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WILD RUMORS.

Admiral Rojestvensky, who has not been prominent in public view since the day he lost his large fleet in the Straits of Korea, has again come to the front. This time he appears with a story to the effect that the English commander of the Asiatic squadron had orders to annihilate his ships, in case the Japanese should fail to do so. Somebody has evidently taken advantage of the credulity of the big Russian and "spun a yarn" which he has accepted as fact. This is not surprising, when it is remembered that he fired away at peaceful fishing boats in the North Sea, where this kind of craft is so numerous, in the belief that they were torpedo boats! One who can make such a childish mistake is no authority on the plans of Great Britain, or any other country. The English government could have no object in attacking Rojestvensky, unless the intention was to make war upon Russia. But Great Britain proved that she did not want war, by accepting the improbable explanation offered as an excuse for the North Sea blunder. If that country had desired war, that would have been the time to declare it, for a flimsier excuse could hardly have been conceived of for such a grave mistake. But England did not want war with Russia.

The facility with which absurd rumors can gain credence in Russia is almost marvelous. Here is another illustration: A short time ago a Russian immigrant arrived in Boston. Of course his opinion was asked concerning the affairs in his country. He seriously declared that the troubles of the czar's empire were caused by Jews who tormented the military into committing outrages. He said also that the revolution was simply an attempt of the Jewish element to upset the imperial authority in order that they themselves might become masters of Russia. In a country where such absurd rumors can be circulated and considered truthful, Rojestvensky's "yarn" about Great Britain's hostility cannot fail to find ready circulation. The Russian Jews conspiring to obtain control of the Russian government!

But, come to think of it, are such rumors any more absurd than some of those that have been sent broadcast in this country about the Latter-day Saints? That the "Mormons" though they be but a handful as compared to the population of the United States, aspire to the control of the government, is one of the many ghost stories told to scare the big children in this country. It is entirely on a par with the Russian story about the Jews of that country, and their aim at government control. Only a short time ago, a fanatic entertained an Illinois audience by saying that the "Mormons" will, in a short time, "hold the balance of power in all the Western states—Wyoming, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico, Arizona, California and Colorado—an area of 612,365 square miles. The Imperium in Imperio," he exclaimed, "will be then no longer a dream of a fanatic sect, but a thing realized." As long as American, intelligent audiences can receive such tales with fear and trembling, and become almost hysterical, we must cease wondering at the effect of similar falsehoods upon the Russian masses. Here in this country education is more general. There should be less credulity and more common sense.

WELLMAN TO THE POLE.

If Walter Wellman undertakes the projected journey to the North Pole in a balloon, it is to be hoped that he will be more successful than was the Swedish explorer, M. Andree, and his companions, who left Spitzbergen in 1897, in a huge airship, and have never been heard from since, except through a few buoys, dropped in the beginning of the journey.

Mr. Wellman, it is said, has been commissioned, by the Chicago Record-Herald, to have a balloon constructed in Paris, under the supervision of Santos Dumont, and then proceed to Spitzbergen and await a favorable opportunity for a dash to the Pole. Mr. Wellman believes the chances of success are good. He explains that the balloon about to be built will have a carrying capacity of 8,000 pounds, besides its own weight. It will have a buoyancy sufficient to enable it to remain 25 to 30 days in the air, and it will be able to make headway against most of the winds of the Polar regions, while it will be equipped for safe anchorage in the highest winds. The explorer believes that every precaution is taken to insure success, and the chances are in his favor.

Mr. Wellman has some experience in Arctic explorations. Twice before he has visited those regions and reached as far north as the 82nd parallel. His previous experiences should be of immense value to him in the present enterprise. In the respect he has the ad-

vantage of Andree. He can command the service of wireless telegraphy. With stations established at Spitzbergen and some point in Norway, he will be in a position to let the world hear from him every day. He will not be out of touch with his fellowmen.

CHRISTMAS DAY CRIMES.

The New York World notices that no less than 30 deaths were reported as the Christmas day record for this country, as a result of murderous assaults and suicides. Upon no other day of the year, it is pointed out, is there such a record of crime.

