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THE Cuban assembly is busily engaged devising means to induce Uncle Sam to raise his ante of $3,000,000. The members of that body should deposit some of their own chips in the center of the table if they wish to acquire the right to participate in a no-limit game.

And now it is China which sends up a petition for a shipload of American corn to feed the starving rendered homeless by the Yellow river floods. Whenever the cry of suffering from famine-stricken lands goes up it is always to the United States that the appeal is directed and it has seldom, if ever, been sent in vain.

PUBLIC ownership of street railways, which for so many years has been a matter of fact in England and Scotland, is to have a trial in Detroit. The passage of the Pingree bill by the Michigan legislature will enable that city to acquire the city railway system by the assumption of its bonded debt and an issue of bonds payable in installments out of the net earnings of the next twenty years. Under this arrangement the street railway company will resume ownership of the property in case the aggregate earnings fail to defray operating expenses and yield sufficient surplus to meet interest and sinking fund. The experiment will be watched with much interest both by the public and the people who have invested in street railway properties elsewhere. The Detroit experiment is, however, not the first instance of public ownership and operation of a street railway in the United States. The railway across the Brooklyn bridge is the property of Greater New York and has for years been managed by a joint commission of New York and Brooklyn in charge of the bridge. The railway carries from 50,000,000 to 60,000,000 passengers per annum, and its receipts range from $1,200.000 to 1,500,000 a year.

MUCH has been said during the past few years in depreciation to the consular services of the United States, until the belief has become quiet general that it is inferior to that of almost every country. Some of the criticisms of the service were unquestionably well founded, but it is not altogether bad and it is pleasing to find that it stands very well in foreign opinion. The State department has published expressions from abroad which attest that in some respects the consular service is quite equal if not superior to that of European countries. For example, the organ of the French diplomatic and consular service recently spoke in most complimentary terms of the service, saying that it is a remarkable instrument of commercial expansion. "The American consul," it remarked, after characterizing the service as unique and resembling none other, "does not understand that he has a commercial situation to maintain, but alway a commercial situation to conquer. His ingenuity is exercised to invent and find new markets and in his study of ways and means he descends to the most minute details." The paper then proceeds to cite instances illustrative of this. Unquestionably the consular service as a whole has improved in recent years, due largely to the attention that has been bestowed upon it by the commercial interests, but there is still much room for improvement and not until the service is entirely divorced from politics will it attain the standard of efficiency and usefulness it should have.

THE people of the United States takes a commendable pride in the courage and soldierly qualities of the men who are wearing the nation's uniform in the Philippines, which has been so conspicuous as to elicit unstinted praise from the press and public of foreign lands. Those at home cannot smother a regret, however, that such precious lives should be sacrificed to such a fruitless cause.

THE American mania for money making has invaded Canada, and the Plains of Abraham, where the gallant Wolfe and the brave Montcalm fell, are to be cut up into town lots and placed upon the market. In this country we have shown small respect for historical places with the result that many of the spots where history was made have been obliterated. A brick yard covers the field of Redbank, Valley Forge was for years used as a tannery and Brandywine is a sheep pasture. Possibly no other country in the world is as careless about these things as the United States, and, while our historical societies have done something and promise to do more for the preservation of historical places, it is to be regretted that our people do not take more interest in these things and that Canada has decided to depart from the policy of England in these matters and follow our example.

THEY do things with a rush over on this side of the Atlantic, and when anything is wanted in a hurry Europeans know where to come for it. A Philadelphia firm has just shipped the material for a 1,100-foot bridge to Khartoum, Egypt, the order for which was placed only six weeks ago, and in seven weeks from the time the material arrives it is contracted to be done. European builders would not agree to complete it in less than seven months.

APART from the personality of Mr. Rhodes, which doubtless resembles that of most other successful empire builders, there can be no question of the magnificence or of the humane beneficence of the work in which he is now engaged; to-wit, the "Cape-to-Cairo" railroad. Nor can there be much doubt of its entire practicability, or of its pratical completion in the near future. The word "railroad" may for a time be a misnomer. It will not at first be an unbroken line of rails, like our Pacific roads, or that which Russia is building across Asia. That will doubtless come in time. But at first this will be a chain of seperate railroads linked together by streaches of steamboat navagation. At present the southern-most link is an unbroken line of rails nearly 1,400 miles long, from Cape Town to Buluwayo, and it is being steadily extended with the purpose of crossing the Zambesi river and reaching Abercorn, at the southern end of Lake Tanganyika. It will not go to Lake Nyassa, but will pass midway between it and Lake Bangweolo, an easy country to build in, and well provide with coal. The total stretch from Cape Town to Lake Tanganyika will be close to 2,300 miles, or almost as much as from New York to San Francisco. Then will come 400 miles on the lake, where the British flag has the same right as on the high seas. For nearly 200 miles north of the lake the railroad will traverse German territory, or else, as is less likely, the Congo State. Then it will reach Uganda and upper reaches of the Nile, and so proceed, partly by river steamer and partly by rail down to the Mediterrnean. The entire chain will be not far from 5,000 miles in length.

