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THE whole country in one acclaim is just now engaged in heaping deserved laurels upon the American volunteer. Although the reports so far received of the recent fighting at Manila are meager and incomplete, they suffice to show that the volunteer regiments bore more than their full share of the brunt of battle and that they performed their duty as soldiers in a manner that would reflect credit upon any body of troops combating against unequal numbers. That the volunteers upon whom the attack was first made in a night onslaught when the position and strength of the enemy could not be readily ascertained should prove entirely equal to the emergency is proof positive of their availability for any military service that may be required. When attempts are made, however, to contrast the regulars and the volunteers it must be apparent on reflection that the line of distinction can be drawn only with difficulty. Whatever might have been said of the volunteers at the time they were mustered into the United States service from the respective militia organizations, the volunteer regiments have long since passed the point where they can be classed as raw recruits. The weakest point perhaps in this system is the risk assumed by lack of experienced officers, for whom longer training and more exacting education are desirable, but here, too, the natural ability of the American volunteer has been found responsive to the demand. It is safe to say that the volunteer regiments, especially those in Manila, are to-day officered in large part by men who have been promoted from subordinate positions or from the ranks since they were mustered into the United States service. With such resources constantly at their command no wonder the American people have an imate aversion to large standing armies and feel confident in their ability to protect themselves at all times against all foes.

The postal telegraph bill is a measure that should commend itself to favorable consideration at the hands of congress. The bill embodies the fundamental idea that the agencies of communication should be taken out of the control of private corporations and made part of the postal service. In this respect the telegraphs of the United States are at variance with those of every important nation of the world. In the main Congressman Maxwell's postal telegraph bill is sound. Instead of following the plan of the late Gardiner Hubbard to create a partnership between the government and a so-called postal telegraph company that would enjoy the use of postal facilities, including buildings, clerical force and letter carriers, the Maxwell bill contemplates the outright purchase of all existing telegraph lines except such as are operated within the private use of their owners. It also includes the purchase and operation of long distance telephone lines. In the matter of rates the bill is somewhat crude, being drawn with the design to establish one uniform rate, irrespective of distance, for all parts of the United States. The question of rates, is, however, a minor matter, the main point being the acquisition of the telegraph systems of the country and their exclusive control and operation by the government in connection with its post office system. The greatest obstacle to enactment of such a bill is now, as it has always been, the inflated capitalization of the existing companies, which makes it difficult to arrive at a fair valuation at which the government should buy in the property. Congressman Maxwell's estimate of \$50,000,000 is much below

what other advocates of the postal telegraph have conceded to be a reasonable price. While it is doubtful that the present congress will give the bill the consideration it deserves, the subject is one in which the people of the whole United States are vitally interested and upon which congress will sooner or later be compelled to take decisive action.

"WHAT shall we eat and drink?" asks the World. One after another the great doctors have set a seal of condemnation upon nearly everything that we like. Tomatoes, we are warned, breed cancer. Cucumbers give colic. Beans are over-rich and destructive of digestion. Beef contains the germ of tapeworm. Pigs and chickens have trichinae. Sugar, bread and peas tend to diabetes. Wine gives gout. The "old oaken bucket that hangs in the well," the "moss-covered bucket," is infested with disease germs, and, besides that, the water of the well, not being properly aerated, is prolific of malady. Even the bubbling spring bears typhoid in its waters, coming as they do from no man knows whither. Milk, the accepted type of innocence, is a dissemination of tuberculosis and other dread diseases, besides being indigestible to grown-up folks. And now at last comes a great German scientific sharp—Dr. Hans Koeppel—to warn us against chemically pure, distilled water as a positive and active poison, destructive of the mucus membrane and otherwise alarmingly deadly. Now, we had all settled down upon distilled water as the one safe thing in the world to swallow. It is rather unpalatable, of course; it is troublesome to procure, and it is by no means satisfying to the cravings of a hungry thirsty man; but at any rate we believed it to be unimpeachably wholesome and so thoroughly safe that our drinking of it—even with a grimace of disgust—we have regarded in the light of an almost supererogatory act of virtue. Again, what are we to eat and drink? The doctors themselves who pronounce all these anathemas against solids and liquids eat and drink whatever they like. Some of them even eat mince-pie at midnight and regale themselves in the small hours with Welsh rabbits and mulled clarets or hot Scotchies. Shall we follow their precepts or their practice?