It is strange that such should be the case. But we believe students of history would find not only that crime seems more rampant during the great holiday seasons of the year, but that many of the most sanguinary battles of the world have been fought on Sundays, and holidays. The days consecrated to the memory of the Prince of Peace, seems to be selected by the adversary of righteousness for deeds of horror.

Allegations would give different accounts of the reasons for the phenomenon observed, but the general principle which the Reformers expressed in the words: "Wherever the Lord builds a church, Satan erects a chapel," seems to apply to all efforts for the establishment of that which is good in the world. No matter what is being done in the interest of the kingdom of heaven, the opposing forces are active against it. That explains many a mystery. It explains why truth and virtue are constantly assailed, and why its opponents at times seem to flourish.

TRUTH ABOUT THE "MORMONS."

In these days, when so many false stories are being circulated concerning the Latter-day Saints, the following episode in the history of the "Mormon People" by a "non-Mormon" and a non-resident of Utah has been published. It is by C. H. Halzel, and appears in the Chattanooga Times for Dec. 17.

The author says he has lived in Utah for many years and been intimately associated with "Mormons," both in business and social relations, and for this reason he feels he has a right to be heard on the question. What he says of the "Mormons," even their detractors know to be true. It cannot be successfully contradicted.

Mr. Halzel first speaks of the hospitality of the "Mormons," and their kindness to strangers, and compares them in this respect to the Southerners. He declares that, notwithstanding this, many who have partaken of their kindness have gone abroad and wilfully lied about the people of Utah. In other words, they have "smitten the hand that fed them." He then testifies to their business honesty, as follows:

"In business transactions the Mormon people are strictly honest. That there are exceptions to the rule cannot be truthfully denied, but as a people, they have a far greater percentage of those who would scorn to be tricky or indifferent in the payment of a debt than any other body of people of the same number in the world. In thriving and growing business towns of southern Idaho and Utah, if a Gentile merchant was asked for goods on credit by a Mormon, the only question the merchant would ask is: Is the applicant in good standing and will the bishop of his ward recommend him? If the answer is in the affirmative he is allowed to buy on credit to almost any amount, and I doubt that a single exception could be pointed to where the merchant has failed to get his pay. He it said, however, to the credit of the Mormon people that they do not believe much in the credit system and are being strenuously counseled by President Smith today as by all his predecessors to get out of debt and keep out."

"I may say here, too, that in former days of Utah, when the Mormons had absolute control of the territorial and municipal government in Utah, that the territory and municipalities were absolutely free from debt, for they believed that what was owed for an individual or a family is likewise beneficial for a city, state or nation; that is, to live within your means, and whatever growth is made is not on borrowed money, but is substantial and not artificial. In this, as in many other views, the whole country, and for that matter, the world itself, might profitably follow the belief and example of the Mormon people."

The author, further, has a good word to say for the efforts of the "Mormons" in behalf of education. He says:

"Educationally speaking, the aims and ambition, the sentiment and principle of this people to bequeath to posterity a good education are not excelled by any people on the face of the earth. History shows that Joseph Smith, their prophet and founder, was foremost in the cause of education. He established a school of learning in the Kirtland temple. He obtained from the Illinois legislature when Abraham Lincoln was a member, a charter to establish a university in the city of Nauvoo. The Utah university, now considered one of the very best institutions of learning west of the Mississippi river, was founded by Brigham Young and his pioneer colleagues as early, I believe, as 1850, only three years subsequent to the event of that memorable body of pioneers into Salt Lake valley. In addition to this they have the Brigham Young University at Provo, the Brigham Young college at Logan, the L. D. S. university in Salt Lake City and many similar institutions throughout the states occupied by them, as also in Canada and Mexico. All these are institutions of high order. In their Church schools they not only teach the spirit and letter of theology, but the secular, including scientific branches, are also embodied in the system. If now the Mormon desire to patronize these Church schools through convenience of locality or for reasons of superior instruction they may do so without being required to study theology. The utmost liberality is shown in this regard. The Mormon people are equally loyal in their support of the public school system, and today statistics show that Utah is excelled only by two other states in the Union in her low percentage of illiteracy. Many young Mormon men and women have attended the higher schools of learning such as Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Ann Arbor, D. S. university in Salt Lake City and others and almost without exception they have graduated with the highest honors, so much so that the success of the Mormon students has become proverbial with the instructors of the great institutions."

