

THE PACIFIC  
Commercial Advertiser.

WALTER G. SMITH - - EDITOR.

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Dewey's motto: Better be wrong than not be President.

Now that Hilo has a locomotive running, let us hope it may be able to work off some of that superfluous steam.

The fact that Hawaii is probably organized as a Territory of the United States justifies the Republicans in getting together and taking the preliminary steps to form a party. Ditto the Democrats, Prohibitionists, Populists, Social Democrats and ex-Royalists. The bars are down for all and the field wide open. The Republicans will be first to act and will show their paces at a mass-meeting next Wednesday evening.

Admiral Dewey has Perry Belmont on his side and there are indications that Cleveland prefers him to Bryan. So far no one else has come out for him, not even his brother-in-law, John R. McLean. Dewey is almost as lone some a candidate, in respect of party support, as David B. Hill. The great trouble with his canvass, aside from the fact that he entered the field after Bryan had got a majority of the Democratic leaders pledged to him, is that he has no politics that he would not forswear for the Presidency. No amount of naval popularity can put a man like that into the White House.

The American public has a right to be amused at the action of the British Columbia Cabinet in announcing that the Alien labor law which was passed to exclude American Unhlanders from the Atlin mining district will soon be repealed. So long as Atlin promised to be the one great North-western gold field, the Klondike alone excepted, Canada was bound to monopolize it; but now that the Cape Nome diggings are opening up on American soil and Canadians want to go there without hindrance, the British Columbian Cabinet hastens to remove unpleasant precedents. It makes a difference, as Adam remarked, whose ox is gored.

Honolulu has no more charming fellow personally than Alkali Abe Humphreys, but the taste he has for human blood is something curdling. It shows even in so peaceful an undertaking as a newspaper interview on the duty of Republicans. "Let us," says this genial but at the same time savage man, "let us do politics with our swords in the sunlight glittering and the scabbards thrown away." My, my! It was a matter of bowie knives and pistols in Arizona, but it is swords here and by and by nothing will do but lyddite. Evidently we are in for a hot and gory time in Hawaii nel. It is a wise man who makes his cemetery arrangements now, for if he waits he may have to take a place somewhere in Row M, Section 17 of Alkali Abe's private graveyard.

After broadly hinting that there would be a color line, and congratulating this paper when it referred to the fact, upon "getting at the truth," the Independent now says that no color line is proposed. Instead we are to have the "Hawaiian National Party," whatever that may be. The Independent makes an appeal to this organization in terms which are certainly curious if they do not refer to an aboriginal constituency: It says:

Are you ready, gentlemen? Ready to uphold our rights, to demonstrate that the Hawaiians and those affiliated with them must show that the day of action has come, that Hawaii, now termed a territory of the United States through the traitorous schemes of a certain clique, is still in the hands of an intelligent, patriotic and loyal people?

Now what does this mean? Is it a color-line scheme or one to align the former Royalists against the Annexationists? Why doesn't the Independent stop quibbling and prevaricating and tell precisely what its friends are at?

The soulful feminine reporter of the Call had a solacing time over Princes David and Cupid. Weeping salt tears, she asked Cupid if the twain were leaving Honolulu forever and that callous young capitalist said they were. Whereupon the lachrymose scribe wrote these pathetic lines: "Hawaii nel will never more give peaceful shelter to a child of the house of Kalakaua. Their lovely island home will know them no more. Driven from their mother island by her foster children, the foreigners, they will sail the seven seas over and the green earth round to find a home where the white dove of peace hovers and makes life a long day of sweet content." This is really sad, especially in view of the fact that the Princes own a million or so of Island property and are having too much fun with the income to permanently abandon such fertile ground. When they come to "sail the green earth," which they will do with their automobiles, they may be expected to give Hawaii its customary share of preference. Doubtless the Princes will be able to find "white doves of peace" if they want them without poaching on foreign soil. Our trees are loaded down with them.

