

# The Chronicle

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## Echoes of the War.

In the United States, the dearth of reliable information as to the progress of the war, the increasing evidence of its serious effect upon business, and the first issue of bonds to meet the cost of the campaign, is causing the sober second thought of the nation to find utterance. The first to fling his feelings into words, a Mr. Pierce from Tennessee, during the debate on the war revenue bill, thus referred to the absolute failure of the war to afford any relief to the starving people of Cuba, on whose behalf the cry for battle had been raised:—"Where now are the starving women and children to whom our warships were to take other ships laden with food? They are all dead, a member says, and it is true. All that will greet our soldiers and sailors now when they land on Cuban soil 'will be, as suggested by another, the bleaching bones of women and children as the monumental evidence of the humanitarian policy of this Republican administration."

This Democratic orator from Tennessee should have joined the little band of sensible business men who tried to prevent this almost unjustifiable war. The day for eloquent references to the condition of the Cubans has passed, and Mr. Pierce's severe arraignment of the Government of his country will avail nothing even for political purposes. The men who will render the best service to the United States and thus capture the popular vote are those whose victories by land or sea will ensure a speedy termination to the present war. The vast multitude are waiting for some all-conquering chief, who by the splendour of his mighty energies will drive the Spaniards from all their colonial possessions. For such an one, the garland will be woven, the arch erected, and the festive board spread.

The people who evinced so much concern about the starving women and children in the Pearl of the Antilles, and precipitated hostilities upon the ground of humanity, have now no time, food, or money to devote to the distressed Cubans.

## Another Strange Insurance Case.

The remarkable insurance story told in our issue of last week, is proving to be of such romantic interest to the public and is being watched by insurance com-

panies, with such rapt attention that whole columns of British insurance and financial papers are devoted to publishing the evidence *in extenso*. The best legal talent of the United Kingdom is endeavouring to ascertain if heavily insured Thomas Johnson was drowned by the upsetting of a row boat off Bradda Head, and the pilots and coastguardsmen of the Isle of Man are expressing opinions about the currents, rocks and weather, of the most confusing character. However, Thomas Johnson cannot be found, and his brother sticks to the story of the drowning accident off Bradda Head, with grim persistency and unconcern. There is material enough in the evidence adduced, and the witnesses have character enough, to furnish Hall Caine with the skeleton for another Manx novel.

Almost equally interesting to insurance companies is the strange case which has been occupying the attention of lawyers and clients in the United States, where the Commercial National Bank of Pittsburg has made a claim upon the Vermont Life Insurance Company for the amount of a policy issued to one Rankin, who transferred it to the bank as security for advances. It is asserted that, whilst driving across a bridge, Rankin was blown to pieces by nitro-glycerine which he was carrying under the seat of the waggon. Strange to relate, nothing of Rankin has been found except a collar and a cuff, and the Vermont Life is displaying some pardonable curiosity as to what has become of the residuum of Rankin and his raiment.

Of course, even an insured body cannot withstand a charge of nitro-glycerine. It is not

*"As if this flesh, which walls about our life,*

*"Were brass impregnable."*

But the request of this insurance company for something more of Rankin than his collar and one cuff seems reasonable. Even a pound of recognizable flesh would outweigh all his clothing as evidence of death.

The insurance field is full of interest to those who watch such curious claims as the two recently occupying public attention on both sides of the Atlantic: