

The Sumpter Miner

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Now, that a shortage in a Hawaiian postoffice has been detected, it is evident that other things besides the constitution follow the radiant American flag.

An American egyptologist, Theodore M. Davis, has, according to a dispatch from Cairo, discovered a royal tomb in the neighborhood of Luxor full of antiquities, including intact sarcophagi, a chariot, furniture and numerous other relics of a past age. The tomb was formerly opened in the presence of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught.

This is the way the Minneapolis Tribune views the railroad rate problem: Just as in freight business, the big shippers get rebates and special concessions, so the men best able to pay passenger fares pay the least. Most men of wealth have their passes and ride free everywhere. The steady travelers, whose expenses are usually paid by their employers, the large business houses, travel on mileage for two cents a mile. The man who cannot use 500 or 1000 miles, or who hasn't the money to pay \$25 or \$50 for a book, pays the full tariff rates, 3 cents a mile. The whole system is upside down. The man who ships one car ought to have as close a rate as the man who ships a hundred.

Our present bankruptcy law was an emergency measure resulting from the panic of 1893, and the house judiciary committee has decided by a vote of eight to six to report favorably the Clayton bill to repeal the act. The author of the bill, Clayton, of Alabama, says:

"It has never been the policy of the United States to have a permanent bankruptcy law. We think the present law has served its purpose, and that it should be repealed. Trial and experience have demonstrated the manifold imperfections of this law, and that many cases of injustice have come, and are constantly coming, from its operation. We do not believe that there is any necessity or any general public demand for the longer retention of the law. It has tended to burden the federal courts with litigation, which, we believe, could be just as well conducted by the courts of the states. The friends of the present bankruptcy law, who belong to the creditor class, are constantly endeavoring to perfect this action into mere machinery for the collection of debts, minimizing or ignoring as far as possible the primary purpose of bankruptcy legislation—the relief of unfortunate debtors."

Henry H. Rogers and Henry C. Frick were recently elected directors of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railway. This action is accepted in Wall street as meaning that the Harriman-Standard Oil interests are now the dominating factor in the company. While these interests do not own an actual controlling in-

terest in Atchison, both the common and preferred stock being widely held by investors, they control a sufficiently large block of stock to render it impossible for any other interest to secure control of the company.

Last fall it became known that Kuhn, Loeb & Company had purchased a block of about 300,000 shares of Atchison in the open market, and that this block of stock had been transferred to a group of capitalists composed of H. H. Rogers, H. C. Frick, James Stillman and several of their associates. This is understood to be the largest block of Atchison securities owned by any single interest. The company has \$102,000,000 common stock and \$114,000,000 preferred stock outstanding. These securities however, are very widely scattered among a large number of small investors.

The bureau of the census has just published its final and complete report on the recent census of the mining industries of the United States. This census was conducted in collaboration with the United States geological survey. It relates to the calendar year 1902 and forms a part of the general work of the 12th census of the United States, being one of the special inquiries provided for in the legislation relating to that census. A summary of the statistics relating to mines and quarries has already been presented to the public in a preliminary report published by the bureau as a bulletin about six months ago. This was a pamphlet of 59 pages. The report now issued is a bound volume of 1123 pages.

The statistics compiled in the elaborate tables comprise data of the value and quantity of the product of the mines, the cost of supplies and materials, the miscellaneous expenses, the number of wage earners, the amount of their wages, the number of clerks and salaried officials, the kind and amount of power used, the amount paid for contract work, etc.

A separate section is devoted to the mineral industries of each state and territory, and it appears from this list that Mississippi and the District of Columbia are the only political divisions of the United States in which the sound of the miner's pick is not heard.

The agricultural department, at the request of Senator Dubois, has ordered a scientific investigation regarding the effect of mine tailings on the lands along the St. Maries river in the Coeur d'Alene mining district. It is claimed that the various chemicals used by these mines in connection with their work, and deposited along the river banks, have proven very disastrous to all vegetable matter and that during years past has caused the poisoning of thousands of cattle. Senator Dubois says that there is heavy litigation pending in the Idaho courts as the result of these foreign deposits along the St. Maries river and that something must be done for the protection of property holders in that vicinity. This, he believes, will be done after the department of agriculture makes a report of its findings.

