

that scion of European royalty who "committed perjury like a gentleman?" Shall we punish severely for ungentlemanly outbursts of sudden passion on the floor of the Senate, repented of and apologized for, while ignoring circumstantial evidence of "gentlemanly" understandings of dishonor within the body of that august assemblage, though the understandings are commonly believed to exist and the incriminating circumstances are defiantly unexplained?

Mr. McLaurin, if guilty, is not the only offender against this greater, this supreme, dignity of the Senate. Other senators who changed their minds about the Philippine treaty without explanation, have fared well. One of them, under Federal indictment and about to be pushed to a third trial after two mistrials, was saved from further annoyance from that quarter. He was from the same state as the Democratic member of the treaty commission who signed the treaty though he had opposed the Philippine purchase, and was fortunate enough immediately afterward to be appointed by a Republican administration to a place upon the Federal bench. More senators than one who are bitter against Tillman and would expel him if possible, have acquired their seats solely because they are very rich men and under circumstances which bring their wealth into suspicious political associations. There are others who, besides being involved in "understandings between statesmen," are not unreasonably believed also to have understandings with corporation lobbyists. Yet these instances of passionless and deliberate disregard for the essential dignity of the Senate are ignored by senators and newspapers and a respectable rabble that have the temerity nevertheless to insist that Tillman ought to have been expelled for momentarily and in the heat of sudden passion disregarding the dignity of its forms!

Mr. Tillman has a full quota of faults. In some respects we are wholly out of sympathy with him. To us his attitude toward the Negro race, for instance, is abhorrent. We could wish him, also, to have more regard for the proprieties of time and place in some of his actions and utterances. But he is not a hypocrite. If he were,

the Pharisees would like him better. Even with reference to the Negro question he is more to be respected than some Republican senators who think of the Negro precisely as Tillman does, and act toward that race with even less regard for its rights, but for political purposes profess to be its very good friends. Neither is Tillman a bribe giver nor a bribe taker. Be it for good or bad, when he votes in the Senate on any great public question the country and his state get the benefit of his own unpurchased convictions.

With all his faults, there are senators who, though immaculate in the particulars in which he offends, could be better spared from the Senate than Tillman. Outward polish and inward purity make an ideal combination for high statesmanship; but when the choice lies between the two, outward polish can be the better dispensed with. Moral sepulchers in the Senate, even when they are whited on the outside, do not best comport with the true dignity of that body. Better for the Senate and better for the people, if the dignity of the Senate must be assailed at all, that it be by an occasional unpremeditated rough-and-tumble fist-fight, than by dishonorable but unrebuked "understandings between statesmen."

NEWS

Later accounts of the British-Boer battle near Klerksdorp on the 23d, of which we were only able to say last week (p. 745) that "there is no further news of the affair than that the fighting was severe," tell of a furious fight resulting in a British disaster with extraordinarily heavy casualties. All the essential facts of the report are official, coming from Lord Kitchener, and were not made public until the 3d. The British troops were serving as convoy to an empty wagon train. Three attacks were made by the Boers, under command of Delarey, in the face of a murderous fire, which included shelling from two field guns with which the British force was armed. The British resisted the Boer onslaughts for two hours of the summer morning, but some of them having exhausted their ammunition all became demoralized, and by seven o'clock, after a feeble bayonet resistance, the battle was over and the Boer

victory complete. Dead and wounded were scattered all over the field, and broken wagons and panic-stricken horses are reported as making the scene one of indescribable confusion. Boers are charged with stripping the British dead, but it is admitted that as soon as Gen. Delarey came up in person he stopped this and restored order. The British casualties reported by Lord Kitchener amounted to 632—killed, wounded and prisoners—and both field guns were captured. The number of British killed is put at 50 and the wounded at 122. Lieut. Col. Anderson, who commanded the British force, escaped with 9 officers and 245 men.

As an offset to this Boer victory, Lord Kitchener forwarded on the 28th a report of his closing-in operations in the region of Harrismith, in which he summarizes, though "not very clearly," say the London dispatches, the result of several days' operations over an area of about 2,500 square miles, and places the Boer losses at 600 men either killed or captured, and 2,000 horses, 28,000 head of cattle, 200 wagons, 60,000 sheep, 600 rifles and 50,000 rounds of ammunition. Gen. De Wet's son, who has acted as his secretary, is reported as being among the prisoners. British losses are not yet published, although the Boers are said to have made desperate attacks upon the British troops and to have poured into them a heavy fire.

The situation in South Africa came up in the British parliament on the 27th, when Mr. Chamberlain explained on the floor that the proclamation of last summer condemning to banishment all Boers who should not surrender by September 15 (p. 298), did not preclude Lord Kitchener from accepting surrenders on modified conditions, and that in fact he has done so. On the 4th the war secretary introduced and explained his proposed army appropriations of \$346,550,000. In the course of a long defense of his department, which he made in this connection, he argued that the war department had done its work well, considering that a war had never before been waged on such a scale as the South African war, and stated that the department is to-day feeding 300,000 men and 243,000 horses in South Africa. He also dwelt upon the subject of conscription. The limit to voluntary enlistments has, he said, in his belief, been reached. To avoid the necessity, however, of re-

sorting to conscription, he proposed additional inducements to volunteers.

