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TODAY'S WEATHER—Occasional rain; cooler during the afternoon; brisk and possibly high, gusty south to west winds.

YESTERDAY'S WEATHER—Maximum temperature, 58 deg.; minimum, 38 deg.; precipitation, 1.10 inches.

PORTLAND, THURSDAY, DEC. 25. Without disparagement of the assiduity with which Postmaster Crossman has labored to discharge the duties of his office acceptably, it is yet to be said that Mr. F. A. Bancroft may reasonably be expected to give the city's growing mail business a better administration than it has had for very many years.

It is not necessary to review in extended detail the history of our post-office appointments, in order to understand the gratification afforded by the selection at length of a man whose business experience and success justify expectation of prompt and energetic performance of these most important tasks.

It is a fact that politicians use this and other offices for the upbuilding of their machines and the complication of Mr. Bancroft's probable appointment with politics no one would have the hardihood to deny; but there comes a point in a city's development where facilities of its business must be reckoned with by the most hardened political manipulator.

Portland has reached that point. Its postoffice business has risen to a volume of between \$6,000,000 and \$7,000,000 a year, and in view of the Lewis and Clark Centennial is certain to increase rapidly.

Its clerical and carrier force comprises in the neighborhood of 120 employees, who are paid \$3600 a year now, and in another year will pay \$3800 to \$4000.

historical fact and philosophical judgment. When we recall how faith in supernaturalism, the savage differences over dogmas concerning the atonement, the trinity, the resurrection, eternal punishment, etc., once made the earth red with blood, as the apostle has said, we can see that the superiority of Christianity as a working human force has been a long and weary effort of evolution before it reached its present form of faith and practice.

Christianity, separated from medieval superstition and theological dogma, is simply the most recent but not necessarily the ultimate or final stride of moral or religious evolution.

Pastor Robinson warned his Puritan flock, as they set sail from Leyden, of thinking of their religious teachers had been lent "a light for all the coming days," or that religious growth was limited by Luther's dike or Calvin's dam.

Before this thought of the mass of thinking men came nothing about the ceremonies and exorcisms of medieval ecclesiasticism, about the fate of a theology which is but a forlorn attempt to make Christ walk and talk in the black robe and cowl of a medieval metaphysician turned monk.

We know neither the day nor the year in which Jesus was born, and that is of no religious or spiritual consequence; but we know that he has been with us and that his spirit is still with us and grows stronger and stronger every year.

It is of no small consequence in the light of Christ's life and thought whether he wrought any miracles or not, for Moses and Aaron and the witch of Endor wrought quite as wonderful miracles.

Historical skepticism may attribute his miracles to the ignorant credulity or pious falsehoods of his followers; science might give a plausible explanation of them, but no skeptic, no scientist, will deny or attempt to explain the vast, overpowering, immortal influence of Christ's life and teachings.

The vasa, overpowering, inexplicable miracle of all he wrought was the miracle of his own daily walk and talk from childhood to the cross, the life of a man that loses nothing of its human tendency by battles about dates and petty wrangling over texts.

Christ's mission as defined by himself implied no mystery beyond that involved in supreme moral genius, for it was to preach the gospel to the poor, to heal the broken-hearted, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach deliverance to captives, to heal the sick, and in execution of this simple scheme he went about doing good.

In the limitation of Christ and the application of his simple creed to human society lies the only hope of a better and less brutal world than we have today.

All evil breeds. Grow gentle, kind hearts grow gentler, as the dawn Of that divinest daybreak lightens the earth.

THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT. The Christmas legend will be recited today in thousands of homes, and the chorus "Peace on Earth, Good-will to Men," will be taken up by thousands of voices in cathedral, church and chapel.

The old story of the Babe of Bethlehem will be retold, and glad tidings of great joy will be again proclaimed to all who will listen. It is not necessary, indeed, to listen to the telling of the Christmas story in order to recognize the Christmas spirit that has for many days been abroad in the land.

Impalpable as air, yet real as life itself, this spirit permeates the very atmosphere with happiness and good cheer. Sweet charity wrought upon anew by its influence, seeks out the abodes of the lowly and the distressed with the season's message of good-will and the season's bounty.

Love, seeking its own, ministers unto them in sweet surprises that have kept the heart aglow for days. Sympathy remembers the sick in hospitals and homes, and visits them, flower-laden, and pity with veiled eyes looks down upon them, and the criminal and come, fulfilled to the cheer and point them to the better way.

