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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1907.

Playing with the Taft Boom.

We know of no reason why Taft could not be nominated as easily at Chicago as at Kansas City, but some of the Secretary's friends say a number of reasons why the selection of the Missouri town as the place for holding the Republican convention would be to his advantage, and so they contributed another chapter to that mismanagement of the Taft boom that has made it the laughing stock of the country. They raised an utterly false issue, and lost. But they are trying to make the best of it. The Cleveland Leader, a Taft organ, declares "There is no sound reason why Secretary Taft's friends should not want the convention held in Chicago." Yet it admits that the active opponents of Taft were conspicuous in deciding that the convention should not go to Kansas City, and accuses them of making "absurd campaign material" out of their victory. The Taft paper in Kansas City, the Star, however, has made no concealment of its chagrin. If Kansas City failed to get the convention, that paper declares, "the choice was made, it would be entirely the fault of the reactionaries. Its suspicions were fully confirmed by Chicago's triumph. But the surprising fact was developed, according to the Star, that the reactionaries had as allies in the miserable business the treacherous third-term boomers from the South.

There was a conspiracy as black as any we have ever heard of. Senator Crane, it was, according to the Star, who first suggested the political inadvisability of Kansas City. The suggestion produced extraordinary results. A "formidable array of reactionary opposition" was gathered together, but, in spite of that, Kansas City would have won but for the "most incomprehensible co-operation" of the third termers. The Star can explain it on no other hypothesis than "that the men who have professed the greatest loyalty to Roosevelt in reality are trying to defeat his aims." We are told that "the enemies of the Roosevelt administration, were not in a majority on the committee, but when in this reactionary vote was added the immense third-term boomers, who from the very first have been using Roosevelt's name to defeat his policies, the reactionaries were in a majority."

"It has all along been insisted by a majority of those who have always supported the administration that the men who were shouting third term were doing so with the sole end in view of accomplishing the President's wishes, and that they were the Republicans party to stand in its next election for progressive rather than for reactionary policies."

Treachery in the camp! Gross betrayal of trust! But if Roosevelt shouters can not be depended on, who can be? Friends are indistinguishable from enemies, and progressists are reactionaries in disguise. Scratch a third-term shouter and you find a Cortelyou man, or a Fairbanks man, or a Cannon man, under another name. It is a puzzling and incongruous situation. Who is playing the game of hide-and-seek-my-boom with the Wandering Boy?

Senator Tom Platt has introduced a national corporations bill—but is as mum as ever about the President's suggested parcels post.

Valueless Gas Reports.

It was not to be expected, of course, that the local gas companies, in making their reports to Congress under the requirements of the law, would present a statement of income and expenditures that would, on the face of it, demonstrate the possibility of a material reduction in the price of gas without affecting injuriously the rights of stockholders or impairing the efficiency of operation. We are not surprised, therefore, to find that the reports make out a poor case for gas reduction on the surface, at least. On the other hand, the reports furnish an equally poor case for the increase in capital stock asked for by both companies. A trifling calculation will show that the total net income of the Washington Gaslight Company applicable to the payment of interest and dividends, including its surplus, would be less than 5 per cent on a capitalization of \$12,000,000. The Georgetown company, by applying its surplus to dividend payments, would be able to pay 8 per cent on its proposed capitalization of \$20,000,000, and a trifle over 5 per cent on the actual cash value of its plant, as fixed by Auditor Payne.

These facts suggest that the dividend-paying possibilities of both plants are much greater than is indicated in the reports submitted to Congress. By parity of reasoning, it may be inferred that their ability to supply cheaper gas at a profit is also much greater than appears in the figures now before us. In fact, there is some evidence to this effect in an exception taken by counsel for the Georgetown company to the findings of Auditor Payne, wherein it was stated that the gross income of the company was rapidly increasing, so that the net income for the present year would be at least \$200,000, or 5 per cent on a capitalization of \$200,000, and 10 per cent on the proposed capitalization of \$200,000. There is evidently good ground for the expectation that the reports of both companies for the current year will present more accurately their real earning capacity, and so supply adequate data for determining whether the price of gas may not be reduced without injustice to stockholders.

One thing is made clear by the reports, and that is the relation of inflated capital to the price of service. A continuous increase in the capitalization of a public-service corporation, as Judge Alton B. Parker has well said, simply means that the price of service will never be reduced. Hence the vital importance to the public of limiting the capitalization of such a corporation to a fair and reasonable amount. Still better would it be, if following the Boston plan, the payment of a dividend higher than 6 per cent should be conditional on a reduction of the price of gas, so that the corporation would have a strong incentive to produce economy and efficiency of operation, and share them with the people.