The most powerful influence at present in this country is military. Our easily achieved defeat of Spain created a popular feeling of pride in the army and navy that is entirely justifiable, but the effect has been to give a potency and force to military opinion and influence quite extraordinary in our national experience. It is manifested constantly, dominating the administration and operating upon congress. Not during the civil war was the military influence stronger than it is at this time. This influence is almost solidly arrayed in support of the policy of expansion, for the very obvious reason that the policy necessarily involves a larger army, which would enable many to at once attain promotion. And quite naturally this influence is not averse to war. It was exerted in that direction before the war with Spain and it is being exerted now for the prosecution of hostilities against the Filipinos. A Washington dispatch states that an army officer who has done a great deal of Indian campaigning advises a vigorous campaign against the Filipinos—that in order to bring these people, who aspire to independence and self-government, to terms, we shall go on and slaughter them relentlessly. It matters not that in doing this many American soldiers must be sacrificed. It matters not that such a course may mean a great expenditure of money to be taken out of the pockets of the American people. It does not matter that to force our rule and authority on these alien people would be utterly inconsistent with the professions we made when we went to war with Spain. These considerations have no weight with such as the military officer referred to. The one thing they see and which blinds them to all else, is that the policy they advise would require more soldiers and with a large army they would obtain promotion.

YELLOW fever in this early making its appearance among our soldiers in Cuba is an ill omen that bodes no good for the future. It usually does not appear

before the latter part of March and in making its advent two months ahead of time would indicate that conditions for its contraction are favorable, notwithstanding all that we have done in the way of sanitation. The work necessary to stamp out this disease in the climate of Cuba will be a labor not of months, but years, and in the meantime there is little hope for the immunity of the soldiers that shall remain on the island.

THE decision of the secretary of the navy to build six 2,500-ton cruisers is to be regretted. The draught of these vessels is so great that they cannot be used in the rivers and estuaries on the coast of China or in the Philippines, while their armament and batteries are too light to engage in battle, unless with vessels of a similar class, which have fallen into disfavor with the strong naval powers and consequently will be no longer constructed. We have already, of this class of cruisers, eighteen, which is fully as many as we are ever likely to need. The money necessary to build these six vessels would have given us four powerful protected cruisers of a higher speed and heavier armament than the New York, which would have added to the effective fighting strength of our navy more than a dozen of these light war ships could have done. The war ship of the future that will decide destinies and make history is to be the fast, heavily armored cruiser and battleships with powerful batteries and every dollar that we expend in the construction of a navy would give better results, at least for the present, if devoted to the building of that type of fighting craft.

IF ANY branch or age of the human family has escaped the grasp of the trusts it has not been observed. They reach out for the baby's cradle, the youngster's candy, the man's toddy, the woman's corset and the corpse's coffin. No one has yet devised a scheme to get a corner of salvation, so this is probably safe until lawyers become more familiar with the subject.

THERE will be very general approval of the position taken by Mr. Cannon, chairman of the appropriations committee, against extravagant appropriations. The government is spending more money than it is receiving. The cash balance in the national treasury, more than half of which is borrowed money, is steadily dwindling and if the present rate of expenditure is long maintained the government must sooner or later go further in debt or increase taxation. The warning sounded by Mr. Cannon is therefore timely and proper and while it may not have the desired effect upon congress it is not to be doubted that it will have strong popular endorsement. According to the statement made by Mr. Cannon the expenditures of the government during the seven months ending with January exceeded the receipts to the amount of more than \$93,000,000, which promises a deficit for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30, of \$159,000,000 exclusive of the \$20,000,000 to be paid to Spain. It is quite possible that the deficiency will be greater than this estimate and it may be confidently predicted that it will be less. There is every reason to expect that expenditures in the Philippines will be larger than at present and the government will not get the money out of the revenue of the islands. It is possible that in Cuba and Porto Rico the revenues will after a time pay the cost of military governments, but this is by no means certain.

J. HENRIKER HEATON, one of the best known members of the British parliament, in a paper published in the North American Review, in 1884, thus expressed his amazement at the neglect of American shipping interests by the government of the United States: "As a consequence of refusing \$5,000,000 a year in subsidies during thirty years to native shipowners, or \$150,000,000, the United States had to pay in the same period no less than \$3,000,000,000 for freights, while their mercantile marine dwindled into insignificance." But the passage of the bill now upon the calendars of each branch of congress, favorably reported by the proper committees, will correct the neglect thus vividly stated, and, as a consequence, the next thirty years will find the United

States far on the way toward redeeming itself. That bill will give us our proper rank in the world, and while providing employment for our people, strengthen the national defense, if it becomes a law.

WITH a population of 35,000,000 the republic of France maintains a standing army of 500,000 men. Surely an army of 100,000 would not be a very serious menace to the liberties of the American people.

CONGRESS is expected at once to pass a bill for the taking of the next census. The bill proposed provides for two principal things—unrestrained spoils and crass incompetency in a work for which competency is vitally important. There is to be a director at \$6,000 a year, an assistant director at \$4,000, five statisticians at \$3,000 each and a number of other high-priced employees, besides sixty clerks, three hundred supervisors and many thousands of enumerators. Under the pending bill not one of these men is to be subjected to any sort of examination to determine his fitness. All of them are to be appointed by the director for such reasons as may happen to influence him—the word of a congressman of his party being the usual "influence"—and every one of them will have a pecuniary interest in prolonging the work of taking and publishing the census to the utmost limit of possibility, because every one of them knows that his salary will cease when the work is done. The whole system is wrong. The public interest is that the census statistics should be collected as accurately, tabulated as capably and published as promptly as possible.