This is the ideal view of the Christmas time, dominated by the Christ spirit. That it does not represent a universal fact is painfully apparent in the perversion in many conspicuous ways of the Christmas idea. But if it tempers with self-denial the great mass of human selfishness; brings pause for a brief season to human greed; places gentle restraint on human strife, and ministers temporarily to human suffering, it performs in its allotted season a divine errand and one that cannot fall of generous fruitage.

GRAND JURY AND THE DEFENSE. The argument in favor of a return to the old grand jury system and a repeal of the law which authorizes the District Attorney to file an information in lieu of indictment, is based principally upon a possibility of wrong-doing under the new system.

No one undertakes to say that District Attorneys have used their power to persecute the innocent or to shield the guilty, but it is said that too great a power has been placed in the hands of the prosecuting officer.

This power is not much greater, however, than it was under the old system, when the District Attorney placed the testimony of the grand jurors and advised them as to its sufficiency.

The District Attorney then exercised the power without bearing the full measure of responsibility; now the credit or censure for results rests upon the official who has control of the prosecution of criminals.

It may be admitted that under the present system a corrupt District Attorney could do great injustice and conduct the office for the advancement of his personal interests, financial or political.

But the grand jury as it is at present is not abolished and that at any time the Circuit Court may deem such action desirable a grand jury may be drawn.

No very serious lapse in official duty could occur without a protest being made which would induce the calling of the grand jury. As one of the Portland lawyers suggests, District Attorneys should make it a practice to have a grand jury drawn regularly at least once a year.

Any one having a grievance might be heard before that investigating tribunal. With this practice established, there would be very little opportunity for abuse of power on the part of the prosecuting officer.

Attorneys who represent defendants can see in the old system some advantage for their clients for the reason that under that system the defendants learned more of the nature of the testimony against them and were enabled to better prepare for the defense.

Unless, however, there has been a conspiracy to manufacture testimony against a defendant, there is no reason why he should be informed of more than the law now requires—the nature of the charge against him, the time of the alleged unlawful act, the person against whom committed and the names of the witnesses upon whose testimony the charge is brought.

An innocent man can prepare his defense with that information as a basis, and his needs more. The present law is in the interests of economy and dispatch, and it is to be hoped that it may be amended if necessary rather than repealed.

The figures showing that in the last two years the school districts of the state paid out over \$28,800 for insurance and received only \$6146 on account of losses sustained makes a very strong presentation in favor of the state carrying the burden.

Since the year 1900 was up school buildings in every part of the state, the losses in the last two years may be taken as a fair representation of the losses that will ordinarily be sustained.

The principle upon which business men carry insurance does not apply in the case of the state. If a business man is burned out, he loses all his property or is so badly crippled financially that he cannot get on his feet again.

Not so with the state. The total losses for two years were only a little over \$6000, or \$3000 a year. These losses could in no way cripple the state, and it would seem that the margin of \$22,000 paid to the insurance companies for carrying the insurance might be saved.

Probably the same state of facts exists regarding all insurance on public property. The state carries insurance on its normal schools, university and public institutions at the capital. Would not the state be the gainer by placing all its property on the same basis as that of the private citizen?

MONGRELS OF MONARCHY. Charles Laurent in the Courier des Etats Unis figures out the pedigree of the different reigning monarchs of Europe, taken from the unswerving, and probably unanswerable, statements of the opposition, all going to prove that Kings can lay little or no claim to race relationship with the people whom they govern.

Here is the result of his investigations: 1. The living Princes of the House of Bourbon, and the House of France, are only one sixteenth French, the remaining portions being German, Spanish and Italian.

2. Prince Victor Napoleon Bonaparte stands for only one-third in the French family of his illustrious grand uncle, and for two-thirds in the houses of Wurtemberg and Savoy.

3. King Alfonso XIII of Spain is four-fifths Austrian.

4. King Victor Emmanuel III is more Austrian than Italian on account of the numerous crossings in his race, and his descendants will have Montenegro blood in their veins.

5. Emperor Francis Joseph and his presumptive heir are as much Wittlebach or Esteres as they are Hapsburg or Conzans and Italians.

6. The King of Sweden and Norway is of Bernaisne and French source by Bernaisne, and of Southern French stock through the Clary family.

7. The King of Greece is a Dane.

8. The King of Serbia is half Russian.

9. The Prince of Bulgaria is a Saxe-Coburg-Gothan or a Bourbon, and has no Bulgarian blood in him.

10. The Emperor of Russia is somewhat Maccovite and very much Danish or German, by reason of the marriage of his male ancestors.