THE Interstate Commerce commission having admitted its inability to enforce the law in respect to railway rates has undertaken to secure a voluntary agreement among the managers of trunk lines for the abandonment of rate cutting, it appears with favorable promise of success. Early in January the commission invited the presidents of the eastern trunk lines to a friendly conference over ways and means of maintaining published rate schedules and suppressing the secret rebate. This conference had results so satisfactory to the commission that a second conference was held later in the month and all the railway presidents agreed to make earnest efforts to abide by the law.

MORE industrial trusts and monopolistic "combines" were formed in 1898 than in the entire quarter of a century since the Standard Oil Company, parent and pattern of American monopoly, first began to destroy competition in illuminating oil, remarks the N.Y. World. The total of industrial trust stocks and bonds authorized in the first two months of this year was $1,106,300,000, as against a total of $916,176,000 for the twelve months of 1898. The Financial Chronicle estimates that the total authorized out put of industrial trust "securities" for 1899 will exceed $6,000,000,000. This is exclusive of such transportation "combines" as the Coal Trust. All of these combinations have as their objects the creation of a monopoly, the limiting of production, the control of prices both for raw material and finished product, the crippling or, if possible, the destruction of competition, and the payments of dividends on a largely inflated capitalization. As to the influence of these trusts upon the people there are two opposite views held respectively by men of all conditions and of every shade of political belief. There are rich men who denounce monopoly, poor men who uphold it. There are Democrats like Flower and Whiteney who applaud and practise monopoly, Republicans like Pingree and Chandler who denounce it.

THE BLACK MAN'S BURDENS.

North Carolina and Manila are subjects of political deliberations that forcibly illustrate the wide difference in thought and action between the Republican and the Democratic parties. The Republican party of this nation, under the wise, conservative, yet progressive leadership of President McKinley is today engaged in a patriotic effort to lead the natives of the Philippines into a higher civilization. The task was not invited by the Republicans. It is a legacy left to the party in power after the wrath of the American people had expended itself in a war, gloriously prosecuted, in the interests of oppressed humanity. At the conclusion of that war the resultant questions of statesmanship required greater ability in solution than did the prosecution of the conflict. The nation and civilization are to be congratulated that these questions were left in the hands of the Republican party. There has been no faltering, no hesitation, in meeting these questions, and nothing but wisdom and good judgment is devising solutions of them that will bring an oppressed people into the light and mark another epoch in the civilization and enlightenment of the world.

While the republican party is working out these vexed problems abroad the Democratic party is trying to create a new slavery at home, undoing the work that was accomplished by the Republican party more than thirty years ago. In North Carolina the Democratic party is trying to force through the legislature an amendment to the state constitution which will result in a practical disfranchisement of the negro vote of that state. In this they are boldly trying to evade the provisions of the constitution of the United States. Under the provisions of the proposed amendment to the state constitution voters must pay a poll tax and be able to read and write any section of the state constitution, with one important exception. That is that any person who, on or before January 1, 1867, was entitle to vote in North Carolina, or in any other state where he at the time resided, and descendants of any such person, shall not be disfranchised because of ignorance.

This simply means that no unlettered negro can vote, but pratically every unlettered white man can vote. The proposition is so glaringly unjust that it must bring a protest from every citizen who has any respect for right and decency, and any conception of the genius of American institutions.

There is no occasion for any such action. It is simply a piece of very disreputable political trickery, and the Democratic party is responsible for it. The Democratic party is in power now in North Carolina, a power gained by negro votes, and upon the distinct assurance of the Democratic newspaper and Democratic political leaders that no effort would be made to disfranchise the negro vote.

