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IS IT ONLY A RUMOR?

The news comes once more that there is to be direct railway connection between this city and Los Angeles. It has been heard so many times and in so many different forms, that the people here regard with doubt every rumor concerning it that reaches them. It is now stated that the Terminal Line is to be extended from Los Angeles to make connection with the Oregon Short Line, a little over two hundred miles south of Salt Lake City. It is also rumored that the Utah and Pacific is "in the deal," and if that is the case, which is not at all improbable, the proposed extension will not be difficult of accomplishment.

The statement which was made a short time ago, that the Southern Pacific people intended to build a through line from California to Utah, came with so much appearance of authenticity that a great many people regarded it with intense satisfaction. But others more familiar with the tactics of railway magnates and companies viewed it with suspicion and as what is called a "bluff," designed to head off any real movement for a connection with Utah roads which would command the trade of a portion of California.

It would be very advantageous to the people of both States to have direct connection between Salt Lake and Los Angeles. There is no need to particularize as to the benefits which would accrue. They are readily perceptible to everybody who understands anything of the relations between Utah and California. The advantages to the railroad people are also obvious. The Oregon Short Line, the Utah and Pacific, and the Terminal Line would be mutually benefited, and if they can be brought together to work in harmony for the accomplishment of this desirable purpose, the people of both States will greatly rejoice and will contribute to the success of the through road.

We hope that, this time, Dame Rumor has not merely repeated gossip without foundation in fact. There is a feasibility in this proposition which suggests that it is not all mere talk. If New York capitalists are really interested with California and Utah enterprise, and favored by the Oregon Short Line company, the problem of direct communication between this point and Los Angeles will be speedily and easily solved. Let us hope that the good news is true news.

THE CATHOLIC FEDERATION.

The project for the federation of the various societies in the United States composed of Roman Catholic laymen, is likely to occasion considerable comment and may result in popular agitation. According to the dispatch announcing the plan, each society is to retain its own identity, but all the organizations are to become affiliated so as to unite under one general directory. It is not stated whether this movement has received the sanction of the Pope, but it may be reasonably inferred that the Pontiff is not opposed to it, or it would not be supported by such prominent ecclesiastics as Bishop McPaul.

Of course, the fear is entertained by Protestants that there is something political and dangerous in this scheme of fraternization. This, however, is denied. Still, in the protest which accompanies the appeal for unity, it is clearly intimated that Catholics resent from exercising that political influence to which they are entitled as American citizens, and it is evident that an association composed of twelve millions of citizens, all of one religious faith, could be made a powerful factor in the sum of American politics.

"Don't vote for him; he is a Catholic." This is a cry to which the representatives of this movement make strong objection. It cannot be fairly denied that the cry is very frequently raised, and that it has the effect intended by opponents of Catholicism. It is altogether wrong and unfair. It is contrary to the spirit of our national institutions. "No religious test" is to be applied as to the qualifications for public office. This is a constitutional provision. It was intended to shut out such objections as that expressed in the sentence we have quoted at the beginning of this paragraph.

There was a time when it was popularly supposed that every movement made by Catholics in this country, political or otherwise, was prompted by the Pope. That Rome dictated the votes as well as controlled the consciences of Catholics everywhere. The error became so widespread and virulent that mobocracy was the consequence; and that is always more tyrannical than the alleged domination of a hierarchy. The "No Popery" riots in England and in the United States, were as violent as the bloodthirsty uprisings against the "Mormons" in Missouri and Illinois.

Some progress has been made in the cause of freedom, and though there are

still many fanatics in the land, some of whom form societies against the Catholics and would prevent the election of any Papist to public office, the opposition is chiefly polemical, and the abuse verbal, and the antagonism is manifested in conventions and at the polls. Experience has demonstrated that a Catholic can be as patriotic and efficient as a Protestant in all public affairs, and can exercise his individual judgment on all matters that pertain to the State, without dictation from any priestly source. The complaint, therefore, that is made by the millions of Catholic citizens that they are discriminated against because of their religion, is a real grievance, and their endeavor to unite for their own protection and the attainment of equal privileges with their countrymen of other beliefs, appears to be justified. If it shall be shown by experience that this organization becomes a mere political lever in the hands of prelates, to effect ecclesiastical purposes by political methods, and to promote the aims of the church through the powers of the state, supporting only Catholics and working against Protestants, it will be an agency for evil. But as it now is presented, nothing of that kind is apparent.

