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A most important and far-reaching question is raised by the opinion of the insular commission in regard to the political status of the islands in possession of the United States as the result of the war with Spain. It is held by the commission that these islands are not a part of the United States, but are simply in the possession of this country—a radical difference, since territory which is a part of the United States cannot be alienated, whereas the government can do as it pleases with the islands acquired from Spain. The cession of those islands, it is held, merely confirmed our military occupation and there is nothing in the treaty of Paris making the islands a part of our territory. Military occupation does not extend the boundaries of the United States. That can be done only by act of congress and when done the action is irrevocable and all laws of the United States are extended to the new territory and citizenship is thereby conferred upon its inhabitants. If this view is sound and undoubtedly it is based upon a most careful and thorough study of the question—it is obviously within the power of congress to decide whether these islands or any portion of them shall be made United States territory. This position is supported by some high authorities. Halleck, referring to the rules or principles in respect to conquered territory, says: "Such territory is subject to the sovereignty and dominion of the United States as soon as the enemy is driven out or submits to our arms. But neither the president nor his officers can extend the limits or enlarge the boundaries of the union. This can only be done by congress." This authority says further: "The conquered territory is under the sovereignty and authority of the union, but it is not a part of the United States, nor does it cease to be a foreign country, or its inhabitants cease to be aliens in the sense in which these words are used in our own laws." This shows that the very common impression that Porto Rico and the Philippines became a part of the territory of the United States by virtue of military occupation and cession is erroneous, and therefore that the question of expansion is still an open question, subject to determination by congress. The opinion of the insular commission is very sure to make a strong impression upon the public mind.

The automobile as a common means of rapid transit is coming, but, like the bicycle, its advent will probably be gradual. This is indicated by the fact that New York has only about 150 or 200 horseless carriages. Philadelphia about fifty, and Chicago not so many. Among smaller cities Cleveland has about a dozen, St. Louis a half dozen, Indianapolis about the same number, while Washington has but one. As to the attitudes of the different cities in regard to this new means of transit, it is said to be popular in New York; Philadelphia has barred it from the parks, while St. Louis' opinion may be inferred from the fact that three companies now have 1,000 orders for automobiles, which they are filling as rapidly as possible. The general attitude of cities in regard to this new improvement in locomotion is one of interest and expectancy. Sanguine believers in the new transportation device confidently look forward to the not distant day, in their belief, when the horseless cab, coupe and omnibus will replace street cars and make rapid transit in cities a reality. At present the general public is unfamiliar with the new invention, but that it rapidly grows in favor is shown by the experience of Paris and London. There are now between 1,500 and 2,000 automob-

biles in use in Paris, and even the proposed use of this conveyance of the future in the exploded royalist plot has not materially affected the public's appreciation of the great utility of quiet, rapid, easily operated and easily repaired motor carriages.

VARIOUS educational institutions have signaled the commencement season this year by announcements of generous gifts of cash. The Chicago Tribune reports that since January 1st, 1899, ninety colleges, academies and seminaries and eight art institutes have been the beneficiaries of public generosity to the extent of \$27,072,358, the figures representing only donations or bequests exceeding \$5,000.

Mrs. MARY ELIZABETH LEASE is to be the central figure in a new trust, putting aside all her popocratic ideas, to enter into a trust to control ghosts. Communication with the spirit land is to be tied up in monopolistic style and "independent" mediums are to be crowded out. Trust prices for connection with the hereafter will rule, and those who do not maintain trust prices will be placed under the ban. Spiritualist mediums of the Mississippi valley have been holding a convention in Richmond, Ind., and they proposed to organize each state convention into a trust, with the purpose of forming a grand combine, at the national spiritualist convention, which meets in Chicago, October 9th. Mary Elizabeth Lease of Kansas fame has been converted to spiritualism, and this ghost-trust scheme is believed to have originated in her fertile brain. There is no doubt that probably this fall, or next year, at the latest, she will be elevated to the leadership of the national body. Her efforts will be along the line of purging the membership. Mrs. Lease has become so enthusiastic that she expects to give the work all of her time, even to the exclusion of her political hobbies. It will not surprise people to know that Mrs. Lease has taken another erratic jumb in the dark. Well, any old, trumped thing suits Mrs. Lease to perfection now.