Senator Mitchell is now wrestling with, perhaps, the bitterest experience to which man is subjected—the loss of the support and sympathy of people whom he has befriended. Though universal, that is the most degrading blot on human nature. If the senator is guilty of all the sins of which he is accused, it would be a

difficult task to defend him, in the abstract. But even granting that he is guilty, he was only doing what every one around him was trying, or willing, to do, and man is the creature of his environment. There are men, of course, with whom it is impossible to be dishonest, or to engage in any questionable sharp practice. Such, however, inherit that sterling trait from a long line of splendid ancestry, and they deserve no especial commendation.

In the case of these people who are throwing up their hands in holy horror because Senator Mitchell has apparently used his official position to make money for himself at the expense of the government, and abandoning him to his cruel fate in his old age, are clearly not actuated by any lofty ideals of honor, or repugnance to acts of questionable character; but are prompted by a spirit of craven cowardice, are deserting a former friend because he is in trouble and needs their aid. Under these circumstances, a real thoroughbred would "stay with" him till the crack of doom. The act of his partner, after admitting that he had perjured himself, in turning state's evidence against a pal—to use the possibly inappropriate but expressive language of the criminal—is particularly despicable. Granting that every charge preferred against Senator Mitchell is true, he occupies a less censurable position, in the eyes of real men, than does his treacherous partner, who offers as a sacrifice his associate, in order to save his own hide.

Some writer on a Portland paper has conceived the fake story that Baker, Grant and Malheur counties are about to make a move to secede from Oregon and have themselves attached to Idaho. Of course, there is no truth in the statement; but if such a move were left to a vote of these three counties, that thing would unquestionably be done. The interests of this section of the state are entirely different from those of Portland and the Willamette valley, and by the action of the latter during twenty or more years past, have been made antagonistic.

The western division of the state, being much more thickly populated, dominates the political; while Portland, owing solely to favorable freight rates and to no enterprise of its own, dominates the commercial affairs of Oregon. Both politically and commercially the coast country has been so narrow and short sighted that it has alienated the regard of the east and we are bound to it, not by choice, but by necessity. On the other hand, our industries and interests are identical with those of Idaho and we would gladly cast our lot with that state were it possible.

A similar condition of affairs exist over in Washington and the proposition has been frequently discussed by the press and men in public life. Owing to the wide difference of interests, an antagonism in governmental affairs is almost inevitable and such a condition is detrimental to both sections. Mountain ranges, not rivers, are the natural dividing line between areas of country and should also be in separating political divisions.

Radical revision of land laws affecting the public domain is recommended by President Roosevelt in a message forwarded to congress, in which is contained a second partial report of the house lands commission, appointed by him October 22,

1903. The commission, upon assuming its duties, was instructed to "report upon the condition and effect of the present laws," and to recommend "such changes as are needed to effect the largest practical disposition of the public's land to actual settlers, who will build homes upon them," and to "secure in permanence the fullest and most effective use of the resources of the public lands."

The report submitted declares the present laws unsuitable to the needs of the growing public domain. Agricultural possibilities are little understood or even ascertained and provision, the commission believes, should be made for gathering the exact facts concerning what the lands will grow, if anything, and for holding for agriculture such tracts as are fit for it.

The recommendation for the repeal of the timber and stone acts is renewed. The commission thinks the sale of timber from unreserved public forests should be authorized. The immediate application of any rigid system to grazing lands is opposed, but the commission recommends that the president be authorized to set aside grazing districts by proclamation, said districts to be under control of the secretary of agriculture.

The commission also recommends: "The right to exchange lands in forest reservations for lands outside should be withdrawn;" "provision should be made for the purchase of needed private lands inside forest reserves, or for the exchange of such lands for tracts of like area and value outside the reservations;" "the commutation clause of the homestead act being found to work badly, three years actual residence should be required before commutation;" "the desert land act being found to lead to monopoly in many cases, the area of a desert entry should be reduced to not more than 160 acres, actual residence for three years should be required, the actual production on a valuable crop on one-fourth the area and proof of an adequate water supply being necessary." The commission concludes: "The fundamental fact that characterizes the situation under the public land laws is this—that the number of patents issued is increasing out of all proportion to the number of new homes."

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