The admirals may not be expert enough horsemen to hold their commissions, but, doubtless, it would be hard to find a Rough Rider unable to lasso a government job and cinch it.

The Fate of a Soldier.

Yesterday began the final act in the tragedy of Port Arthur. Terrible as that struggle was between the hounded in Russia and the indomitable Japanese, a struggle titanic in its proportions, and which left the Laotian hills strewn with dead, it has almost been forgotten by now—save by those who saw or who took part in it. But the drama is not yet ended, for over in St. Petersburg yesterday began the final stage in the trial by court-martial of Lieut. Gen. Stoessel, indicted for the crime of having surrendered Russia's far Eastern fortress to the enemy.

With Gen. Stoessel are to be tried Gen. Fock and Reiss, who are accused of having acquiesced in the surrender, and Gen. Smirnov, who is being tried on a minor count, though the whole prosecution is based on Gen. Smirnov's secret report of the defense of Port Arthur.

It is not likely that the world at large will hear much about the court-martial except its judgment at the conclusion; and yet so great was the tragedy, that was enacted at Port Arthur, and so many and varied are the surmises and guesses as to whether the place could have held out, and if it had held out, what might have happened, that the details might well prove interesting.

Since that day when Gen. Stoessel marched out with the remnant of his defending force in humiliation before Nogai's conquering battalions, his life has been a broken one, marked with shame and bitterness. Twice he, who through all those grim months of the siege was only slightly wounded, has been stricken down with paralytic strokes, and the general who was strong, stern, and a brave and honest fighter is now a broken-down, weak-bearded, and trembling old man, eager for his trial and hopeful that his honor will be restored to him by military decree.

It is really most pitiable to think of it. It is easy for us who know only by hearsay of the horror of that siege; its inevitable end staved off by courage until the dogged persistence of the defenders as it did at the terrible persistence of the besiegers, to level criticisms, to say that this or that should have been done, and that it was the duty of Gen. Stoessel to resist to the death. For his own death it may be that he cared but little, but under him, under his sole care and responsibility, were still 17,000 fighting men, and in the hospitals were 15,000 wounded.

One thing is certain, that after months of mining and digging and burrowing in the ground, the Japanese had taken fort after fort, hill after hill, until at last they stood masters of the field. From its dozen directions they could pour their deadly fire into what remained of the once beleaguered city. Every battle ship in the harbor was sunk by the Japanese guns from landward. Utter and complete demoralization was but a question of hours.

And so he surrendered; and to-day in Russia, the unsuccessful general is being tried for his life and for what is dearer to the soldier than his life—his honor. It is a sad and mournful spectacle; it is a grim and hollow echo of a dreadful war!

"Congress doesn't understand the financial question," says Senator Bailey. Well, it seemed to understand that phase of it relating to raising its own salary.

Donald and His Pipes.

To Donald McLean, a Canadian, whose home is at Warsaw, we beg to doff our hat and offer assurances of our most distinguished regards. While, possibly, he would be classed as a nature worshiper by the greatest living authority on natural history, to our untutored mind he appears as a public benefactor. But let the short and simple annals of his exploits speak for themselves.

Like Eve Baby Bunting's papa, Donald went a-hunting. Whether he sought rabbits or less ferocious game does not concern this narrative. He went a-hunting, and, although the open season for deer was on in Canada, he was not accidentally shot, but returned safely to his camp. There it was that dangers far greater than any he braved in the chase menaced him. Night came on, and as he built a fire whereon to prepare his modest evening meal, shining eyes, and still more shining eyes, glared at him from the darkness. Behind the eyes were the means of saving him from a cruel and horrible death. Donald well knew the possibilities of those pipes. Spurning his rifle, as if it were no more than a toy gun, he slung his beloved instrument over his shoulder, fitted the mouthpiece, and began to blow!

