicious influences is imperfectly developed; and in no direction can reformatory energy be better employed than in the culture of the personal virtues—a truth which it sometimes seems to us is not sufficiently appreciated.

Rev. Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts is now gunning for the president's political scalp and beseeching the Republican leaders to substitute some other man as the presidential candidate because, among other reasons, Mr. McKinley did not overthrow his attorney general's interpretation of the army canteen law nor snub the hundreds of reputable army officers who testified that the total abolition of the army canteen would thrust the common soldier from the frying pan into the fire. We suspect that to be entirely happy in this country Dr. Crafts will have to become a candidate for president himself.

The National Boer Relief Fund association, whose purpose is to raise a million dollars for the benefit of the widows and orphans of the Transvaal, has been organized under the presidency of Bourke Cockran and with a general committee comprising a hundred or more names of national prominence. Contributions may be addressed to the association, St. James building, Broadway and Twenty-sixth streets, New York.

When actor Charles L. Davis died at Pittsburgh the other day it was announced that he had not a relative on earth. Now the claimants to his estate are springing up on all sides like applicants at a civil service examination. There's nothing like a snug fortune to cause one to be remembered by distant relatives after death.

Lovers of forestry will be glad to know that congress has just authorized the purchase by the federal government of a tract of land in California containing the finest big redwood trees in existence. The land is to be made into a public park in order that these magnificent trees may be properly protected and preserved.

The New Haven Register occupies a column in describing its contempt of President McKinley because of his "complete incapacity to grasp the problems arising from raw conditions." Our contemporary should not be too sure that the incapacity is not located nearer its own office.

After a silence of months the German agrarians are again showing a disposition to pitch into the United States. As the agrarians occupy about the same position in Germany that is held by English-haters in this country, their face-making need cause no anxiety.

It is estimated that the first year's collection of franchise tax in New York state will yield \$4,000,000 in revenue. No wonder Senator Platt predicts Governor Roosevelt's re-election.

THE COMMERCIAL SPIRIT.

From the Washington Post. Quarterly dividends are most readily earned, in regular business operations, where the people are satisfied with and loyal to their government. There are no men more desirous of promoting social progress than the intelligent capitalists of the United States. They found and endow institutions of learning, libraries, art galleries, and hospitals. They cheerfully pay taxes for the support of the free schools, for which they have little direct use. If all this is not true, unselfish benevolence, it must, in part at least, be accredited to sound, long-sighted business sense. Capital may be, and sometimes is, heartless, but it is useful, in fact, indispensable. The money-makers must precede the money-spenders. The Girarde, Peabody, and Hopkins had a shrewd eye to the main chance

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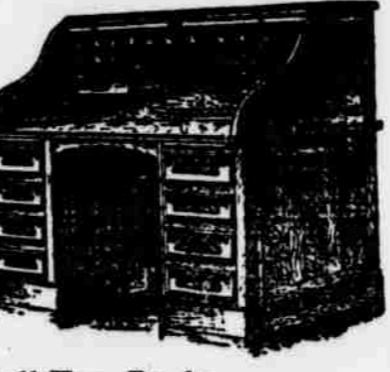
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