Mr. Halzel notices the fondness of the Saints for music, their industry, their benevolence, and then pays a compliment to their moral character, in these words:

"As to matters of the higher morality, which involves sexual purity, I consider them as a whole entirely above reproach. There are exceptions, it is true, but any one in the church that is found guilty of a lapse of virtue in any form must repent and make

restitution as far as possible or the hand of fellowship is withdrawn from them. They look upon adultery as next in the catalogue of crime to murder, and as for infanticide, footed and the prevention of offspring, they esteem them either murder or very closely akin to that awful crime. We are honored at the present time with a man at the head of our glorious republic who does not believe in race suicide, President Roosevelt. He has by his utterances practically rebuked this heinous practice in our nation. In a recent issue I believe the Mormon people to be the only great body of people in the nation who are not guilty and who stand unscathed by the just rebuke coming from the chief executive of the greatest nation on the earth."

Mr. Halzel closes his article with the following tribute to the loyalty of the Saints:

"At every stage of their history they have proven their loyalty to the government and in every sense of the word, in all things that go to make good people and loyal citizens, they are the superior of any other body of people in the nation. Ministers and politicians may pollute the pulpit, the rostrum and the press by misrepresenting, twisting and lying about the Mormon people, but as certainly as God lives and history repeats itself, so surely will future generations do justice to this people to the everlasting shame and content of those who may speak evil of them. My testimony concerning the Mormon people, from years of experience in their midst, is that they are hospitable, kind-hearted, charitable, industrious, temperate, virtuous, God-fearing, loyal and progressive. For them, as for all other people, there is but one true and safe standard by which they shall be judged, and that is the rule and law of the Great Master 'in whose mouth there was found no guile.' viz.: 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.'"

Teachers have their own peculiar principals as well as other people.

No doubt Senator Depew wishes that Senator Brackett was merely joking.

In politics the office-holder is usually far more of an eclectic than a partisan.

The result shows that Wadsworth had the most votes if not the most merit.

When shall these three—John A. McCall, Richard A. McCurdy and Robert H. McCurdy—meet again?

Senator Depew would much rather see the resolution demanding his resignation as a member of the United States senate pigeon-holed than Brackett.

Senator Armstrong is going to write the report to be presented to the New York legislature, on the life insurance investigation. Long or short, it will speak volumes.

The reinstatement in the naval academy of midshipmen who had been dismissed for hazing was a direct encouragement to hazing and has borne its legitimate fruit.

The various governments are preparing to suppress an uprising in China like that of 1900, anticipating one will occur in the near future. The various governments have taken a leaf from Buck Farnshaw's book.

Midshipman Decatur denies absolutely that he hazed Midshipmen McCrary and Church. They swear positively that he did haze them. Does not the "code of honor" make provision for clearing up such discrepancies as these?

People have always wondered what the name of Owen Wister's "Virginian" was. The original of that celebrated character seems to have been John Henry Hicks, manager of the "T. O." ranch in Mexico. Let the Virginian's name be Mr. Hicks of Virginia, the same as "Mr. Barnes of Texas."

William O. Lamotte, clerk of the juvenile court of Chicago, in an address before the Social Economics club of that city said the bad boy is disappearing, and the bold, bad girl is taking his place. Speaking of the cause for this he said: "You women, we all ought to work day and night to create a public sentiment which will cause the extinction of those infamous dance halls in which nearly all these girls started on their downward career." The public dance hall is a very hot house for the growth of wayward girls, and should be frowned down upon, and suppressed where possible. No wise and careful parent will permit a child, boy or girl, to visit them. They are plague spots that should be shunned by all.