As before the explosion of a bomb carrying grape and shrapnel and deadly gases, the famished wolves fell back, recovering somewhat from the terror caused by the attack, however, they attempted to rush the intrepid Donald, who now went round and round a tree, the pipes emitting a militant marching tune manly—"Garryowen." We think it was the leaders of the band reached the circle of the players. By parity of reasoning, it may be inferred that their ability to supply cheaper gas at a profit is also much greater than appears in the figures now before us. In fact, there is some evidence to this effect in an exception taken by counsel for the Georgetown company to the findings of Auditor Payne, wherein it was stated that the gross income of the company was rapidly increasing, so that the net income for the present year would be at least \$200,000, or 5 per cent on a capitalization of \$200,000, and 10 per cent on the proposed capitalization of \$200,000. There is evidently good ground for the expectation that the reports of both companies for the current year will present more accurately their real earning capacity, and so supply adequate data for determining whether the price of gas may not be reduced without injustice to stockholders.

A LITTLE NONSENSE.

HIS LUMINOUS VIEWS. The statesman leans back in his chair, Looks out across the park, And, weighing every word with care, Delivers this remark: "The tariff is a meaty nut; I think it should be altered, But—"

The statesman fumbles with his pen, Seeking means and ways, Looks out across the park again And sardonically says: "The tariff of state is not a skiff; The ship will be altered, If—"

Sounded Seasonable. Poe was writing his "Descent into the Maelstrom": "A good timely title," quoth he, "People will think it's a story about Christmas shopping."

The Modern Politician. "My boy, never ask for credit." "No?" "No; put up a pouter-pigeon front, and let 'em force it on you."

In Washington. "I made a glaring error to-day," sighed the cabinet lady. "How's that?" inquired the department lady. "I glared at a woman whom I should have ignored completely."

Almost Human. Money talks, Seldom balks; Aims its views and simpers. Now and then Just like men It gets scared and whimpers.

It Was Santa. "Anybody been in Jack?" asked the building inspector. "Man with white whiskers wanted a permit to go down chimneys." "Well, well! I hope you didn't charge him anything for it."

He Could. "And you say the law can't touch me?" "The law can't, but that doesn't apply to us lawyers. Five thousand as a retainer, please."

Loss of Memory. "John, where were you last night?" "I don't remember." "And then he added softly, "That sounds like a hackneyed plea, but in this case, it's the petrified truth."

NOTES AND NOTIONS.

THOSE BOOMS. The Presidential bee is buzzing Loud; Booms they come along; in anxious fussing Crowd. Some just burst into a lively being Quick; But they don't, as far as goes folks' seeing, Stick.

There's the Taft boom, which has, to all showing, Weight, That the country needs big men, the knowing State. And the Fairbanks boom, some say, inherits Place, But that cocktails changed too soon its merits Face.

And the Cannon boom that o'er the nation Roars; The Foraker boom that in elation Soars. And the boom that really is most ready To stir relief—The most persistent one of Teddy's III.

Not Coming His Way. Mike—They say the new gold pieces The business men don't like because they come in in relief. Pat—Don't ye believe it, me boy. Sure, they ain't a-comin' to my relief.

The Test. American—Our Senate is superior to the upper legislative houses of any European nation, and I can prove it. Briton—How do you make it out? American—Because your upper House is without a peer.

Sight Reading. Mrs. Rusticus—Pa, our boy Tommy must be awful careless with that tern; he's got you to buy for him up to the city. Mrs. Rusticus—How so, ma? Mrs. Rusticus—Why, he writes in this here letter that he keeps it in the garbage.

The Real Thing. "Do you think that unconscious spell which Miss Sharp had at the ball was a swoon?" "No; I am sure it was a feint." "What do you mean?" "She had declared her intention of making a sensation at the ball, and I think she was like her intention—she wanted to be carried out."

The Proper Fee. "What do I get for this stunt?" asked the vain, but execrable, amateur. "If I were a police magistrate," answered the manager, "you would get thirty days; but, as I am not, you'll simply get out."

Not Quite Plain. "I don't like Jigsby. He is always running people down." "Gossip or motorist?"

Paying Election Expenses. From the Wall Street Journal. The government pays the expenses of elections, and provides the entire machinery for voting. In the State of New York it also defrays the expense of holding the primary elections of the different parties. Is there anything revolutionary, or wrong, in the proposition favored by President Roosevelt, that the government should also defray the expense of conducting political campaigns? It is surely as important to instruct the people in the issues at stake as it is to provide them with honest primaries and adequate election machinery.

Our Chief Litterateur. From the Boston Globe. If President Roosevelt hadn't received the Nobel Peace Prize a year ago perhaps he would have been awarded the Nobel Library Prize this year.

