

The Weekly Enterprise.

Oregon City, Oregon,

Friday : : : Dec. 23, 1870.

Merry Christmas.

Before another issue of this paper shall reach our many readers we will have passed the merry-making season of Christmas. We take the present occasion, then, to wish you one and all a merry Christmas. May bright sunshine and true gladness of heart find place in many a family circle, as its numerous branches are gathered round the old hearthstone to do justice to roast turkey and plum pudding. May it indeed be a merry season to both old and young, when both givers and receivers shall be made happy in each other's happiness, and taste of the sweetness of true reciprocal love. May it be a day that shall lead our thoughts from the gifts of earthly affection and love and the pleasures of time, to the Gift of infinite love and the true and unending pleasures of eternity.

The observance of Christmas as a religious festival in commemoration of the Saviour's birth has been maintained in the Church from the earliest days of Christianity. At first it was a movable festival, and celebrated by the eastern Churches in the months of April and May. In the 4th century a diligent investigation was made concerning the day of Christ's nativity, and the result was an agreement between the Churches of the East and the West on the 25th of December. From that time to the present this has been the day observed by all parts of Christendom in commemoration of the Saviour's birth. Whether this be really the day on which Christ was born or not, is a matter of little consequence. Christians observe it with religious services, not because it is the real day on which Christ was born, but as a day in commemoration of that event. The celebrations peculiar to the 4th of July, when it comes on Sunday, are held on the 3d or the 5th of that month. There is nothing detracted from their significant meaning because of this change of time. The same holds good with regard to Christians in their observance of the 25th of December, be it the real day on which Christ was born or not. It is not the day but the event they commemorate. There are many strange customs there with this season. During the middle ages it was celebrated by the gay, fantastic spectacle of dramatic mysteries performed by personages in grotesque masks and singular costumes. The scenery usually represented an infant in a cradle, surrounded by the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, by bulls' heads, cherubs, eastern magic and manifold ornaments. The custom of singing carols at Christmas, called carols, which recalled the songs of the shepherds at the birth of Christ, dates from the time when the common people ceased to understand Latin. This custom is still kept up in the Anglican Churches.

In England, Christmas has always been at once a religious, domestic, and merry-making festival, equally for every rank and age. The revels used to begin on Christmas Eve and continued often till Candlemas (Feb. 2d), every day being a holiday till the twelfth night, (Jan. 6th). The larder was filled with capons, hens, turkeys, geese, ducks, beef, mutton, pork, pies, puddings, nuts, plums, sugar, and honey. The tenants were entertained at the hall; and the lord of the manor and his family encouraged every art conducive to mirth.

The common custom of decking the houses and churches at Christmas with evergreens is derived from the ancient druid practices. The holly, ivy, rosemary, bay, laurel and mistletoe, furnished the favorite trimmings, which were not removed till Candlemas. Holly and ivy still remain in England, the most esteemed Christmas evergreens though, at the two Universities, Cambridge and Oxford, the windows of the college chapels are decked with laurel. In this country such evergreens are used in the decorating of churches as can be most conveniently had. Cedar is more generally used than any other. This custom of decorating churches at this season we look upon as a most beautiful and significant custom. Decorations have always been used on festive and joyous occasions as a mark of rejoicing, and what occasion is more so than that of the nativity of the world's Redeemer? It is, further, emblematic of a great and important truth—the unending property of Gospel blessings. As the cedar, the pine and the box are evergreen, so are the truths of the Gospel evergreen in the believer's soul, and the salvation it procures unending and eternal.

In Christmas New England the observance of Christmas was forbidden on penalty of fine or imprisonment. They would suffer no one to keep it whether as a day of religious observance, or as a holiday or festive occasion, and those who did observe it were actually fined or imprisoned. But since that day a great change has taken place. Then there were no Christmas-trees, no festivities, no reassembling of the family circle, no holiday, nothing whatever to mark the season. But now nearly all religious bodies show some regard to it. Many of them hold religious services upon Christmas day. Christmas-trees are common among all the various denominations, and as a festive season it has become universal throughout our land. It is such a beautiful and instructive season to the true Christian that nothing but prejudice could ever keep him from its sacred observance. We hope to see the time when the secular character that now so strongly attaches to the day, and by which its high and holy meaning is

grossly perverted, shall disappear and all who love and adore the God made flesh shall with one heart and voice fill every consecrated temple with the loud angelic song of "God to Glory in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The Oregonian on the Rampage.

The Oregonian says that we stated a falsehood when we said that the official census had not been taken before the Legislature met. We now say that that paper states a falsehood when it says that they were completed before the 12th day of September. It states that a certified copy of the census was sent to the Secretary of State "four weeks before the adjournment." Very good. Is "four weeks before the adjournment," before the Legislature met? Not much, and consequently we were correct when we said that the taking of the census was not completed until after that body met. But we can see no reason why the Oregonian and other Radical papers should be so sorely exercised over this question. It will make but little difference to them in the next Legislature what the representations are, as they will not be able to carry more than three counties in the State, and their increase of representatives in these counties would not give them any great advantage. The Oregonian and other Radical papers, taking their cue from the "Independent" sheet at Portland, have professed a great deal of hypocritical sympathy for the counties east of the Cascades and those South of the Callapooia mountains, yet these are the very counties, with the exception of Douglas, which they desire to cut down from their present representation, and the gains will be made in Washington, Multnomah and Marion. Had the new apportionment been made, the Democrats would have gained as many members in other counties as the Radicals would in these, and consequently the change would not have been material. While the Oregonian is making so much fuss about the apportionment, would it not do well to examine when the new apportionment was made after the census of 1862? Was that done the same year? or was it put off until 1864? four years after the census was taken. The Oregonian advises its party to make its own apportionment and elect members in accordance therewith. Very well. What will that avail you? The next Legislature will be Democratic, and they will decide for themselves how many members each county shall have, and they will also take care that the Radicals don't get any more than they are entitled to. When those Radical managers are hopelessly in the minority, they always counsel revolutionary measures for the purpose of gaining power, but in this case, their counsel will not avail them anything. They have had their time in Oregon, and they had better submit to their fate cheerfully.