The popocratic press is very much wrought up by the decision of president McKinley to make all appointments of officers for the provisional army now being recruited for the Philippines instead of allowing these appointments to be made by the governors as was done last year when the volunteers were enlisted for the war with Spain. We feel sure that president McKinley's action will meet the approval of men of all classes and sections who know anything about war or military affairs. They know that no man, however intelligent and well educated, is qualified for military command unless he has military training, either in a military school or actual war. To place an army freshly recruited from the ranks of the people under command of inexperienced officers when men qualified by training and experience are available would not merely be an inexcusable blunder, but a crime. While the officers of the volunteer regiments commissioned by the governors of their respective states have in most instances made an enviable record, there can be no doubt that many disasters and blunders might have been averted had all the field officers been selected by the president from the class of applicants who had either graduated from military schools or received military schooling in the army.

The test, after all, of the commercial prosperity of the country is the record of business failures in different lines of industry. The man who invests his money in business enterprises uses every effort, naturally, to make a success of his venture. A minimum of business failures is a guaranty, prima facie, that the consumers are in good condition, that dealing is active and that ruinous competition—that certain index of depressed conditions, does not prevail. Judged by this standard the half year which closed with June 30 was the most prosperous in the country's history for the last seventeen years. Bradstreet's reports that business failures in the United States has increased nearly 50 percent since that time, and business capital still more rapidly; so that the percentage of failures to firms in business would make better comparison with

1882. Liabilities of insolvent traders in the West during the period increased 31 per cent from 1898, in the middle states 46 per cent, in the East 22 per cent.

THE solicitude of Russia in regard to a possible alliance between Great Britain and the United States has been strongly manifested. The matter has been freely discussed by Russian statesmen and newspapers, who have urged that the United States could make no graver mistake than to enter into such an alliance. The Russian ambassador to this country, one of the ablest men in the diplomatic service of this government, has in interviews indicated the solitude with which Russia viewed the apparent tendency toward an Anglo-American alliance and sought to persuade Americans that such a course would be inimical to the friendly relations of the United States with certain powers, especially Russia. There appears in the current number of the North American Review an article by a prominent Russian journalist which is a forceful plea for a Russo-American understanding. He urges that now that the United States has begun its career as a world-power, "it must cast off the shackles of British tutelage, as was done by the ancestors of the nation when they sought spiritual liberty, and as was gloriously done a second time in the name of national independence. Now for a third time the Americans must assert their independence, if they mean to work out their own salvation and be ready to release their future states from the grip of the English." Herein is seen the animus of the article, disclosing the traditional Russian hostility to England. We are told that the friendship exhibited by the English toward Americans during the Hispano-American war "was due to the fact that the English realized the danger they would run in defying the great American republic, with a hostile Europe at their backs to emphasize their isolation"—a remarkable conclusion in view of the common understanding that some of the nations of Europe were disposed to intervene and were only prevented from doing so by the friendly attitude of England toward the United States. The writer asserts that in the Chinese question England has already outwitted the Americans. "The Chinese question," he says, "in its aspect at the present moment, resolves itself into the acknowledgment or the negation by the great powers of the integrity and the independence of this great empire of the far east," and he declares that the independence and integrity of China is a fundamental principle of Russia policy in Asia. If such is the case most of the civilized world has misjudged Russian policy, which has seemed to most intelligent people outside of Russia to contemplate anything but the independence and integrity of the Chinese empire. It is perhaps true that British diplomacy has aimed at the absorption of China, or its more valuable portions, by England, but British policy has proposed fair treatment for all nations in the commerce of the Chinese empire and this cannot be truthfully said of Russia.

THE price of iron in the United States has about doubled since the beginning of the current year and the visible supply is very small while the demand is large. A continued scarcity is predicted, so that the price of iron is likely to go higher. There are few who comprehend how great a factor iron is in the prosperity of the country and such will find interesting the statements and conclusions of a writer in one of the magazines, who it is to be inferred is connected with the iron business and who at all events has made a careful study of its relations to commercial prosperity. This writer refers to the advances in pig iron in past years and deduces therefrom the conclusion that the subsequent turn in the tide of prosperity was due to the advances. It was not disturbed finances, he says, or loss of confidence, which turned the tide of prosperity in those years, it was the advance of from 100 to 300 per cent in the price of pig iron. The loss of confidence and disturbed finances came months afterward and were the effects of the turn in the tide. However curious this theory may seem, it is supported by very plausible reasoning. In the first place, it is to be observed, the consumption of iron is enormous and whatever resists this consumption limits, to that extent, the growth of the people in wealth and prosperity. Now while there are many articles produced in which the price of iron plays a very small part, the duration of prosperity depends upon the continued growth of the great enterprise, and in most of them the price of iron is the chief factor. "It is the stoppage, one by one," says this writer, "of such as cannot be continued at famine prices for iron, and the discharge of the workmen employed, which bring a premature end to each of our commercial revivals. This end does not come suddenly, nor does it come at the time when the price of iron advances; consequently the general public do not connect the two. The cause and the effect are separated by several months. It is when normal price contracts are exhausted and the people who furnish the capital for these undertakings come to face the question of continuing at famine prices for iron, or suspending work until they can resume at reasonable prices, that the fatal blow of prosperity is felt." This may occur when there is no lack of either money or confidence. Assuming this theory to be sound, the question presents itself as to how long it may be before the advance in the price of iron will bring about a reaction from present prosperity. It is pretty safe to say that such effect will not be experienced this year, but it may come a year hence. Mr. Abram S. Hewitt recently predicted that the activity in the iron trade would probably last a couple of years and this appears reasonable. At all events the theory regarding the relation of the price of iron to prosperity is both curious and interesting.