DOMINION. I have loved him with equal lights And sung him to midnight sleep— And then, in the hour of night, I have strangled his cry in the deep.

I have purged his fet on the sand And whisp'ered low to his ear, Till, far from the sleeping land, I have swept him to death in the gale.

I have promised him substance and store If he gave me his sons and his feet; And then, having consumed him sore, I have cast up his head at his feet.

But he spurs me with dog and his lead, He brands me with marks for his sin, He serves the tale of his dead, And turns his ships seaward again, —Charles Burton Going, in McClure's.

The awarding of a Nobel literary prize to Rudyard Kipling is apt, we fear, greatly to encourage the bad poetry output.

CAPITOL GOSSIP.

John Dalzell, of Pennsylvania, who ranks next to the Speaker on the Committee on Ways and Means, is a small man, with an aggressive, busy air, who spends no more time on the floor than is absolutely necessary. He is always just going some place, and his handshakes and greetings are almost invariably short, terse, and extended with an air of preoccupation. When he is not by himself, he is with Mr. Payne, whose bulky appearance is accentuated by the short, lean, Dalzell. Both are in their seats promptly when the sessions open, for they are the right-hand men of the Speaker, and, according to the members on the minority side, there is no use trying to get any kind of a bill through unless Messrs. Payne and Dalzell will permit. Mr. Dalzell's characteristic by which he is most easily recognized from the gallery is his habit of holding his head to one side, for all the world as though he had his ear cocked to hear something from his right.

"This game looks to me," said Representative Asbury, of Ohio, "as though the story a new member told at home was about right. The new member, whose first visit home came in the Christmas holidays, confided to a group of friends that if his constituents knew how little he could do in Washington without the consent of the few big men who rule the House, they would never have elected a Representative, but would have written instead."

M. R. Denver, new member of the House from the Sixth Ohio district, succeeding Thomas Scroggy, has attracted much attention from the galleries since his advent at the Capitol. Mr. Denver brushes his hair up from his forehead in exactly the same way Senator La Follette does, and scores of times so far this session Mr. Denver has been pointed out as the Senator from Wisconsin. The resemblance goes even further than the similarity in the matter of head dress, for Mr. Denver has also much the appearance of the Senator, being only slightly taller.

Already the members of the minority in the House are beginning to discuss the question of new minority leader to succeed John Sharp Williams after next session, when he leaves the House for a year's rest before going to the Senate. There are no less than four members who are talked of as the right men to take the responsibility for looking out for Democratic interests, and they include Henry Clayton, of Alabama, now chairman of the Missouri caucus; Judge De Armond, of Missouri, who was a candidate for the place this year, but who withdrew in favor of Mr. Williams; Robert L. Henry, of Texas, and Swager Shirley, of Kentucky.

All will probably be in the lists when the time comes, and all are considered strong factors on the minority side of the House. The fact that success in the caucus may mean real success on the floor when the Sixty-first Congress convenes, adds to the interest of the race.

The Fifth Congressional district of Maryland can be counted upon to return a Republican Congressman as long as Sydney E. Mudd is a candidate. He has represented this district since the Fifty-fifth Congress, and will doubtless continue to do so, unless Dame Fortune smiles on him and he be sent to the Senate.

"Everything is fine, and everybody happy down my way," said yesterday. "I don't worry about the Fifth district. We have a little excitement, prior to elections, but that only tends to keep our heads in. I think I will go home," he added, until after the holidays, digest the President's message, and read Pumpsie's pie."

"A member of Congress who hasn't a bill on the currency is considered out of class," said a Pennsylvania statesman, "and I am such a member. The only thing I know about it is, that money is hard enough to get, and when you get it, very hard to keep." When asked if he thought the new Banking and Currency Committee would get together on a popular measure, he answered by saying, "When Tom Reed was Speaker he was asked why he placed on a certain committee members with such divergent views. 'Because,' said Speaker Reed, 'I don't expect them to do anything.' You can draw your own conclusions."

Senator Clay, of Georgia, and Senator Pile, of Washington, met in an elevator in the Capitol Annex yesterday. "Hello," said Pile, "how's the Senator from Georgianna?" "Fair to middling," responded Clay, "how's the State of Washington coming along?" "Fine."

"Wish you had the fight out your way I've got on my hands," said Clay. "Got everything just the way we want it," replied Pile. "I see your eye is getting better. Still, a little bloodshot."