A similar spirit to that exhibited in many quarters against Catholics in politics, crops out every now and then against the "Mormons." It is equally wrong in both instances. It is not very often shown in outspoken sentences or in public gatherings, but it is exhibited in private conversation and in the returns at elections. Candidates for office are objected to, occasionally, simply because they are "Mormons." To paraphrase the Catholic protest, the cry is raised, "Don't vote for him; he is a 'Mormon'." The effect of this, too, is similar to that which is produced in the Catholic mind. The desire is at once entertained to unite for mutual protection and to obtain the rights and privileges to which, by virtue of numbers, such citizens are entitled.

It may be that a similar feeling is sometimes entertained by individual "Mormons," as against non-"Mormons," for public positions. We do not believe, however, that this would be at all prevalent if it were not caused by anti-"Mormon" action. In either case it ought not to be indulged in. If a man is a suitable candidate, qualified for the position for which he is named, the question of his religious faith or unfaith ought not to be raised in a purely political contention. Whenever it shows itself it ought to be sat down upon with emphasis.

It is perhaps quite natural that some of the old anti-"Mormon" and anti-"Gentile" influence should be felt in this community, as a relic of past bitterness, but the sooner it is entirely eradicated the better it will be for the State. The question "Is he a 'Mormon'?" ought not to be raised, any more than "Is he a Catholic?" when one is named for an official position of any kind outside of the church to which he belongs. The church is not to dominate the State, according to our Constitution, on the other hand, the State is not to dominate the church in matters religious.

When it is evident that members of the "Mormon" Church largely predominate in numbers in any given locality, and endeavors are made to place non-"Mormons" in office to the exclusion of others, it naturally provokes a conflict along the lines that ought to be avoided. It causes retaliation and promotes ill feeling. If there are to be any divisions of that kind, they should be arranged with perfect fairness according to the just claims of the respective factions. But in our political affairs "What is his religion?" ought not to be among the questions asked concerning any person named for a public office. Catholic or Protestant, "Mormon" or non-"Mormon," if he is a fit and suitable candidate his religious affiliations should cut no figure among his fellow citizens.

The only way to prevent Catholics, or any other religious body in the United States, from banding together in such a way that they can become a formidable organization affecting local or national affairs, is to refrain from raising the objectionable issue as to their church membership, and to accord them equal political rights and privileges with all other citizens of this Republic. To that they are entitled, and anything less than that must in the very nature of things cause them great dissatisfaction and suggest to them the only efficient remedy.

DO NOT PATCH THE FLAG.

The wisdom of forming political State organizations on national lines may well be questioned, particularly when the matter is sprung immediately after a gathering, the object of which was, according to the originators thereof, purely social and religious.

Considered politically, there is only one nationality in this country. There should be no such thing as Scandinavian-Americans, German-Americans, or Italian-Americans, but only Americans. It is perfectly proper for foreign-born citizens to gather for the purpose of worshipping the Almighty in their mother tongue, and to hold social gatherings in which old memories may be kept fresh; but when the question is of the good of the commonwealth, Scandinavians can have no interests separate from those of other citizens. There is not, and there should not be, any hyphenated citizenship in this country.

It is conceded that ambitious foreign-born citizens, if they have the necessary qualifications, are entitled to recognition in the distribution of offices of trust, particularly in sections where they form majorities, or even considerable minorities, but they should seek such recognition through the ordinary channels, and not through clannish organizations. From other parts of the country, well grounded protests have been heard against the disposition to divide on national lines in order to compel the political parties to barter for positions on the slates.

We believe the advice is both good and timely, to discourage that practice. Everyone should be content to march under the flag of his party, and keep it intact without any effort of cutting it up into fragments or patching it up with bits of foreign colors.

THE NEWS FROM CHINA.

The situation in China is the topic of all-absorbing interest. There is no definite confirmation of the wild rumors that the German ambassador has been slain, but it is feared that the actual state of affairs is worse than indicated by the reports. At all events, an engagement between the foreign forces and Chinese troops has taken place, and a state of war certainly exists, which may, or may not, be of long duration. It all depends on the magnitude of the revolutionary movement now on foot. If it is as widespread as it seems to be, and if the insurgents have any leaders worthy of the name, the destruction of a few coast forts will by no means end the trouble. Vandalism and murder will be rampant all through the interior for a long time to come.

It seems the United States warships in Chinese waters took no part in the bombardment of the forts at Taku. They are there, not to make war on China, but to protect the lives and interests of American citizens. In all probability, however, the time will come, when this country must act. The Chinese are not likely to respect any foreigners. In the madness that seems to have seized the ruling spirits, the voice of reason will be drowned in the clamor for blood, and the result will be that all the foreign powers will have to act in concert, in order to crush the evil power that rises in hostility to the interests of humanity and civilization. In that case the disintegration of the Chinese empire is almost certain.

