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We have the most complete and varied assortment of Builders' Material, Tools, etc. for the least money, quality considered.

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Stoves and Ranges.

Clauss' Shears and Scissors, Warranted axes, saws, wedges, pocket and table cutlery, tin, granite and aluminum ware.

BROWN & SMITH

Hotter Than Ever.

Hostilities May Begin Very Soon.

Italy as a Peacemaker—Buchter Weyler's Plan.

HAVANA, March 18.—The war feeling is very intense and people here believe that hostilities between the United States and Spain may begin at any moment.

The banquet given at the palace by Blanco, in honor of the officers of the Spanish navy now in Havana, had great political significance. It was remarkable that the only representative of a foreign government present was Senor Vazquez, a consul of Mexico. The consuls of England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and Austria sent excuses.

Consul-General Lee said: "I consider the situation serious, but not alarming, and am sorry to see that the public here believes in the imminence of war. I hope all pending questions between the two countries will reach an honorable solution without recourse to war."

La Union and the Constitutional both say, editorially, that war appears to be imminent.

Italy as a Peacemaker.

LONDON, March 18.—It is believed that Italy has decided to play the role of peacemaker between the United States and Spain. The Italian ambassador sounded the views of Great Britain in an interview with the secretary of the foreign office. Italy suggests that the Maine question be submitted to an international commission consisting of one naval expert appointed by England, France, Germany, Russia, Austria and Italy, with a president nominated by Holland, Denmark or Belgium.

It is believed that the British officials do not favor the proposal.

Intervention Is Unavoidable.

WASHINGTON, March 18.—Senator Gray, of Delaware, the most conservative Democrat in the senate, and heretofore opposed to recognition of Cuban Independence, said that Senator Proctor's speech had convinced him that it was time to interfere in Cuban affairs. He will favor immediate intervention, even if war with Spain should result.

Buchter Weyler's Plan.

NEW YORK, March 18.—Honore F. Laine, the Sun correspondent recently expelled from Cuba, made public a letter which Weyler had written to a friend in Havana, in which the following startling statements were made:

"I have read, these days, that Americans are pondering about sending one of their warships to that city. During my command in Cuba they didn't dare even to dream about it. They knew the terrible punishment that awaited them. I had Havana harbor well prepared for such emergency. I rapidly finished the work that Martinez Campos so carelessly abandoned.

"If the insult is offered, I hope that there will be a Spanish hand to punish it as terribly as it deserves."

Laine had obtained a letter from a correspondent in Havana the day before the Maine arrived, and its session, he claims, was responsible for his imprisonment and expulsion, and would have caused his death had he not maintained a French citizenship.

Assassinate Starving women and Children

HAVANA, via Key West, March 18.—Horrible Spanish crime—has terrorized the Cuban population. A train which arrived this morning from Casiguas, Mantanzas, brought several Cuban women and children, made prisoners by the Spanish column at El Purgatorio. Mantanzas 100 starving women and children there massacred them

The arrivals, all wounded, are only the few survivors of the assassination. An official statement is given to the effect that the women and children were insurgent.

House Naval Committee.

WASHINGTON, March 18.—The house committee on naval affairs has disposed of the question of an increase in the vessels of the navy, unless there is some change of disposition among the members. The committee by unanimous vote, adopted the motion of Representative Foss to authorize the construction of six new torpedo-boat destroyers, and the provision for this has been incorporated in the naval bill.

It has not been decided what appropriation will be made for this purpose. It is stated to be likely that the torpedo boats will cost about \$100,000 each, though it is possible the sum given may exceed that. A member of the committee stated that the torpedo destroyers may cost between \$200,000 and \$250,000 each. There has been no conclusion as to the amount to be given for the construction of five new drydocks. It is significant, as showing economy, that all of them except the Algiers dock, are to be built of timber. It is now probable that the bill will be in shape for report before Saturday or Monday next.

Oration by Blanco.

HAVANA, March 18.—At the banquet given at the palace last night by Captain-General Blanco to the officers of the Vizcaya and Oquendo. General Blanco toasted "the king, the queen regent, the army and navy of Spain."

"The present generation will never see another banner than that of Spain at the entrance to the gulf of Mexico. That banner, representing civilization, progress, liberty, humanity and religion, will be eternal, like that of the first American nation."

These sentiments were received with shouts of applause.