Fortunately for the South, unfortunately for Mississippi, Governor Vandaman is a sul generis. In his message to the Mississippi legislature he said: "As a race the negro is deteriorating morally every day. It is your function to put a stop to the worse than wasting of a half million dollars annually—money taken from the toiling white men and women of Mississippi—and devoted to the main purpose of making something of the negro which the great Architect of the Universe failed to provide for in the original plan of creation." It is not true that the negro race is deteriorating, and while education is not a universal panacea, it is a great preventive. Education of the negro means the solution of the negro problem, in large measure. Some whites also need education.

PROTECTION OF WILD LIFE.

Washington Post.

Is there any way of accounting for the propensity manifested by a large number of people to kill something for the sake of killing it? It is not inherited from our savage ancestors. They tortured and killed their enemies, but never slew wild animals except for use, and never more than were needed. Civilized man, so-called, however, goes out in the woods and fields with murder in his heart and calls it sport. Nothing is cunning enough to keep out of his way, nothing so innocent, harmless or beautiful as to escape his thirst for slaughter, and very little that swims, flies or runs is too small for him to hunt down.

IDEAL FOR WORKINGMEN.

San Francisco Chronicle.

John Burns, in a speech made in London, the first since his entry into the cabinet, declared that his ideal for the working man was "fewer workhouses, smaller charities, larger wages, more pleasure and less drink." The brief dispatch which brings us this intelli-

gence fails to inform us how Mr. Burns would go about the attainment of this ideal, particularly that relating to higher wages. A half a century's experience with the "sheep lock," which Mr. Burns has championed during his political career, does not seem to have helped the British people along the road he would like to see them travel, for we have the distinct assertion of his chief, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, that one-third of the population of the United Kingdom is living in the border line of a condition of misery brought about by low wages.

TO MAKE A CANARY SING.

London Post.

Generally any kind of soft, sibilant noise will tempt a canary to sing. In a kitchen will usually start his song if he hears, say, the sizzling of a frying-pan. We utilize special devices to tempt the shy singer, who is, perhaps, rendered the more bashful by finding himself in novel surroundings. For this purpose we employ whistles and song organs, which articulate the words of the "Tours" of the roller. This latter method is found to be irrefragable when all other plans have failed. The bird feels apparently that he is being challenged, and forthwith responds to the challenge by pouring forth the best of his song.

A LIBBY PRISON ANECDOTE.

Washington Star.

Here is a Libby prison anecdote told by Col. E. B. Bradshaw of Washington: "I recall one of the darkest, stormiest, rainiest nights at old Libby. The Union prisoners were huddled together in one of the lower floors, and the rain was coming in on them in a perfect deluge. Among the captives in blue was Bishop McCabe, then a chaplain. In his excess of good nature he saw the humorous side of even such a situation. While our boys, hungry and cold, were trying to keep warm and dry, a voice was raised above the howling of the tempest outside: 'Hands on your pockets!' The voice was that of Captain McCabe, who knew full well that there was not a single dollar in all that great crowd of sniveling Yankee soldiers. The only cause of an outburst of laughter, notwithstanding the uncomfortable conditions of the situation."

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

The Forum of January-March leads off with Henry Litchfield West's review of "American Political Trials" of the opening of the Fifty-ninth Congress, and such impending issues as tariff revision, the regulation of railroad rates, the admission of new states, and power in the House of Representatives, the Congressional campaign of next fall, etc. "Foreign Affairs" are dealt with by A. Maurice Low in his customary lucid and picturesque manner. "Finance," by Alexander D. Noyes, sums up the ruling conditions in the world's markets at the year-end. "The Educational Outlook" is scanned by Ossian H. Russell. Sturgis writes of "Mural Painting," giving critical descriptions of the principal works of this class which have been executed in public buildings in the United States during the past few years. "Applied Science" in enterprises of modern engineering and technical processes is discussed by Henry Harrison Supple. Professor George D. Colburn reviews "New Editions of Franklin." Two Japanese papers of interest are "Financial Japan After the War," by Baron Shibusawa, and "The New China," by Adachi Kinomake. Finally, Wolf von Schierbrand's article on "Russia's Economic Future" is an inquiry into the governmental finance system and condition of the great empire which seems hurrying toward national bankruptcy.—45 East 42nd St., New York.

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