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A story is published in the Pacific coast papers to the effect that a schooner load of Alaskan miners got within about half a mile of the north pole when they were trying their best to go the other way. Peary, or some of the other arctic cranks, might try that route.

From the testimony given before the strike commission it appears that the G. B. Markle Co. is composed of about as inhuman a set of monsters as ever enslaved labor. Making little boys toil for years to pay the "pluck me" store bills and coal debts of their fathers killed in the mines and causing the death of women by summary evictions are some of their doings.

The last English papers received in this country contain numerous letters from Hong Kong and other points in the Orient, all of them declaring that foreign trade has come to a standstill on account of the fall in the price of silver. The correspondent of the London Times says that the condition there is worse than it was in 1892. There is lots of trouble ahead for the gold bugs.

From private letters The Independent learns that the populists of Indiana are contemplating the holding of a conference on Washington's birthday, on which occasion they will have some remarks to make to David B. Hill, Grover Cleveland and other plutocratic political idiots who think that they "can win" without the votes of the 2,000,000 men who supported Bryan, but who will never vote for one of the Dave Hill breed.

A great deal of talk is indulged in by the dailies about the 30-cent dollar, but the national bank notes is one degree worse than the 30-cent silver dollar, for it is redeemable in silver. If a man should conclude that the small piece of paper issued by a national bank was not "sound money" and want it redeemed, all he could get for it is one of these despised 30-cent silver dollars. But the dailies never denounce the national bank note. Those dirty pieces of paper are, in their eyes, just "as good as gold."

The interstate commerce commission is going to present a formal inquiry to the railroads, asking them why they raised rates and the railroads will make a formal reply, the plain English of which will be, because they thought the traffic would bear it. That will be the end of the costly farce. But then this is a world of shams and it all goes in a lifetime. There are little shams and big shams and the public likes the big shams the best. That is why they pay so much to keep up this interstate commerce commission.

**VENEZUELA**

The muddle down in Venezuela is a puzzle past solving for most men, on account of a lack of information upon which to found a satisfactory opinion. After one has read columns of stuff about it in the dailies he is left without the necessary facts. It appears, however, that the German and English citizens built some railroads down there. Whether these roads were owned by the government or by private parties the dispatches do not say. It is stated that interest on the debt caused by building these roads has not been paid for five years, and that Castro, the dictator president, had refused to propose any satisfactory plan for an adjustment.

Of late years the European governments have adopted the plan of becoming collectors of the bad debts of their subjects contracted in foreign lands. The propriety of this, The Independent has always doubted and still believes that it is not the function of any government to become the collector of debts of private parties. However, to this sort of paternalism, this government and all others have in late years given their sanction. That being the case, the English and German governments formed a pool for the collection of these bad debts in Venezuela and sent a great fleet there to enforce payment. That fleet captured the tiny gunboats and cruisers of the little South American republic and then took the captured vessels outside the harbor and sunk them. This needless destruction of property was in direct violation of all law. The British say that the Germans did it and the Germans say that the British had as much to do with the destruction of this property as they had. It is one of the most cowardly and shameful things that has happened in a long time.

This trust, formed for the collection of debts in South America by the combination of the British and German governments, proposes to enforce the payment by seizing the custom houses and collecting the tariff themselves. Castro says he will abolish all tariffs and enter upon a reign of free trade and asks the collection trust how it will get any money that way. When the trust sent its ultimatum, which was done in a very queer way, for they were sent on Sunday and the government offices not being open, the documents were left at the private residence of the minister of foreign affairs, the governments at the same time withdrew their ministers and turned over the protection of their citizens to the United States minister, Mr. Bowen. Castro ordered all of the British and German citizens arrested and rounded them up in the police station. Mr. Bowen interceded and got most of them released.

That is the history of the row up to the present writing, but there is something more to it.

Everybody is talking about the Monroe doctrine by which this government has stood since 1823 when it was first proclaimed in the seventh annual message of President Monroe on December 2 of that year. The sentence which contained the doctrine is as follows:

"We would not view any intervention for the purpose of oppressing them (the South American republics) or controlling in any manner their destiny, by any European power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition towards the United States."

From that day to this the people of the United States have stood as a unit for that doctrine and it has often been reaffirmed by the executive department. No European government will be allowed to add one foot of land to its jurisdiction on this hemisphere. But this collectors' trust says that the governments have no such intention, that they have sent two fleets of warships over here for the simple pur-

pose of collecting some bills and when that is done they will take their warships and go home. If they take possession of custom houses and small portions of the territory of Venezuela, they intend nothing but a temporary occupation and not a permanent addition to their jurisdiction.

But that is exactly what England said when she went down to Egypt to collect a bad debt and every one knows that she is there yet and intends to stay there. That is what is causing such constant reference to the Monroe doctrine.