11. The King of the Belgians is Saxe-Coburg-Gothan and Bourbon-Orleans.

12. The King of the Netherlands is descended from the houses of Orange, Nassau and Waldeck-Pyrmont.

13. The Emperor of Germany is Hohenzollern by his father, Guelph or Brunswick-Luneburg by his mother, daughter of the Emperor of Russia by his ancestor, Louis de Coligny, the daughter of the great Admiral married by Charles IX.

14. The Emperor of the second time to William the victor, who was the son of the Emperor of Prussia, from the union there was one son, Henri-Frederic of Nassau-Orange, born at Delft on the 29th of January, 1584.

His daughter, Louise Henriette, married in 1646 the Grand Elector, Frederick William of Brandenburg. And there begins the relation to the Hohenzollerns. The son of Frederick William of Brandenburg, the Orange was the first to take the title of King of Prussia. It is from him that the Hohenzollerns are descended.

LAW OF THE WIDE-OPEN POLICY. Spokane Chronicle. For years Seattle has been the "wide-open" policy. For years Seattle has been the headquarters for the toughs, the bunco men, the panders and the thugs of the Northwest.

Notorious lawbreakers posed as "reform" politicians trucked; rival gamblers waged war with the help of the police force; dens of vice multiplied; immorality was protected if fostered by public officials; murders, hold-ups, robberies came one after another; and the fame of Seattle's bad lands spread across the continent.

It was the "wide-open" policy in its per se that the "wide-open" policy in its theory that gambling must be given full liberty, just must be stimulated and encouraged, drunkenness must be treated as a delirium, and gentlemen, in brief, that bold, open, flaunted vice is far better for a community than decency (not to say virtue) because it "attracts fellows to the city" and "gets people to spend their money in the town."

Such was Seattle. A change has come, Gambling has been closed. A grand jury has been called. An effort has been made to foster the town's unpleasantness, the most despicable wretches who fattened on the shame of women and the debauchery of men. It is interesting to note the progress of the experiment—interesting to those who would have believed that "wide open," for the same noble reasons that were given by Seattle's business men—the fellows who would trade decency for dollars, risk the wrecking of the city, and "to attract fellows to the city," would make merchandise of the virtue of their neighbors' daughters, if only for a few dollars.

The horrible fate of Jailer Johnson should be a warning to all little boys and girls. This unfortunate man's birthday comes on Christmas. Could heaven devise any more dreadful punishment for sin? And Mr. Johnson is a good man, too, but he makes the mistake of hanging about the City Jail. Wonder if this happens to all men who go to jail? Horrors!

As General Corbin turned the corner of Fifteenth street at F this morning, says the New York World, a small boy who was running away from his mother bumped full into him and was sent skittering to the gutter.

"There!" said the mother, "now you see what you have done. You ran into that gentleman."

"He ain't no gentleman," squeaked the small boy. "He's a General."

"See my new dollie, mother?" "Yes, dearie." "She can wink her eyes, can't she?" "Just like baby used to, mother?" "Come here and let mother kiss dollie."

"Wasn't baby a Christmas present to you, mother?" "Yes." "And you losted her?" "Yes, sweetheart."

"Ain't you sorry? Ain't you awful sorry, mother dear?" "Don't cry, mother dear. You can have my dollie part of the time. And you'll be real good to mother, won't you, dollie? 'Cause she lost her baby."

In the carelessness of our age we forget that anniversaries such as today come a limited number of times to each one of us. The greater part of those enjoying themselves today will see but few more seasons. This is not reason for sadness, rather it should be the cause of passionate and wholesome devotion to all the joys that Christmas can bring.

To throw away Christmas is to lose the most perfect jewel of the year. And in every home in the city families will put aside care and worry and pleasureless memory and dread to taste to the utter fullness the sparkling wine of life. In other seasons we shall look back upon this day as one of rest and happiness. So even anticipation may lend its warmth to the hour's gladness.

Yesterday afternoon at a late hour the County Clerk had issued 13 licenses for Christmas weddings. The deputies in the office, as the closing hour for the day approached, and another would be Benedict did not appear, discussed in sympathetic tones the hapless fate which might overcome these unlucky 13 couples, and prayed that another marriage document would be issued before the clock struck 5, in order that the hoodoo would be broken.

One of the boys in his eagerness to help the unlucky 13 out of their trouble, even went so far as to muster up courage to propose to one of the young women in the office, with the understanding that the license be made out on the spot, but he had not the nerve to do so, for fear the girl might accept. But just as the case seemed hopeless, two more couples seeking connubial bliss arrived and saved the day.