"Yes," returned Clay, ruminatively, "but I'll bloody the other fellow's before I get through."

Congressman Kincaid, of Nebraska, called on Senator Burkett, of the same State, after the House adjourned Monday, having been in session only a few minutes. "Didn't give me a chance to vote on anything over on the other side," said the Congressman, as he shook hands with the Senator at the latter's office door, "but I remember that I had a few proxies over here, so I thought I'd come over and see what was doing."

Public Printer Stillings' messenger to the Senate would uphold the dignity of an East Indian rajah, so far as his bills are concerned. His uniform has quite as much gold lace on it as is allowed a major general, and he bears himself with a mien becoming to his handsome trappings. There's always a stir among the visitors in the corridors as this gay functionary passes along, and many a patriot from Wayback, Ill., or Smithbury, Conn., goes home satisfied that he has beheld a real live hero for once in his life.

Senator Guggenheim, of Colorado, is an interested spectator of all that goes on in the Senate. In his seat promptly at 12 o'clock, he remains through the entire session, only directing his attention to chat with some Senator who is passing.

"I think it is the greatest body of men in the world," said the Senator, "and though I am new at the business, the more I see, the more I become interested in my surroundings."

EVERY INCH A KING.

Tribute to the Great Sovereign Who Has Passed Away. From the New York Tribune. The venerable monarch who has just passed away, grandson of Bernadotte and son of Josephine Beauharnais, might truly be described as "every inch a King." There were more conspicuous sovereigns in Europe during his long reign, but there were few, if any, who more justly appreciated the functions of a modern constitutional monarch or who more diligently and successfully strove to justify the existence of kingship by service to the people. For thirty-five years Oscar II labored as earnestly as any democratic chief of state for the welfare of his kingdom. His reign was a period of progress and prosperity and of general advancement of his subjects' welfare. His one untoward event—from his point of view—was the accession of Norway, which he strove to avert by using all his influence for the just conciliation of the Norwegians, and against which, when at last it inevitably came, he protested vainly but with a dignity not often rivaled in royal utterances. He was a generous patron of literature, science, and art, and was himself a man of letters—historian, essayist, and poet—of no mean rank. Sweden is the better for his having reigned and the world is poorer for his death.

He has left the kingdom strong and prosperous, to be reigned over by his son, a worthy successor, already familiar with the duties of kingscraft. There will be no disturbance of Swedish affairs, at home or abroad, because of the change of monarchs, but only grateful recollections of the King who is dead and loyal confidence and anticipation for the King who lives.

Season of Glories from the First of May to the End of July. From "The Reminiscences of Lady Randolph Churchill" in the Outlook. The London season of thirty years ago was far more prolonged and its splendor more apparent than they are now. It was looked upon as a very serious matter which no self-respecting persons who considered themselves "in society" would forego, nor of which a votary of fashion would willingly miss a week or a day. Religiously on the first day of May, Belgrave—the Belgravia described by Lord Beaconsfield—would open the doors of its freshly painted and flower-bedecked succeeded one another without intermission till the end of July, the only respite being at the Whitstable recess. A few of the racing people might go to Newmarket for a week, but the fashionable world flocked only to the classic races—the Derby, Ascot, and Goodwood.

Parties were arranged for Hurlingham to see the pigeon shooting, or for the fashionable flower shows then held at the botanical gardens, or again to Wimbledon to see the shooting for the Elcho Shield. In those days was a feature of the London season. To command a carriage of the camp was a coveted post, and I remember Lord and Lady Wharfedale living in large tents and entertaining for a whole fortnight in the most sumptuous manner. We used to drive down on coaches in Ascot frocks and smart-feathered hats, and stay to dinner, driving back by moonlight.

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AT THE HOTELS.

H. M. Stevens, of Spokane, one of the best-known attorneys in Eastern Washington, arrived at the New Willard last night. Mr. Stevens is interested as attorney in the hearing of the case of the lumbermen of the Northwest against the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Mr. Stevens was attorney for the city of Spokane and the chamber of commerce of that city in one of the first cases filed with the commission after the passage of the Hepburn bill. That case entailed a great deal of interest all over the country, and the first hearing was held last January. Speaking of this case, Mr. Stevens said that a decision is expected in a few weeks. It is eagerly awaited in all the interior cities of the Northwest.

"The people of Arizona want Statehood, and they want it very badly," said D. H. Armstrong, a mining operator, of Tucson, at the New Willard last night. "