AN Ann Arbor professor claims to fatten pigs by electricity. He has not tried it on the Poland China or Berkshire of the agricultural regions, but he has tested its nutritive virtues with guinea pigs as his subjects, and if guinea pigs can be made to take on a streak of fat with the streak of lean through the agency of a domesticated streak of lightning why should not other pigs be susceptible of the same influence? Dr. J. W. Herdman is the Ann Arbor professor who conducted this interesting experiment. He used two cages of guinea pigs and both sets of pigs were treated exactly alike in regard to heat, light, air, food and water. Around one cage, however, he strung electric wires which were charged daily. The pigs in this cage gained 10 per cent more in weight in a given time than the pigs in the cage where there is no electricity. "Dr. Herdman's discovery," comments the Minneapolis Times, "means that farmers can save just 10 per cent of their feed or raise 10 per cent more stock on the same amount of feed by rigging up dynamos in their barns. The windmill that pumps water for the stock will also generate electricity to fatten the critters. Instead of hustling out early on frosty winter mornings to heave a few pumpkins over the pigpen fence, your twentieth century farmer will push a button at the head of his bed and go to sleep again. This will give the pigs 10 per cent of their breakfast and he can take his own time about heaving the other 90 per cent into the trough. The chickens, horses and cows will be likewise introduced to the nutritive qualities of volts and ohms, and as it will not be necessary to chew the same, the horses and cows will retain their teeth to a good old age. Dyspepsia and toothache will be unknown among the inhabitants of the barnyard forevermore. If the subtil fluid will fatten pigs, why will it not fatten men and women? The question has not been experimentally investigated, but it has been observed that all telephone, telegraph and trolley car magnets are stout and ruddy. That surely means something. What a reputation a boarding house mistress could win for her establishment by rigging wires around the beds of her lodgers and turning on the current while they slept! They would then fatten and thrive on the same bill of fare that erstwhile kept them pale and scrawny."

THE producers of American meat have been led to believe that the German people are prejudiced against this country and its products for trade, or personal reasons. There is no dispute but that America can furnish meat for the world's consumption and should be doing so.

Late investigations indicate that the objections to the meat products of America find their origin largely in the capital which certain politicians are trying to make out a recent investigation. It was to have been expected that American competition would be opposed by the farmers of Germany, but this opposition was dwindling rapidly and would have wasted away entirely but for the partisan warfare waged against American meat against anti-administration politicians. The fact is emphasized by the opposition to American meat in Germany. The arguments against American meat were found in the columns of American newspapers and were adapted by the German press. Robert P. Porter, who has just returned from Europe after four months investigation of commercial conditions as special commissioner for the United States government, describes the feeling in the following language: "The German government is not unfriendly to American interests and desire to treat us with absolute justice, if

not with consideration. The various meat investigations and the political capital which has been made out of them by American newspapers have done our interests more injury, not only in Germany, but in all six European countries, England, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Holland, which I visited, than all foreign influences put together. Whatever may come, therefore, we have no one but ourselves to blame. Unless efforts are made to disabuse the European mind of some of these libelous charges against American meat, as a whole, the loss of this trade will range from \$20,000,000 to \$25,000,000 per annum. It must be borne in mind that only the wildest and most exaggerated statements find their way into the foreign prints. The effects will be to shun our products, and that is just what the agrarian press of the entire continent wants. These foreign official in Germany and elsewhere, therefore, who are willing to accord us justice have a difficult and thankless task."

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