Converting the Mayflower.

NEW YORK, March 18.—The Mayflower was taken to the Brooklyn navy-yard to be converted into a war vessel.

Battery to Fort Monroe.

FORT RILEY, Kan., March 18.—Battery F. Fifth artillery, for Fort Monroe, pulled out on a special train.

Spanish Torpedo-Boats.

MADRID, March 18.—Admiral Bermejo, minister of marine, has wired the commander of the torpedo flotilla at the Canaries not to proceed to Havana.

Russia Takes Port Arthur.

LONDON, March 18.—A dispatch from Shanghai states that Russia informed China that the latter's delay in replying to the Russian demands will be construed as an acquiescence in the Russian occupation of Port Arthur.

Sir Claude McDonald, the British minister at Peking, is said to be urging China to resist.

TELEPHONE COMPANY. — G. B. Trask, A. L. Shreve and E. E. Porter, as incorporators, today filed articles of incorporation of the Stayton Telephone company with the county clerk.

Skagway News.

SKAGWAY, Alaska, March 12.—(Via Seattle, March 18.)—Ben Atwater arrived here from Circle City and Dawson, N. W. T., bringing 100 pounds of mail from the above places. Atwater's former home was in Morrison, Ill. He went to the Yukon country in 1886, and has resided there ever since. Atwater, accompanied by H. C. Pettit, of Snohomish, Wash., left Circle City, January 10, and Dawson February 8, with dog teams. The trip up the river and lakes was a hard one, the weather being bitterly cold.

Atwater says that there is food enough in the Klondike country to last the present population two years. As a consequence of the food scare the output of the mines will be curtailed. He estimates it at about \$8,000,000.

Atwater says that many claims which were considered to be only wildcat properties on various creeks are running out well. Dominion is paying finely, and will have a big cleanup next spring. Sulphur and Huoker are also good, and so is Indian. Quartz ledges have been found on the latter creek which look well. There is quite a settlement at the mouth of Stewart river, but no reports have as yet been received from the prospectors who went up the river early in the winter.

On Walsh creek, five miles below Big Salmoon, dirt has been found which yields 75 cents to the pan. A stampede occurred from Circle City about January 10 to American creek, about 300 men leaving for that section. Atwater met 300 or 400 men from Dawson making their way to American creek. American creek is 50 miles from Forty Mile and about 25 miles below the international boundary on the Alaska side.

The reports from the Minook country are very encouraging. A courier from Minook arrived at Circle City just before Atwater left that place, with about 50 pounds of mail. This Atwater brought out. The courier had with him a quantity of gold from Minook, and he stated that the prospectors had struck it rich in that section.

Atwater says there are but few cases of scurvy in Dawson. The hospital contains but 45 inmates, and these have either met with accidents or are suffering from chronic diseases.

As a result of the agitation here against the "sure-thing" men, led by "Soapy" Smith, United States Commissioner Smith and Deputy United States Marshal McClunes closed all the gambling houses on Wednesday night. It is said that an arrangement was made whereby the gambling will be restricted to so-called legitimate games, and all sure-thing or bunco games will be prohibited. The sure-thing men are leaving the town in twos and threes.

The weather here for the past week has been mild and springlike, and the warm south wind and the sun are playing havoc with the winter trail, which follows the river for a distance of eight miles. Hundreds of people are making their way over the divide, however, undeterred by wind or weather. The snow has entirely disappeared from the streets, which are now muddy beyond conception. The strike of the longshoremen for 75 cents an hour has been declared off by the local union.

Fruit Outlook.

LOS ANGELES, March 18.—In order to determine as far as possible the extent of the damage to fruit in Southern California caused by the heavy frosts of last December, the Times secured the services of a conservative man, familiar with horticultural interests to make a thorough investigation of the matter, as the estimates of the loss were greatly at variance.

As a result it is conservatively estimated that one-third of the fruit of Southern California was more or less affected, the heaviest burden of the damage falling upon the lowlands of Riverside.

Killed His Wife; Shot Himself.

OAKLAND, Cal., March 18.—J. H. Moffet shot and killed his wife, Lucy, and then attempted suicide. Moffet was formerly president of the carpenters, union of this city, and fairly prosperous, but for some time has been out of work and dependent upon his wife, who supported her widowed daughter and two children by dress-making. Moffet quarreled with his wife about a payment upon a mortgage on their home, but when the family retired there were no indications of further trouble. Moffet's wound is not considered fatal.