He stood outside the window of a Fifth-street store and gazed hungrily at the glittering things within. He had done every night since payday on Saturday, only now he had but a dollar left when the first time he was possessed of 30. It seemed to him particularly unkind in heaven to give him so little for Christmas. Even now he was thinking that he would have to spend his remaining coin for oil. And once started on this calculation, he ended miserably in a mass of figures that apparently denied him a dime to spend on anything for the next year. After an hour's weary pacing back and forth, now blind with tears, now smiling in boyish delight at his dreams, he turned doggedly away and trudged out Washington street. At the front door of his little house he halted again. "Poor Nellie!" he muttered. "I never was able to get her an engagement ring."

NOTE AND COMMENT. Good morning! Merry Christmas! Now, don't be cross because the children wouldn't let you sleep.

We live not by bread alone, but also by kind words and loving smiles. Little girl, don't please don't give your new dollie too much to eat the first day.

The old people, bless their hearts, can beat the whole family in telling stories today. White hair doesn't mean black memories.

It is not necessarily a sign of change on political faith when a man believes in expansion after the sixth course of today's dinner.

The nutritious and exhilarating plum pudding will bring delight to the small boy's heart and it is useless for his mother to warn him anxiously against it. Even experience is not proof against its charms.

A Portland miss, 7 years old, says she does not think there is a Santa Claus because she does not believe there is any old man rich enough to give all the children in the world Christmas presents. But it's all true, just the same.

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BRAVER THAN CLEVELAND. Minneapolis Tribune. We hear no public expression of doubt of President Roosevelt's courage, because of his conduct in the assurance of this Venezuelan difficulty as President Cleveland played in that of seven years ago.

Should any such doubt arise, we represent two youthful figures, a boy and girl, in the costume of the Venus of Medici, but otherwise as free from any improper suggestion as the most saintly Madonna and Child.

Mr. Watts is too great a painter to make common pictures, and he presented this painting, after the exhibition, to the Government of the United States, as he had given many pictures to the British galleries for public exhibition.

The White House soon after Cleveland's election and its marvelous beauty caused it to be generally photographed and engraved.

The Women's Christian Temperance Union of New York has a so-called "purity in art and literature" committee, which makes it its business to demand that wax models in show windows be properly clothed and that public buildings should expose neither limbs nor bosoms.

This purity committee decided from the newspaper reproductions that the Watt picture was immoral, and started a popular agitation to drive it out of the White House.

They got affiliated bodies to write letters on the "chain" principle, which increases its geometrical proportion until President and Mrs. Cleveland were hurried under an avalanche of protest. The letters were dumped into the fire without counting, but the women say that 12,000 of them were written.

Mr. Cleveland could not stand the staccato of the pictures, and the picture was sent to the Corcoran Art Gallery.

There it hung, contaminating the public instead of Grover Cleveland all through his administration and McKinley's. Till the Corcoran Art Gallery was burned, the Roosevelt knew something about art, and Mrs. Roosevelt changed the relative station of a lot of pictures.

One of the pictures she did was "The Young Man in Life back from the Corcoran and hung it in her private sitting room. The purity committee heard of it and the bombardment of letters has begun again, though they do not count.

The "chain" has not begun to work. Most of them have been sent to Mrs. Roosevelt so far; but she has inspired the announcement that she needs no advice as to the decoration of the White House.

This has brought the inspired statement from him in turn that the letters will be burned unread and that the picture will stay where it is.

The nobility will doubt Theodore Roosevelt's courage out of it.

Frauds in Land, Scrip. Oaklandite Cruiser. A bill is before Congress to repeal the timber and stone act on the ground that wholesale frauds are being perpetrated under these acts.

There have been some frauds, but to repeal these laws is to give that other and greater fraud still another check. We refer to the present act on Government lands.

The present law permits a working man to procure a timber claim for the few hundred dollars he has been saving and to make money out of it. Scrip has been a good money maker in many cases for the lumber companies in many cases for the lands which have been logged off, and again placed upon timber land. If the small man is guilty of not living up to the law, he is a victim from the very start, but the big syndicate will continue to steal from Uncle Sam and all will have to submit.

Even the Parrots Are Disgusted. Boston Evening Transcript. Just to show how universally the coal situation is deplored, the comment of a parrot took this day and in mournful tones says, "Coal two dollars a ton, should be recorded. It is, or it may be, a side light on the condition that will help to impress on the minds of future generations the suffering that ancestors in this Winter of distress, if they know that even parrots joined in the widespread lament. Besides, true stories of parrots—these 'human birds,' as a visitor from Italy calls them—are always in order. And this is just as true as it is coal is scarce.