Grant that the negro vote is in a measure a menance to the rule of the white man in North Carolina and other Southern states, that is no reason for such a dirty political trict as that being attempted by the Democratic party in that state. While it is possible that it is desirable no make an educational test for voters in such states, the test should be made general and not of a class character. If the negro cannot read the constitution of the state he is not to be allowed to vote, then the same restriction should be placed upon the white voter. If the unlettered negro is not to be allowed to vote, there is no more reason why the ignorant white man should be debarred. The white man, with the advantages of free schools and better surroundings, who is not intelligent enough to read his ballot is quite as dangerous as the negro equally unlettered. North Carolina was given representation in congress in 1868 on the distinct pledge that it constitution should not be amended or revised in any way that would prohibit any class of citizens from exercising the full privilege of franchise. Even if the state purposes to violate this agreement, it ought, in all decency, in the name of fair play for which the South is credited with having the utmost regard, to make the law apply to all classes. If the ignorant negro is not allowed to vote, the ignorant white man should also be denied the privilege.

THE TRUST PROBLEM.

Public interest in the trust problem grows with the increasing number of industrial combinations and the question of dealing with this form of monopoly, it is very generally recognized, has become of paramout importance. The New York Journal of Commerce—a paper of the highest authority as to industrial and commercial affairs—presents a summary of approximately complete statistics of the trust organizations of the United States, using the term "trust" as covering not only consolidated corporations formed for directly monopolistic purposes, but also alliances of independent organizations acting under a common understanding for the purpose of less directly regulating or defeating natural competition, the latter being but a small proportion of the whole. It has shown that at the end of February these combinations numbered 353 and that they had issued stock bonds to the enormous amount of $5,832,882,842. During the year ending with February the number of combinations increased 76 per cent and the combined stock and bonded debt 60 per cent, showing the extraordinary rapidity with which the movement has spread within the last twelve months. It is pointed out that the total capitalization of these combinations is equal to about 90 per cent of the entire manufacturing investments of 1890.

Thus nearly our entire industrial system has been placed upon the monopolistic basis and as the Journal of Commerce says, the change is the most stupendous revolution ever accomplished in the history of the world's industrial growth. "Its suddenness," observes that paper, "Is as remarkable as its magnitude. It has come with none of the careful deliberation that usually attends the investment of great aggregations of capital. It has been guided by no precedent of experience. It is no gradual result of a natural evolution. It is an abrupt outburst of resistance to an unusually severe pressure of the natural regulatory force of competition. It is a reversal of all that economists have accepted as fundamental axioms of trade." What is to be the outcome of this revolutionary change is a question of the profoundest interest to all classes. It affects not only the manufacturer and the consumer, but also the great distributing class, which is at the mercy of the trusts, and the producers of raw materials, who in the home market will have but one customer for whose single wants they will all be competitors. Labor, likewise, has a deep concern in this revolutionizing of industrial conditions.

The situation is very generally regarded as pregnant with danger, but how to deal with it is a most difficult question. Existing law has proved ineffective. The anti-trust act of 1890, so far as the combinations are concerned, appears to be worthless. Attorney General Griggs says that act does not give to the federal courts jurisdiction over any combination constituting a restraint and monopoly of trade unless such trade is what is known as interstate or international trade and commerce. "A combination or trust," says the attorney general of the United States, "for the purpose of maintaining a monopoly in the manufacture of a necessary of life is not within the scope of the Sherman act and cannot be suppressed by the federal courts." This view is in accord with judicial decisions. The law was so construed by the federal supreme court in the case of the Sugar trust and it is held by the attorney general that the combinations generally are similar to that trust and therefore not within the jurisdiction of the federal courts. If amenable to any law they are amenable to the laws of the respective states.

It would seem that congress has already gone to the limit of its powers in legislating against trust and that the only recourse for the suppression of the combinations is in state legislation. In the exercise of their police powers the states can deal effectively with the trusts, but in order to accomplish anything such legislation must be general. The prospect of this, it must be confessed, is not so favorable as the foes of the monopoly could wish, but the conditions are making for it so strong as to warrant the hope that sooner or later most if not all of the states will have anti-trust laws which will be rigidly enforced. Meanwhile the trust problem promises to grow in proportions and in gravity.

Pile on the Schoolmarm's Burden.

Pile on the schoolmarm's burden
Be sure to make it high,
For she can stand most anything,
If she will only try.
Tell her that your children
Never do anything that's wild
Tho of course your neighbor's children
Are half devil and half child.

Pile on the schoolmarm's burden
Be sure you never say
The least word of encouragement,
You know it ain't your "way,"
For teachers never need kind words
'Twould only make 'em vain.
And it ain't your way to flatter,
You always speak so plain.

Pile on the schoolmarm's burden,
Be sure that you believe
The tales the children bring you
Altho it makes you grieve
That neighbors' girls could do a thing
So very rude and wild,
But then you always thought them
Half devil and half child.

