

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 shall be subject to editorial revision.

SCRANTON, NOVEMBER 30, 1900.

The necessity for amending the existing bankruptcy law so as to place creditors more nearly on a footing of equality with debtors is revealed by a glance at the statistics of the law's operation in the fiscal year just ended. There were in all, 19,540 cases of voluntary bankruptcy, with liabilities of \$284,979,152 and assets of \$33,098,771. In other words the creditors whose claims were adjusted under the provisions of this law realized altogether less than 14 cents on the dollar, the other 86 cents standing for the greater part as a monument to legalized fraud. This condition of affairs is too one-sided to be lasting.

The Philippines

HAT THE president made no mistake in his selection of the men now serving on the Philippine commission is rapidly being demonstrated by their work as details of it are reported. The establishment of a native civil service, the beginning of public road building and railway extension and the establishment of effective control over the saloon business in Manila are among the points in evidence and the spirit of intelligent determination which they represent is bound to make its impression upon the Filipinos in course of time.

To a friend in Cincinnati, Judge Taft, the chairman of the commission, recently wrote: "With these islands completely pacified they are far and away the best possessions in the Orient for purposes of trade and development. Their climate is better than the climate of any tropical country I know, and the capacity for agricultural, mineral and commercial development would seem to be unlimited. Even with the unsettled condition of the country, the tonnage of the vessels coming into the harbor of Manila, exclusive of the government transports, is double what it ever was in Spanish times, and the same thing is true of the inter-island tonnage. With the construction of roads and railroads through these islands, the opportunities for development cannot be exaggerated. These people are a people who take to the luxuries of life, enjoy good clothes and comforts and markets among them for cotton goods, for canned goods, for flour, for petroleum and for machinery can be created in wonderfully short time. One of the things that is needed here is the introduction of American business methods. The establishment of two or three large American business houses here, (retail or wholesale), carrying into business the same methods that prevail at home, would do wonders for the business standards of these islands."

These things will come. Common-wealth building is slow work. In it years count as days. The one thing which Americans have to guard against in connection with their expectations of Philippine development is impatience.

The sultan of Turkey is also in danger of having trouble with the Billy Masons of his cabinet, who want war with the United States.

Disposing of Cuba.

IT IS THE news that as a rule doesn't get into print that is invariably the most interesting, the real inside of things, which, from motives of policy or through lack of information or other cause, is withheld from the mass of newspaper readers. Announcement is made in Collier's Weekly of a department which, so far as affairs at Washington are concerned, is to be filled with this kind of news, collected and collated by a recognized expert, Mr. Walter Wellman. The issue for Dec. 1 contains a specimen installment, and a good bit of it certainly is news.

For example, apropos of Secretary Root's recent visit to Cuba, announced at the time to be "for the benefit of his health," Mr. Wellman tells us: "He wanted to see how his Cuban program was coming along, for the administration has a Cuban programme, worked out in principle and detail, and Mr. Root is the father of it. The scheme is to induce the Cuban constitutional convention to do what we want it to do, and at the same time to believe that it is doing what it wants to do; and the scheme is working very well. What the administration wants and intends to have is this: "A Cuban republic of limited powers; a Cuban nation that shall be virtually sovereign over its domestic affairs, but which internationally shall be an American state; a Cuban government whose foreign relations are to be managed at Washington, not at Havana; a Cuban republic without the power to conclude a treaty except through and with the aid and consent of the United States, and therefore a republic that cannot become a member of the family of the nations, but must remain under the protecting wing of the great American eagle an autonomous Cuba, as Canada is autonomous, but a dependency of the United States as the Dominion is a dependency of the British empire."

The queer thing about this Cuban programme is that Secretary Root and his skillful agent, Governor Wood, have for a long time been shaping and moulding to this end, driving slowly and cautiously, but unerringly, to their mark; and even at this late day neither Cuba nor the United States appears to be more than half aware of what is

going on; for both in the island and in this country public men and the public press continue to talk of the days when Cuba is to be an internationally sovereign power, while the blunt truth is that Cuba is not to be a sovereign power at all, but a self-governing colony of the American republic. Thus we are coming to a true colonial system faster than most people are aware of."