A GREAT VICTORY FOR MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

The inauguration in New York last month of the excavation, for the underground rapid transit crowns with victory a long and brave struggle. It is a great triumph over the principle, far too well established, that cities are to be perpetually in the hands of corporations controlling valuable transportation franchises, and it is a much greater triumph for municipal ownership. The long and short of this new enterprise upon which New York has entered is that the city lends its credit to the contractor—being able to borrow at a much cheaper rate than a private party—and secures in return for itself fifty years hence the ownership of the entire system without the expenditure of a dollar.

This is an innovation, for while many other cities have made what were considered sales of franchises on advantageous terms, not one of these has contemplated the ownership by the city of a street or underground railway system free of cost. In this case the city does not even lend money for the construction; at least not directly. It merely permits the contractor to construct the line and the company to run it, and receives each year enough money to enable it to pay off the bonds within the time prescribed.

New York City can borrow at three per cent. The contractor is glad to borrow at four and a half per cent. The city, then, issues bonds to the value of \$35,000,000, bearing interest at the rate of three per cent, for the construction of the road. The contractor pays the city four and a half per cent on the value of the bonds. This covers the interest and leaves a sinking fund of one and a half per cent, which repays in full the principal at the end of fifty years. The city will receive its rapid transit system half a century hence without payment and without debt.

No one who does not know New York well can understand the desperate need of this rapid transit system. The overcrowding of the trains on the elevated roads has reached such a point of discomfort and hardship that some relief must be secured. The elevated roads have shown clearly that they will not provide any new facilities. Cheap and proper rapid transit is the only way to relieve the intolerable and horrible congestion of the tenement districts. These circumstances have been growing steadily worse for twenty years. Gradually the conviction grew, at first chiefly among the working classes, who take to ideas connected with the municipal ownership of quasi-public institutions more readily than do other people, that the public should in this case come to its own relief. The first bill drafted for the municipal construction of a rapid transit system received the hearty support of nearly a hundred trades unions. It passed one House two successive years; then came a bill for construction by a Commission. The trades unions compelled the insertion of a clause referring to the voters the question of municipal ownership. The bill was passed, and the popular vote stood nearly three to one for municipal ownership. This was in 1895.

But wealthy property-owners on lower Broadway fought it, and the Supreme Court proved bitterly hostile. It asserted that the road would cost twice the Commission's figures which would cause the city to exceed its debt limit; but they could bring no evidence or expert opinion to support this statement, and the trades unions and several of the most conservative papers fought the decision. The Commission went on with their work, deciding to stop the road at the City Hall; and the Court of Appeals decided that the city had the same right to build a rapid transit system as to construct a system of water supply.

But the municipal campaign of 1897 went wrong, and Tammany and Croker brought their power to bear to turn over the work to a private corporation, giving it a perpetual charter. The Commission gave up the battle in 1899, but the unions and the papers reminded the Governor and the Legislature that municipal ownership had been ordered by the people by a majority of three to one. Governor Roosevelt took the ground that he would not sign the bill; and presently the Legislature became convinced that it would not be expedient for them to repudiate the instructions given by the people. This settled it; the Traction Company withdrew, Tammany veered around, and the bids for the construction of the road—despite the enormous rise in the cost of materials—were but little higher than the Commission's estimates.

The long fight, which more than once seemed desperate, has ended in an overwhelming victory for the principle of municipal ownership without cost to the public funds. The greatest municipal railway ever projected will be returned to the city free of charge and free of debt, and with no cost to the city in the meanwhile.

THE BRITISH M'CIELLA

General Sir Redvers Buller shares the bad luck which usually comes to the General who begins an offensive war against a well-organized enemy. He and General Warren are the McClellan and Pope of the anti-Boer campaign. It is usually a thankless task to lead off in such an undertaking as the British have before them in South Africa. At the start the enemy is not well known and measured; the best means of meeting him has not been developed; the invading troops are unseasoned in war; the chances of disaster are manifold. Usually it falls to the lot of the pioneer General to show his successor by the object-lessons of sad experience where pitfalls are and how the enemy had better be approached; and while he goes into retirement and perhaps disgrace for not knowing these things by intuition, the General who comes after him and uses the lessons of his pioneer campaign to win victories with is acclaimed as a hero. Yet if the victor had tried to do the work at the outset he might have fared like his predecessor. It is a prudent General who chooses to come in at the finish; an unfortunate one who has to make the first dash at the foe.