Pile on the schoolmarm's burden,
Be sure you say she's spoon
On every hair liped sterling
With eyes like harvest moon,
And then you know there're widowers
And bachelors, mayhap,
Or a few old henpecked married men,
At whom she's set her cap.

Pile on the schoolmarm's burden,
Be sure you don't forget
She'll have to stand your insults
You have her money yet,
Be sure you don't provide her
With globe, map, chart or rule.
If she can't teach without these,
She surely is a fool.

Pile on the schoolmarm's burden.
For if she's short or tall,
Or fat or lean or hungry,
She'll have to take it all.
But with a birch in one hand,
And pluck in soft eyes, mild,
She'll conquer your young heathens,
All devil and no child. —VIXEN.

Blasts from Ram's Horn.

Half-hearted service is always hard.

Neglect bolts the door of opportunity.

Small boats should keep near the shore.

Some Christians do more wining than shining.

The pulpit rail may become a wall of partition.

The wings of riches are poor aids to heavenly flight.

More souls are saved through service than by sermons.

Kind words, like fragrant flowers, are admired by all.

Modern theology teaches that man fell up instead of down.

An iceberg in the pulpit cannot kindle a fire in the pews.

Dress does not make character, but it often proclaims it.

The man who confesses his ignorance is on the road to wisdom.

Don't use religious stilts when you visit a strange prayer meeting.

Fidelity in little things is one of the surest tests of character.

Men who are honest for policy's sake are generally dishonest at heart.

Prattle of the Youngsters.

"George, you can't squirm out of it, I've got to spank you."

"All right, daddy, if you've got to. But there's one thing you will do, won't you?"

"Well, what's that?"

"Let me sit down while it's goin' on."

A pathetic incident of the cold weather in Atlanta, Ga., is the case of a barefoot little fellow who walked into a shoe store, planked down a dollar and said:

"I wants a pair o' shoes fer that!"

"What number?" asked the clerk.

"I dunno what number," was the answer. "I ain't never wore no shoes since I can remember. You'll have to measure me."

"Boys," said a Chicago Sunday school teacher after she had impressed upon her pupils the duty of prayer, "suppose one of you were in some far-away city. Suppose that you were without a friend, and that you didn't have a cent in the world. Suppose you were unable to find any work or to get any money and were hungry. What would you do?" She paused and gazed at the serious faces in front of her, and felt sure that the class had profited by the lesson. Johnny Green raised his hand in reply with the utmost promptness. "I'd go to a free-lunch counter," he said.

A little girl who lives uptown went to church last Sunday, relates the Cleveland Plain Dealer. She is a bright little maiden, and, considering her tender age, only 6, she is decidedly intelligent. Her mother has been suffering from the grip and didn't accompany her, and as her father was alway from home she went alone.

Whether it was the loneliness of the big pew or whether the church was poorly heated, mamma wasn't quite sure, but, anyway, the little maid came home and declared she was very chilly.

"My toes got so cold while I was sitting there, mamma," she declared. "And so did my fingers and my nose. I don't believe there was hardly a speck of fire in the furnace'"

"That was too bad," said mamma; "did the other people seem to suffer, too?"

"Oh, yes, they did," cried the little maid. "They just shivered!"

Then mamma thought she would divert the little maid's attention.

"What was the text, dear?" she asked; "can you remember it?"

"I should think I could," was the quick answer; "I can 'memember every word of it."

"Well, what was it?"

The little maid put her head on one side and, screwing up her face, chrilly intoned:

"'Many are cold, but few are frozen!'"

And mamma had to admit that it seemed remarkably appropriate.

A romantic and tragic story comes from Point Pelee, Ontario, James La Blanche, a young French Canadian, killed his sweetheart, an Indian girl named Olga Postamie. The Frenchman lived on the mainland and had not seen the girl during the winter. When he went to her home he learned that she had given her love to another—an American. He begged the young woman to take a walk with him. When they arrived at "Lover's Rock," a spot made famous because an Indian chief had there murdered a Freneh girl who refused to marry him, La Blanche is said to have stabbed Miss Postamie. He threw the body into the lake and drove the knife with which he had killed the girl he loved into his own heart, falling dead into the water after her.

It can be announced on the best authority that the English government fully consents to the absolute control of the Nicaragua canal by the United States. A public statement to that effect will soon be made by Lord Salisbury.

A special from Juneau, Alaska, reports the murder of 16 Kentucky prospectors near the mouth of the Kuskokum river. The story is that the goldseekers were killed while asleep, by Indians, who wanted their kits and supplies.