The United States have large interests at stake, and though this country may hesitate to take any prominent part in the Chinese tragedy, it may be forced to do so by circumstances. The United States lead all the nations in the export to China of some articles of merchandise, notably cotton and kerosene. In 1899 the imports of cotton drills from America were 1,697,710 pieces; from England, 143,827 pieces; from Holland, 29,490 pieces. During the year the imports of sheetings from America amounted to 3,963,197 pieces; from England, 556,338 pieces; from India, 42,192 pieces. In the same year the import of American oil amounted to 27,628,415 gallons, while Russia supplied 13,776,760, and Holland 3,861,898 gallons. Besides, the greater portion of the material for railways comes from this country, and the bulk of articles of luxury, such as cigars, clocks, watches, window glass, lamps, matches, needles, perfumery, soap, sugar and umbrellas, comes from this country and Great Britain.

This trade must be protected, and whether it is threatened by the native rivalry, which is directed against all "foreign devils," or by the European powers, which are sparing for "spheres of influence," this country must be on hand and be prepared for emergencies.

Those familiar with the Chinese condition assert that the present crisis has been brought about by an awakening of the dominant powers of the people, never before witnessed in that empire. Since the war with Japan it became evident to the educated classes that China must either join the procession of civilization, or perish. The result was the wonderful spread of western literature. Imported books are eagerly looked for, and they are studied for information on history and the progress of the sciences. Against this tide of progress, the reaction of barbarism has set in. The insurgents are aiming at the destruction of foreign intruders and native reformers alike. It is a blow to modern ideas, no matter what their origin.

This is the present situation in China. If the influence of this country could be used successfully for the benefit of the Mongolians, in behalf of civilization, without the disintegration of their empire, its work would be in harmony with a long-established policy. America gave civilization to Japan without seizing any of its territory, or establishing "spheres of influence." What has been done to Japan should be repeated in China, as soon as barbarism has spent its strength against the advancing forces of civilization. It may be necessary, to begin with, to employ brute force, but that should be only temporary. In the battle between races and civilizations, those that justly claim superiority should prove the claim and conquer by intellectual means rather than by steel and bullets.

There are a good many Chinese in this country. We hope, should any prolonged trouble occur in eastern Asia, that these pagans be not subjected to outrages such as those we condemn when they take place on Chinese soil. Massacres are deplorable enough in heathen countries, but they positively are without excuse when committed by people to whom the highest moral code is, professedly, the standard of conduct.

THE BUBONIC PLAGUE.

A contributor to the John Hopkins Hospital Bulletin gives his observations on the bubonic plague, which recently threatened to create a scare on our west coast. He says it originated in Yunnan, southern China. In 1891 it reached Kiao-chiao, and in 1894 it descended the West river to Canton, whence it was carried by Cantonese coolies to Hongkong. The conditions here were very favorable to its spread. "The coolies live in indescribable filth, the aggregation and overcrowding being so great that at night the overflow sleeps in the streets. Many of these in the native districts are so narrow that one walking with outstretched arms can almost touch the buildings on opposite sides of the road. As yet the coolie has not learned even the rudiments of personal hygiene, and the Chinese enjoy the unenviable distinction of being one of the filthiest peoples on the face of the earth."

Hongkong, however, is considered clean compared to some other parts of China. From this place it was carried to India, where the fanaticism of the people prevents the carrying out of sanitary measures. The Chinaman is more easily overawed by the sight of power than is the Hindu, and he submits more readily to the regulations, because the customs offended by the plague measures are, in China, for the most part,

merely personal and are neither national nor religious.

The lesson of the present epidemic is that the West may have to undertake a thorough cleaning of the East, as a matter of self-preservation. From different parts of Asia devastating epidemics are always threatening the world. As long as neither the origin nor the nature of those diseases was known, there was apparently no remedy. But it is different now. The world has become an one house. The tenants of one part of it cannot be permitted to maintain a nuisance threatening the lives of those that occupy other parts of it.

Recent investigations of the manner in which the plague spreads have not yielded much light on that subject. The following is from the current number of Medical Record:

"Before the disease attacks man large numbers of rodents are found in the houses and streets of a threatened district. This was the case in Mandi, where the street Arabs amuse themselves by using the dead animals as missiles in play. Curiously enough Simon has discovered that preceding the rat in initiative causative influences comes the rat flea, which appears to have the real credit of starting the humble bacillus in its ambitious tendencies for better company. Simon says that a healthy rat has very few fleas on it, but the sick animal becomes very soon covered with them. The insects become gorged with bacilli and transfer the disease not only from one rat to another, but also to man."