According to Mr. Wellman, Secretary Root has reported to the President, as Governor Wood had done before him, that the constitutional convention is likely to adopt this policy as its own, and also agree to the American requirements that limitations shall be placed upon the debt-incurring power of the new government, and that for a time at least the United States shall by stipulation retain possession of the principal port fortifications of the island. In this way, and this way only, the leading men of Cuba are coming to perceive, can they secure the very thing which the United States intervened to give them, to wit, a stable and enduring government.

In case, however, the convention becomes obstinate, "there will," writes Mr. Wellman, "be no change. The present status will have to continue, and this convention of another convention will have to try again. President McKinley will not take his hand off Cuba till he is assured peace and order and stability are to follow. A constitution unacceptable to him can never become operative in Cuba nor get before the American congress for ratification. The president is master of the situation, and the Cubans, under the gentle tutelage of Governor Wood, are beginning to see it."

We hope that Mr. Wellman's prophecy shall turn out to be accurate. It presages that the ideal escape from the terminable difficulty and embarrassment. A call has been issued by the Evangelical Alliance to all Christian people for a world-wide concert of prayer to usher in the twentieth century. Special devotional services of a preliminary character are advised for the first Sunday in December; churches and individuals are requested to mark the advent of the new year by watch night prayer and further all believers are invited to devote the week of Jan. 6-13, inclusive, to special prayer for one another, for the church universal and for the unsaved world.

Missouri's Tax on Mortgages.

THE BELIEF, current in many minds, that wealth in this country is not paying its fair proportion of the tax burdens has given birth to numerous propositions toward equalizing matters, and the latest of these arises for attention in Missouri.

At the last election in that state an amendment to the constitution was voted upon and adopted by an overwhelming majority, which provides in substance that when the assessment is made for taxation the owner of real estate shall be assessed only on his equity in the property, while the amount represented by the mortgage shall be assessed against the mortgagee and shall be a lien upon his mortgage. The amendment provides that "the taxes so levied shall be a lien upon the property and may be paid by either party to such security. If paid by the owner of the security, the tax so levied upon the property affected thereby shall become part of the debt so secured. If the owner of the property shall pay the tax so levied on such security, it shall constitute a payment thereon and to the extent of such payment a full discharge thereof."

This amendment received very little attention at the hands of the voters; it was rushed through and carried with a hurrah by the debtor class. The consequences are as might have been expected. Formerly loans on first class security were made in Missouri, plentifully at 4 1/2 per cent. interest and in cases at as low as 4 per cent. To-day there isn't a borrower in the state who can get a loan in regular business channels at less than 8 per cent., and while this probably represents a temporary condition which will wear off, no man of intelligence can foresee any other permanent result than that to the rate of interest prevalent in other states, say 5 per cent., the Missouri borrower, in order to command loans at all, will hereafter have to agree to add a per centage equal to the average taxes or more, bringing the final total rate of interest up to from 6 1/2 to 7 per cent.

With such a rise in interest rates will come naturally a depression in farm values. Thus the owner of unimproved real estate, who sets not even an apparent benefit, will suffer, and the owner of mortgaged real estate will simply have to scratch more gravel and scratch it faster to remain in the position where he was before. What the consequences will be in litigation and confusion have yet to be revealed, but in all probability they will be both numerous and expensive. The aspiration of those who want a fair deal in life is entitled to sympathy and respect; but it will materially expedite its realization to have a better general understanding of the fundamental truth that no man can lift himself from poverty to affluence by tugging at his own bootstraps.

Mr. Teller thinks that the silver question is not dead. This is a belief in which Mr. Teller seems to have an absolute monopoly.