The Message.

We gave our readers last week the annual message of President Grant. It is not worthy of any lengthy comments, and as our readers have had the document in full, we will not trouble them with a review of it. The main feature of the message is the annexation of the Island of San Domingo, which the President attempted to lobby through the Senate last winter, and for which he has received unenviable comments from the press. It is a little job in which he has been changed of having a very strong interest, and consequently pleads most piously for the Senate to take the necessary steps for its purchase. He recommends the purchase of the Alabama claims which are claimed to be due from England to citizens of the United States from such citizens, and this once done, they will sleep the sleep that knows no waking, as the eastern shipowners will be satisfied and the President and his party will never demand a settlement from the British Government. It is a device by which the exploiters of the north can get four times as much as they actually lost out of the people of the United States, and not from the parties who were the cause of the damages sustained. He congratulates the country for having enjoyed a year of prosperity. This is certainly not due to the management of his administration. He also, in the same paragraph, while he seems to be reverentially inclined, tells a willful falsehood. He states that in some cases intimidation was used at elections which changed the result. No one has been more guilty of intimidation than the Executive, as for instance the sending of troops to New York and other Northern States, and to this day the byword is used by the administration in all the Southern States to prevent a true expression by the people. We have neither space nor inclination to review this document, and will submit it to the candid judgment of our readers.

No Doctor or Dr.—The Herald says that it learns from a private letter that Gov. Grover expresses a willingness to give as much of his means as any other man in his circumstances, towards making up the \$100,000 demanded by Ben. Holladay, as a condition for the construction of the first twenty miles of railroad on the West Side. While we regard it as an extortion, yet every man who has an interest in the prosperity of our State should contribute towards the improvement of the country. Albany was assessed as a condition that the road was to go to that place \$50,000 and her citizens raised the amount. Portland is better able to give \$250,000 than Albany was to give the \$50,000 and her property owners should not hesitate in raising the amount. Gov. Grover has always favored the interests of the people, and we are not surprised at this offer to aid in this matter.

Federal Outrage in Alabama.

The fourth article of the Constitution of the United States declares in section four, says the Patriot:

The United States shall guarantee to every State a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them from invasion, and, on application of the Legislature, or of the Executive, (when the Legislature cannot be convened,) against domestic violence.

This is the supreme law of the land, which no act of Congress can contravene, and which the President is sworn to observe, and, when necessary, to enforce with all the power at his command.

An election for State officers and members of Congress was recently held in Alabama. As the political organization of the State was entirely in the hands of the Radicals, the judges of election, registers, and other officers were appointed exclusively in that interest by the Governor, as a means of continuing his own power. Superadded to these partisan expedients, the President ordered a detachment of Federal troops to the State, in the hope of intimidating a people already oppressed by Executive interference, and robbed by a corrupt combination of alien adventurers, having no other aim than self and plunder.

In spite of this conspiracy and violence, the people calmly and peaceably asserted their rights at the polls, and rejected the Radical candidates by decided majorities. The revolutionary proceedings by which Smith, the defeated candidate for Governor, and his associates took in the Legislature, attempted to break up the joint convention and to prevent a count of votes, by which his defeat would have been formally declared even in the house of his friends, have already been exposed in our columns. In commenting upon them on Monday we said, "They have been adopted in order to provoke difficulty, and thus furnish a pretext for the intervention of the President and his military minions."

The link with which this prediction was written was hardly dry before it was literally verified, as related in our dispatches from Montgomery yesterday morning. And here we confess to some difficulty in finding language sufficiently moderate to denounce the outrage, not only upon the free State of Alabama, but upon the people of the whole Union, whose constitutional rights have been indignantly neglected in the act of usurpation of which the Executive is guilty, and for which he deserves the sternest punishment, as he must receive the most unqualified reprobation.

The Capitol at Montgomery was seized by Federal troops, acting under orders from Washington, to uphold usurpers in office who had been defeated in a fair election. The whole authority of this great Government, so far as it could be exercised by the Executive, was exerted there in support of a shameless fraud and violent resistance to law, which even the respectable portions of those who plotted the inquiry have been prompt to repudiate for its infamy.

Such is the spectacle presented to the civilized world by the Chief Magistrate of a nation which boasts of a written Constitution and of a Government of liberty regulated by law. What a sham and mockery are they, if such enormities may be perpetrated with impunity! There is not a despot in Europe, call him Czar, Emperor, Sultan, or King, who would dare to violate the law as the President has done. And if attempted, revolution would be the first inevitable result, and the head of the offender the second.

This rash experiment upon public forbearance has a serious import, beyond an immediate protest. It foreshadows a usurpation upon a grander scale, which to be crushed needs to be confronted now with true American manhood. The President and his party occupy the same relation to the people of Alabama, as the British did to the people of America. They know their doom is written, and they have already resolved to hold on to office by force or fraud, cost what it may. The sooner the nation realizes the import of this monstrous conspiracy, the more prompt will it be prepared to trample down a treasonable conspiracy. The attempt is to educate up to the practice of armed intervention by the Executive, so that when he shall have been turned back again to his native land, he may be able to buy his way to the regular army, or be allowed to play the part which the corrupted soldiers of France did, when Louis Napoleon, with perjury to the constitution, blazed upon his brow, struck down liberty on the one hand, and Congress and the members of the Legislature, returns are meager and unsatisfactory, but it is believed that the Democrats will carry the election.

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