

The International American Bank. Some weeks ago we referred to the proposal to establish an International American Bank, with branches in London, Paris, Berlin and all the great cities on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The application to Congress for a charter for said bank has been productive of much discussion, and the supporters of the bill were compelled to abandon many of the privileges they applied for. It seems that the charter provided for exemption from personal liability of stockholders and taxation, and other restraints upon state banks were not thought of and provided for. The *Evening Post* of New York thus refers to the matter:—

“One of the first difficulties encountered by the Populist Congressmen who pine for empire has been over the charter of an International American Bank. These statesmen are thirsting for foreign commerce, but commerce is very dependent on banking facilities, and a large part of the Populist creed consists of denunciations of banks. One of their leaders has recently published an article intended to demonstrate that as a nation we are practically bankrupt, owing to the rapacity of these institutions, whose claims for interest absorb the entire earnings of the farmers. In some cases the savings-banks in California get as much as 50 per cent. interest on the money they lend, and savings-banks are probably the mildest species of bank that is known. For the government of the United States to charter a corporate monster with a capital of \$25,000,000, in view of these conditions, is enough to make the reason of a Populist totter on its throne. In truth, there is much ground for apprehending future jobbery in connection with an institution of this kind which obtains a special charter from Congress, but the Populists have wearied the public with their abuse of banks in general, and can therefore get no hearing for their objections to this bank in particular.”

Cuban Patriots. As it is very evident that the United States intend to “enlarge the sphere of their commercial activities,” and to enter seriously into the business of empire building, by the expansion of their domain, the disinterested on-looker feels tempted to ask what has become of the people in whose behalf our neighbours took up arms. Collier’s weekly thus accounts for some of the Cubans, and the report fully justifies what we have maintained from the time when the first rumour of war was heard—that Cuba will be conquered and governed by the United States, and not by the Cuban Junta. Otherwise, chaos, confusion and internal strife will continue to destroy the commerce, and retard the growth of one of the richest islands in the world. Of the utter incapacity of the inert natives for self-government, the following sketch of the condition of things in Tampa is evidence:

“There are three thousand Cubans in Tampa. Only about two hundred have enlisted, have taken up arms

to fight for their own island. The remaining twenty-eight hundred watch young Americans marching toward the transports ready to give up their lives for the Cuba of those twenty-eight hundred Cubans. And the twenty-eight hundred say: “Well, you see we can’t be soldiers, because we are cigarmakers. We sit all day at a table with our backs bent, and we smoke and smoke, and we drink black coffee, and we never take exercise. We cannot walk one mile without losing breath, so how could we march for Gomez—eh?”

I have heard some of these same twenty-eight hundred Cubans sitting in their restaurant in Tampa saying some very uncomplimentary things about the American soldier.”

Another City Heard From. If the suggested international tournament for firemen is made one of the features of the Paris Exhibition of 1900, it will afford an opportunity for comparing the fire-fighting appliances and methods of all countries, and must be the means of adding to the efficiency of the men engaged in saving life and property. During the past twelve months, the reports of inadequate protection against fire have been frequent, and Melbourne, London and several large cities have had special committees at work re-organizing and improving their fire forces, and seeking for information about engines, ladders, hose and hydrants.

The latest complaint of deficient fire protection (owing principally to want of water) comes from Edinburgh, and the state of things disclosed by the report of the Firemaster to the Town Council is not creditable to the capital of Scotland.

It seems that the report refers to a fire which it is stated could have been extinguished in twenty minutes if water had been available. The Firemaster of Edinburgh in his report to the Council says:—

“When he arrived on the scene the M’Ewan’s fire brigade had attacked the fire with their private hose from the brewery yard, but the water did not reach the first floor. A hydrant was tapped at Upper Grove Place, but hardly any water could be got for the central steamer; and this engine had to be taken to Grove Street, and it took two hydrants, one on the 3-inch pipe and one on a 4-inch pipe in that street and a third in Morrison Street to keep one engine going with only one line of hose. The Torpichen Street steamer, which had got attached to the 6-inch pipe at the corner of Fountain-bridge, could not work at full pressure for want of water; and the Causeway-side steamer went to work on a hydrant on the same 6-inch pipe, but there was not sufficient water to admit of it working beyond 20 lb. pressure. After this the North British Rubber brigade turned out and pumped water from the canal. The greatest difficulty was experienced in saving the brewery property. The efforts of the brigade were hampered from the very first by what might be termed a total absence of water for fire-extinguishing purposes, little or no provision being made for that in this large manufacturing district.