Cost of Living Eight Cents a Day

THERE WAS recently a considerable discussion as to the lowest possible figure to which the daily cost of food necessary to nourish properly an average man could be reduced. President Harper of the Chicago university starting it by the assertion that 15 cents a day was ample. In a recent issue of the Savannah News appears a contribution which reviews this interesting topic by describing what has been done in the way of cheap living by the socialist colony of Ruskinites situated a short distance from Waycross, Ga. According to this authority the actual cost per capita in this colony is less than 8 cents a day. Everything they consume is bought by wholesale in

large quantities, and is cooked in the community kitchen. In the community dining room tables are set for 300 people. Those who do not wish to eat with the crowd are given the privilege of purchasing from community stores and cooking it at home. When vegetables are scarce these people are allowed 7 cents per capita a day; that is, 7 cents for each person, big, little, old, young, sick or well. When vegetables are plentiful the cash allowance is only 5 cents. As the community raises its own vegetables, the approximate cost is only about 2 cents per capita a day, making the actual cost of living at Ruskin from 7 to 9 cents a day for each man, woman and child.

The correspondent of the News thus describes a visit to the community dining room: "In a large room, 20 feet wide and 150 feet long, we saw nearly 300 men, women and children seated at long tables. Breakfast is our first meal. It is well prepared, savory and daintily served. We make a wholesome meal on light bread furnished by the colony baker, butter, Georgia syrup, oatmeal, Irish potatoes, milk, cereal, coffee and sugar. Sometimes we have fried mush, with fruits and jellies. Our dinner generally varies according to the season. Meat only comes to the table twice a week. The bill of fare usually consists of rice or potatoes, beans or macaroni, some two or more of these: Georgia syrup, beets, tomatoes, egg plants, potatoes, soup, bread and cereal coffee—cereal coffee is made by the colonists as one of their main industries. For supper cheese in some form, lemonade, cake, rice or beans, sugar, grits, mush, fried potatoes, cold tea and bread. The person visiting Ruskin and taking his meals in the community dining room will have the above bill of fare placed before him, with slight variations. He will find that it is not only palatable, but provokable, for people to live at a cost of from 7 to 9 cents a day per capita. It is not merely existing, but the meals are wholesome, satisfying and well prepared."

There is little doubt that the American people as a class have much yet to learn in the direction of household economies. The opinion seems to be well founded that in their table wastes they are the most extravagant people on the face of the earth. The time is coming when a closer study of economies will be forced upon them.

Scientists contend that man's blood travels through his veins at the rate of 168 miles a day. During a political campaign, however, this record is doubtless lowered by many laps.

It begins to look as though Mr. Bryan will prove a veritable "old man of the mountains" when the Democrats attempt to get rid of him as a leader.

LITERARY NOTES.

A letter from Harriet Stark to her publishers casts some light upon the origin of the old, unusual plot of "The Bacillus of Beauty." "Three years ago," she writes, "I spent a day with Prof. H. W. Cross, Wesleyan University, who was applying bacillus culture methods to butter making. He was 'educating' cream by introducing it with microbes of ferrous origin, better cream. I could see with my own eyes in his test-tubes the little clusters of spores which not only hastened ripening, but made the cream richer than it would have been if left to nature. Of course bacillus culture is a daily commonplace now, and drummers hawk oval butter cans all over the country. The idea was never then, and it made upon me a deep impression. That night I took a way train from Middletown to Hartford. At one station, nearly a group of factory girls came aboard. Nearly all were very pretty; their bright eyes, their merry chatter, made everybody in the car there. The strange alchemy I had seen, the beauty before me—was it any wonder that the idea flashed upon me: 'What if there were a 'Bacillus of Beauty'?' 'What if all the world were at the feet of its discoverer? What would happen to his first client? Forthwith I resolved that there should be, in fiction at least, one perfectly beautiful creature, one creature entirely lovely, so glowing with health and happiness, so rare in face and unapproached in form, that all the world would be at her feet, whether the slow train stopped or crawled ahead thereafter. I failed to notice. My thoughts had begun to weave the story of Helen Winslip."

Many thousands of copies of a strange book entitled "The Bacillus of Beauty" have been heard during the week are discussed by the judges, and a vote taken, beginning with the junior judge and ascending to the chief justice. The judgment is first settled at representing the chief justice then assigns all the cases that have been discussed each to some one member of the court for re-examination, taking care to include the cases which are the most peculiarities of the judges. Each judge to whom a case has thus been assigned writes his opinion. Printer's proofs of this are then distributed to all the justices, who each in turn, and in order of seniority, give their own opinions in the light of the suggestions received. 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