SOME of the Chicago papers are singling out three men—Hoar, Hale and Gorman—as being in a particularly direct degree responsible for the deaths of the American soldiers killed in the fighting at Manila. This is all right as far as it goes, but what is to be done with Billy Mason? Billy's vote for the treaty after he had been fighting it until that time ought not to save him from the condemnation of the country. There was a chance all along that Billy would be frightened into supporting the treaty at the last moment, but his attack upon it were as president and vindictive as those of any other of its opponents. To the extent of Billy's influence he was as much responsible for the lives of the forty or fifty Americans killed in the recent fighting as Hoar, Gorman or Hale. The American people, in keeping that list of twenty-seven copperheads who voted against the treaty, will not fail to make a place on the tail end of the roll for the name of the Illinois Senator, who stood with these renegades upon the moment when the indignation of his own state forced him to abandon them and to attack his own tricky and discreditable record.

CONGRESSMAN CONNOR'S statement before the house of representatives dooms all hopes for relief from stamp taxes for the next two years at least, and incidentally it may be remarked that if imperialism becomes a condition and not a theory the stamp tax may be here to stay.

THE attempt to bring the bodies of fallen soldiers back from Cuba and Porto Rico brings to light the fact that it costs more to bring home a dead soldier than a live soldier. That is another reason why the people would prefer to have their soldiers brought back alive.

THE refusal of Governor Roosevelt to exercise executive clemency in the case of the woman who brutally murdered her defenseless stepdaughter is gratifying. Foolish sentimentality for criminals is all too common in this country, and whenever one commits a wanton and heinous crime there is no reason why punishment should not be inflicted as the law directs, irrespective of the sex, color or previous condition of the criminal.

HAVING put both houses on record in favor of a constitutional amendment providing for the election of United States senators by direct popular vote the members of the legislature can bend their undivided energies to reaching a popular choice in the senatorial election which the constitution devolves upon them.

A Montana man who stretched hemp in the legal fashion recently refused to

have "any skylit show him the road to heaven." Just before striking the invisible trail he let loose this chunk of wisdom: "If any of you follow my body to the cemetery do not uncover your heads and take chances on getting pneumonia." Helena thermometers were pretty low down at the time the advice was heeded.

The minister to Nicaragua had not completed his explanation of just how the late revolution in his country happened before another broke out. South and central America is the finest field for the education of war correspondents yet discovered and the wonder is that more do not attend. These little disturbances afford constant practice and they are as harmless as a French duel.

COMMERCIAL CONDITIONS.

The foreign commerce of the United States last year showed an unprecedented surplus of exports over imports. The foreign commerce of the United Kingdom presented a striking contrast to this, the exports having materially declined, while the imports were largely increased. The extraordinary progress of the foreign trade of this country is causing some anxiety in England. It is stated that some of the more prominent financiers and in fact some of the statesmen of England who concern themselves with economic subjects, are taking a very deep interest in the new conditions in the United States. They confess that if it continues a serious problem will be presented to the British nation. They are not only alarmed that the United States is buying less of the products of Great Britain and especially of her colonies, but on the other hand this country is selling millions more to Great Britain and her colonies than it has ever done and so far as some of the colonies are concerned—Australia and South Africa, for instance—is talking away England's own market so long established in those countries.

In 1898 the exports of merchandise produced in the United Kingdom fell below the imports by the large sum of \$1,152,000,000. This was unprecedented in the history of British trade and it has raised the question whether the British nation is not to some extent living on its capital. Although trade in the United Kingdom is good and the country seems to be more than ordinarily prosperous, many Englishmen are apprehensive that the appearances may be deceptive. Such men as Sir Courtney Boyle, president of the British Board of trade, and the colonial secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, take a somewhat pessimistic view of the situation. There are others, however, who do not regard the conditions so seriously, among them Sir Robert Giffen, the eminent statistician. That authority, in an address before the Royal Statistical society, while unable to strike a favorable balance, explained that there are certain unknown quantities which if they could be accurately ascertained would give a different aspect to the situation. A great many items, it was pointed out, enter into British exports which are not included in the government statistics, one of these, the value of vessels built in Great Britain for foreigners, amounting lately to \$50,000,000 or more a year. Mr. Giffen and others present arguments to prove that Great Britain can stand a surplus of imports amounting to even a thousand million dollars a year without touching the capital of the nation or causing it to live beyond its legitimate income.

There is no doubt that the wealth of the British nation is steadily increasing. Its vast investments of capital in all parts of the world bring returns which constantly add to the national wealth and undoubtedly the addition of this source during the last few years has been very large. But it appears to be no less certain that British supremacy in the world's commerce is passing away and that the time is not very far distant when the United States will have attained primacy in a trade of the world and as a necessary consequence financial pre-eminence also.

The Oregonian says "The only legislature Oregon has had within recent years that has not done injury to the state was the one of 1897, that didn't organize."

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