General McClellan was probably a better officer than some of those who emerged from the Civil War with brighter reputations. Sherman has been acclaimed as one of the world's great Generals, yet he never commanded an army in a battle of the first rank—a battle like Chancellorsville, Antietam, Shiloh or Gettysburg—and he made the most of his reputation by a march which almost any soldier could have led as successfully. He was lucky enough to be with Grant and Sheridan in the command of armies that had learned their business and to meet enemies who had begun to find the strain of the war too much for them. McClellan or Pope or Hooker or McDowell under such circumstances might have eclipsed Sherman in military reputation; Sherman on the other hand, might have failed in high command during the first two years of the Civil War as miserably as did these four who led the way. It must not be forgotten that he was with McDowell at Bull Run and did not distinguish himself.

Sir Redvers Buller, the British McClellan, is an officer of distinction who probably did as well on the Tugela as Roberts could have done himself. He was repulsed through no fault of his own, but those very repulses were needed for the proper education of the British soldier in Boer warfare. Lord Roberts is profiting by them now. His march on Bloemfontein was made in tremendous force and with ample cavalry and artillery because he had learned from Buller's experiences that it never would do to tempt the Boers with a small force. A few months ago

he believed in the promenade theory and thought the British troops would eat their Christmas dinners in Pretoria. Buller taught him sense and by that fact alone he deserves something else than the rebuke of the Commander-in-Chief and a possible recall.

But he will hardly be likely to come out any better than McClellan did unless, perchance, by means of some happy accident. His is the fate of the man who sinks in the quicksand at the ford and shows those who come after that it is safest to take the longer way around.

Honolulu as it was, appears in a sketch, reproduced elsewhere in these columns, which Missionary Hiram Bingham drew seventy-nine years ago. In making the engraving Mr. Bingham's drawing was accurately followed save for the insertion of a few lines of descriptive text. Back in 1821 Honolulu was a small collection of grass huts standing mainly on the site of the recent Chinatown. The mission near Kawaiahae contained the only foreign buildings. What the city will be seventy-nine years hence is a question which no one but a real estate dealer can answer reasonably.

OF CURRENT INTEREST.

Japanese Police Courts.—Dr. Louis L. Seaman is an authority on Japanese affairs, and he went to see the company of actors now playing at the Berkeley Lyceum, to discover whether they were genuine or not, and, if so, how much. The doctor's last visit to Japan was when he was on board a United States transport, returning from the Philippines.

"There was a little incident happened while we were in port," he said, "that showed the magnanimity of those people. A United States soldier was out riding a bicycle, and he was coasting down hill, when he ran over a man. They promptly arrested him, and he was taken before a magistrate. We all went up from the transport to see how things went with him. The magistrate heard the case, and fined him \$5 for running over a blind man. 'What?' said the soldier, 'was the man blind?' Here, give him \$20,' and he pulled out a twenty dollar gold piece and handed it over to the magistrate. And what do you think they did? They were so pleased that they remitted the whole fine, or would have done so, only the soldier would not take it back, but insisted on its being given to the blind man, and then they gave him a diploma, setting forth what he had done."

Napoleon in Hades.—In the museum at Brussels, where the works of the eccentric painter Wiertz are preserved, is a painting representing Napoleon in the infernal regions. A Dutch artist has reproduced the picture, but has placed Mr. Chamberlain's head on Napoleon's shoulders. The painting has been exhibited in Holland for the benefit of the Boer fund.

Women Druggists.—Apothecary shops with women clerks are not only becoming common in Russia, but they are said to be specially favored by physicians and the public.

"Treasures of Flowers Rare and Roses Red"

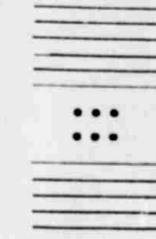
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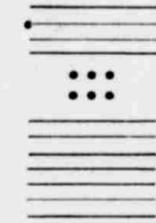
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