The Record adds: "It does not appear to be distinctly contagious in the sense in which that term is now used. There is great probability, however, that it is markedly infectious under certain circumstances of careless contact. This is most frequently manifest in cases of autopsy in which the operator becomes infected through accidental wounds coming in contact with the blood and secretions of the corpse. Two of Kitasato's assistants acquired plague that way. The experience of the Vienna laboratory, still fresh in the minds of medical men, were on parallel lines. It is quite assuring to know, however, that physicians, nurses, and undertakers who come into contact with plague cases are seldom stricken when proper aseptic precautions are taken. The danger appears more in the direction of actual contact, actual and direct transmission of virus, than by any other means. But a most ready means of transmission of the disease is by house infection, which by many high authorities is considered to be the underlying and controlling factor in all widespread epidemics."

Now is the time to enjoy the mountain air by going into the canyons.

Wheat is catching the wave of prosperity now, judging by the swell prices of the big markets.

The Chinese military strength appears to be chiefly weakness, taking the army figures given by Washington today.

The Boer army has again refused to surrender, though allowed five days to think it over. Gen. Botha does not seem to have spent five minutes in real consideration of the proposition. Evidently he expects to worry the British considerably yet.

The vice presidential contest at Philadelphia seems to be chiefly a test of the relative strength of Ohio and New York in politics. Senator Hanna of Ohio says Roosevelt shall not be nominated for Vice President, and Senator Platt of New York says he shall.

Both the Chicago and the St. Louis strikes seem to be in the desperate stage, so far as the strikers are concerned. These lost the sympathy of the influential public when they began to resort to lawlessness to carry their way. Dynamite and clubs are poor weapons to win a strike with.

It is now suggested that Admiral Seymour returned from the effort to relieve Pekin because only the Americans of all the forces present, would support the British commander. This indicates the real "harmony" that is in the European concert. By the way, the situation at Pekin must have been certain of disaster, or those Americans would not have come back, if they have done so. With any hope of success they would have pushed forward to the Chinese capital, and it is not certain that Capt. McCalla has not gone there.

The United States has taken no steps toward the dismemberment of China, but rather to preserve national existence there; it took no part in the bombardment of the Taku forts; its attitude toward China has been one of friendliness. If, under these conditions, the Chinese government has consented to the murder of United States Minister Conger and the Americans in Pekin, there is no alternative left for this nation but to engage in the overthrow of a government that is so blind to international friendliness. It is hoped, in the interest of humanity, that the reported massacre at Pekin has not occurred.

THE CHINESE TROUBLE.

Sacramento Record-Union.

If Russia swallows a portion of China it is no concern of ours to engage us in war, though it should command our protest. The United States is on the safe side in this business now, and should be kept there. Nothing but the most flagrant and direct assault upon us by the Chinese should entitle us in a war against them. The administration has acted with great discretion and fine wisdom thus far, and there is no reason to believe that it will depart from its policy.

Springfield Republican.

It is certain that China can be saved only through the free play of the progressive influences already born within her. That those influences will save her in time cannot be doubtful, provided the selfish ambitions of western powers can be restrained.

Los Angeles Express.

It may be that some solution of the difficulty may be found, but at the present time it must be admitted that the outlook is not at all encouraging. If the reports are true, there is no time to be lost, and this government should at once take the necessary steps for the protection of our interests at Pekin.

Chicago Times-Herald.

Last fall Kang Yu-Wei was interviewed in London, where he could the foreigners in his characterization of the empire. She was a woman of low origin and many vices, he said, who governed through her paramour, and her ability was vastly overestimated. She had involved herself in all sorts of trouble by her ignorance of state-

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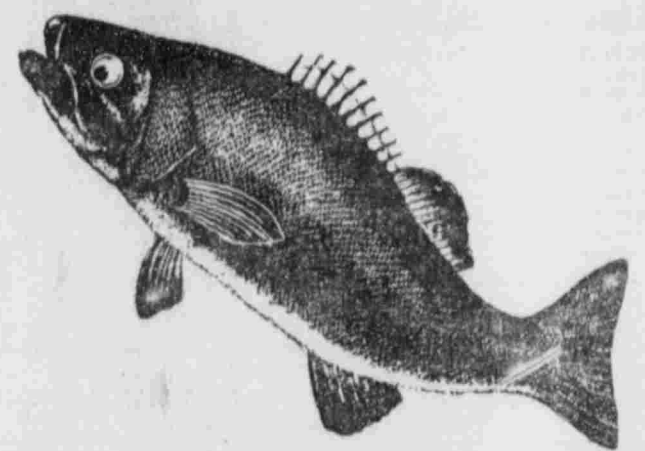
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