From Spain the only news of permanent interest relates to the Barcelona riots, which were reported last week (p. 745) to have subsided. Owing to the Spanish censorship of news, it is not yet positively known whether that report is true; but so far as censored reports can be confirmatory, it is confirmed by Madrid dispatches of the 4th to the effect that several strikers arrested for participation in the "recent" Barcelona riots were shot that morning. The same dispatches report seizures of papers at houses of "anarchists" which reveal a widespread plot now frustrated. They tell, however, of two new strikes, one at Cadiz and the other at Ferrol.

Since our last report regarding the civil war in Venezuela (p. 633) the news from that quarter has continued to be gossipy and untrustworthy; but it seems possible to gather from it all some statements that are really worthy of belief. Early in the year the name of a new revolutionary leader, Gen. Matos, came into prominence. He sailed from Martinique on the 2d of January, with 300 men, on board the British steamer *Ban Righ*, which he had purchased, and after fitting it up as a formidable warship had rechristened the *Libertador*. Before sailing, Gen. Matos issued a manifesto setting forth as the primary object of the revolution the removal of President Castro from office. Upon learning of this expedition President Castro formally denounced the *Libertador* as a pirate. The expedition appears to have been landed on the Venezuelan coast prior to January 11, and to have taken possession of the village of Cumarebo, in the state of Falcon. There is good ground, also, for believing the report that about the 7th of February the *Libertador* attacked and sunk the Venezuelan warship *Gen. Crespo*, making her captain and crew prisoners and taking possession of her war material. The latest report is from the island of Trinidad. It asserts that on the 2d of March the *Libertador* bombarded the Venezuelan port of Guiria, on the Gulf of Paria, for the purpose of covering the landing of more insurgent troops, and that these troops were on the 3d preparing to march upon Carupano, a town of 12,000 inhabitants about 100 miles to the west.

From the neighboring republic of Colombia, where also a civil war has been long in progress (see p. 663), there came on the 2d from Colon reports of a battle on the 21st of February, at Rio Frio, in the state of Magdalena, in which, after four hours' fighting, the insurgents were defeated.

Colombia has taken unexpected action with reference to the Isthmian canal (p. 663), which may influence the action of the United States in that matter. A meeting of the shareholders of the Panama Canal company had convened at Paris, France, on the 28th, to receive a report from the directors regarding the proposed sale of their canal to the United States for \$40,000,000; and at this meeting the president of the company announced the action which the government of Colombia had taken. He said he had received on the 27th from the consul general of Colombia at Paris a telegram warning the company that it must not transfer its concessions in Panama to another nation without first securing a modification of articles 21 and 22 of the agreement of the company with the Colombian government. Article 21 provides that—

the grantees, or those who in the future may succeed them in their rights, may transfer these rights to other capitalists or financial companies, but are absolutely prohibited to cede or mortgage them under whatever consideration to any nation or foreign government;

and article 22 imposes a forfeiture of all rights under the grant as a penalty for violation of article 21. Officials of the Colombian legation at Washington explain the warning notice to the Panama Canal company by saying that their government is preparing the terms of an agreement by which the canal company may transfer its rights to the United States under certain conditions to be stipulated by Colombia.

On the 3d the subcommittee of the United States Senate committee on interoceanic canals agreed to report against accepting the offer of the Panama Canal company. This subcommittee, composed of Senators Pritchard, Mitchell, Turner, Kittredge and Foster, had been appointed especially to investigate the legal questions involved. Senator Pritchard was absent from the meeting of the 3d and Senator Kittredge reserved the right to make a minority report,

but the other members reported that the complications in the way of a transfer of title to the United States are insurmountable, and that therefore the United States should not become a purchaser of the Panama company's title and properties.

In American politics the principal news of the present week comes from Ohio. The Willis tax bill, described last week in editorial correspondence, at page 742, was adopted by the Republican caucus at a brief meeting on the 25th, and on the 26th was unceremoniously rushed through the lower house, by 69 to 26. On the 27th, after listening to an argument by Mayor Johnson in support of the bill allowing Cleveland to establish municipal ownership of the street car service, in the course of which he guaranteed that if the bill were passed Cleveland would have "a municipal railway, run on civil service reform principles, with a two-cent fare, and the street car system wholly out of politics," the House committee on municipal affairs agreed to report in favor of indefinitely postponing consideration of the bill. The only Democratic member of the committee present voted against this recommendation. Both the tax bill and the municipal ownership bill, in connection with the action of the Republican majority, are likely to be burning issues in Ohio politics.

While Mayor Johnson was thus endeavoring to obtain legislative permission for the establishment of municipal ownership of the street car service in Cleveland, in which he is defeated for the present by a party vote, he relaxed none of his efforts to secure a three-cent fare for that city, under a franchise which requires the grantee to surrender to the city whenever the latter gets legislative authority to establish municipal ownership and makes the demand. In order to forestall the plans of the existing companies to bribe frontage owners, an injunction was obtained; and for the same reason, as explained in editorial correspondence last week (p. 743), it became important to give one name to a long street which now has three. This matter came before the city council on the 24th (p. 744) and was then referred to a committee. After a public hearing, the committee voted, 4 to 2, to recommend the change; and at the council meeting on the 3d, though a motion to suspend the rules and adopt the name-changing ordinance was lost for lack of a