The sycophantic dailies have taken occasion to talk about the wonderful foresight of the government in assembling a fleet in proximity to the shores of Venezuela, which is about the silliest sort of writing that ever appeared in a newspaper. It is true that Dewey is down in that region in command of most of the war vessels of this government, but the assembling of the fleet there for practice and maneuvering, as every one knows, was arranged months ago, long before any European fleet ever started for the shores of South America, and all the details of the matter were published last summer.

One thing will be a serious detriment in the settlement of this question, if any complications arise, and that is the imperialism that the republican party has been engaged in. The principle upon which the Monroe doctrine was founded was that the United States would not interfere in European policies and that the converse of that was that European governments should not interfere in American policies, whether in North America or South America. Now the European diplomats claim that as America has abandoned that position and has gone into Asia and extended its jurisdiction over a large territory and millions of people there, it has thus in abandoning the principles upon which the Monroe doctrine was founded, also abandoned the doctrine itself. This point was often insisted upon by those who opposed imperialism.

If Venezuela adopts free trade and the trust collection agency undertakes to blockade the ports and levy custom duties, that will be an act of sovereignty and the levying of taxes will in itself be an annexation of South American territory. What will John Hay have to say then?

**RAG MONEY**

The feature in Secretary Shaw's report that delights the inflationists and "rag money" advocates more than anything else is the recommendation that the banks be allowed to issue all the "rag money" that they wish without making it a first lien on their assets. If congress fails to indorse this "rag money" system, then he looks forward with pleasure to the time when the government will begin to issue isthmian canal bonds which can be used by the national bankers as a basis for issuing "rag money," while they draw interest on both the bonds and on the money which they issue. The amusing thing about this is to watch the mullet head mobs. When the republican party is for "hard money" they are all for hard money, too. When it is for "rag money," they declare that rag money is just the thing. If the exporting trusts should find out that the slide downward of silver could not be stopped, that the fall would ruin the Oriental trade, that the loss of that trade would bring stagnation at home and ruin of the industrial trusts, and should conclude to turn around and advocate the coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, every last one of these mullet heads would be out shouting for silver inside of a week. That is proven by the way they have taken to rag money after shouting for gold and hard money for ten years. Great is the mullet head.

**VINDICATED**

For years the republicans have specifically charged that the panic of '93 was the result of the democratic free trade Wilson bill, but at last that party has been vindicated by no less an authority than Mr. Roosevelt's secretary of the treasury. Mr. Shaw in his official report says:

"In 1893 a very serious financial panic arose, which threatened every commercial and industrial institution in the land. Without going unduly into the history of this panic, it is quite universally recognized that the possibility of government notes being redeemed in coin worth less than 25.8 grains of gold was the prime factor which led to the hoarding of gold."

So it was not the tariff at all, but the possibility of the government notes being redeemed in a coin worth less than 25.8-10 grains of gold that caused the panic and the hard times that followed. No higher republican authority exists than that of the secretary of the treasury. He refutes the charge that the panic was caused by a "democratic free trade tariff." Hereafter let no republican spell-binder or hireling editor of a great daily newspaper bring that old charge against the democratic party. The question has been settled by the highest authority. Neither tariff legislation nor the "threat" of tariff legislation was the cause of the panic of '93. It was caused by the fact "universally recognized" that the government notes might be redeemed in a coin worth less than 25.8-10 grains of gold. So that is settled at last.

But who was responsible for the laws that made government notes redeemable in a coin worth less than 25.8-10 grains of gold? It was the republican party. That law was known by the name of the great republican leader of that time and is still called the "Sherman act." The republican party had held power for a quarter of a century during which time it had always controlled either the legislative or executive branches of the government and nearly all the time both of them. The laws that made government notes redeemable in a coin worth less than 25.8-10 grains of gold were republican laws and if that is what caused the panic and hard times, then the republican party brought on the panic and not the democratic party.

Nevertheless the mullet heads were rounded up to vote "er straight under the cry: "Do you want to go back to free trade and Cleveland soup houses?" When it wasn't free trade at all that did the mischief.

**DEPENDENT EMPLOYES**

Some of the professors are beginning to employ the very language so often used by The Independent in regard to the condition of the masses of the people. Prof. G. Frederick Wright, A. M., D. D., LL.D., of Oberlin college says:

"Business is more and more coming into the hands of immense corporations, which, like the long-winged beetles, are fitted to survive the financial storms, while the masses of the people are settling down to the condition of dependent employees."

This professor is a plutocrat and seems also to be a fatalist, and he thinks that the making of the masses hirelings is the will of the Lord and all for the best. But the acknowledgement of the truth of what The Independent has been saying, coming from such a source, is worth mentioning. This professor of the "Harmony of Science and Revelation" thinks that is "evolution" and an illustration of Darwin's theory of the "Survival of the Fittest." It is not the first time by any means that one of these "divine right" apologists has tried to stretch Darwinism so as to cover their inhumanity. Darwin never dreamed of any such thing.

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