Notice

If the person who removed the sack of bran from my barn last Wednesday night, will return it to me, I will give him 1/2 of the remaining sack of shorts to mix, as this makes good cow feed, while he will find that bran alone is almost good for nothing.

E. O'FLYNN.

Congressional News.

Senator Proctor Talks to the Senate About Cuba

He Tells the Plain Unvarnished Truth About the Island.

WASHINGTON, March 18.—Senator Proctor of Vermont, who returned last Sunday from an extended trip to and through the island of Cuba. He made a statement to the senate of his observations on the island yesterday. From many points of view the statement was remarkable. It had evidently been most carefully prepared. Every element of sensationalism had been studiously eliminated from it and, except so far as the facts recited were sensational, it bore not the slightest evidence of an effort to arouse the public mind, already keenly alive to the condition of affairs on the island.

Calm and dispassionate, to a notable degree, the utterances of the senator aroused interest. Every person within sound of his voice was convinced that he was putting his observations into careful terms, lest he might subject himself to the criticism of being emotional. One of the best characterizations of the statement was made by Senator Frye, of Maine, a few minutes after its delivery. "It is," said he, "just as if Proctor had held up his right hand and sworn to it."

Senator Proctor said: "There are six provinces in Cuba. My observations were confined to the four western provinces, which constitute about one-half of the island.

"The two eastern ones are practically in the hands of the insurgents, except a few fortified towns. These two large provinces are spools of today as 'Cuba libre.' Everything seemed to go on much as usual at Havana, one sees little signs of war there.

"Outside of Havana all is changed. It is not peace nor is it war; it is desolation and destruction, misery and starvation. Every town and village is surrounded by the trenches (trenches of a sort) and barbed wire fence on the other side of the trench.

These trenches have, at every corner, and at frequent intervals along the sides, small forts, with a guard of from two to ten soldiers in each. The purpose of these trenches is to keep the insurgents out. From all the surrounding country the people have been driven into the fortified towns and held there to the last extremity. "There are frequently blockhouses, enclosed by the trenches, and with a guard along the railroad track. With this exception there is no human life or habitation between these fortified towns and villages, nor throughout the whole four western provinces, except to a very limited extent, among the hills, where the Spaniards have not been able to go and drive the people to the towns and burn their dwellings. I saw no house or hut in my

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ROYAL BAKING POWDER CO., NEW YORK.

400 miles of railroad rides, except within these Spanish trenches. There are no domestic animals nor crops on the rich fields and pastures except such as are under guard in the immediate vicinity of the towns.

"All the country people in the four western provinces, about 400,000 in number, remaining outside of the fortified towns, when Weyler's order was made, were driven into these towns and these are the reconcentrados. They were peasant farmers, some land owners, others renting lands, and all owning more or less stock.

"When they reached the town they were allowed to build huts of palm leaves, in the suburbs and vacant places within the trenches and left to live if they could. Their huts are about ten by sixteen feet in size and for want of space are usually crowded together very closely. They have no floor but the ground. With large families or with more than one family in the little space the commonest sanitary provisions are impossible. With foul earth, foul air, foul water and foul food, or none, what wonder that one-half have died and that one-quarter of the living are so diseased that they cannot be saved. A form of dropsy is one cause of this condition. Little children are still walking about with arms and chests terribly emaciated, eyes swollen and abdomens bloated to three times their natural sizes, physicians say these cases are hopeless.

"Deaths in the street have not been uncommon. I was told by one of our consuls that they have been four dead about the markets in the morning, where they had crawled, hoping to get some stray bits of food from the early hucksters and that there had been cases where they had dropped dead inside the markets surrounded by foot. These people were independent and self-supporting before the Weyler order. They are not beggars even now.

"Rarely is a hand held out to you for alms when going among their huts, but the sight of them makes an appeal stronger than any words.

"I went to Cuba with the strong conviction that the picture had been overdrawn; that a few cases of starvation and suffering had inspired and stimulated the press correspondent and that they had given free play to a strong, natural and highly cultivated imagination. I could not believe that out of a population of 1,600,000, 200,000 had died within a few months past, from actual starvation and from disease caused by insufficient and improper food."

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