EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

The Distressing Abuse of Christmas Presents.

MANY people will sympathize with a writer in the Nineteenth Century, who complains that the custom of gift-making has degenerated into a system of barter.

How true this is we all must realize with the approach of Christmas and the shopping it entails. Pretty soon we shall sit down some morning, look over our memoranda, find out who sent us presents last Christmas, remember what was the approximate cost of each, and then start on a tour of the shops to purchase gifts of about the same value. And these we shall send to our creditor friends with a written message of Christian charity and holiday good cheer, but heaving over each parcel a heavy sigh of relief that this is off our minds and we are even.

Nor is that the worst of it, for very often we seriously embarrass our finances by paying our obligations of this sort and many a bill collector has made a man's life miserable for months because of such meaningless tokens of love and affection that generally do not exist.

As a matter of fact, the Christmas present, like the wedding present, has become a nuisance. It had its origin in a sweet sentiment, but that sentiment, except in the cases of families that are closely knit in genuine fondness (and how many are they?) has long since been destroyed by the ever-increasing costliness of gifts. The generous simplicity of the past is gone and ostentation has taken its place.

If you doubt this, just try sending no Christmas gifts next Christmas and the Christmas following, and see what happens. You will find that the man who gives no presents gets none. Even the glowing and philanthropic humanity of the Christmas season takes account of the dollars and cents and insists upon value received.

It is time for a reform of the abuses that have surrounded and spoiled the beautiful custom of celebrating Christ's birthday with evidences of peace on earth and good will toward men. As it is practiced now it is commercial, sordid and destructive of everything but hypocrisy.—Chicago Journal.

A Land for Felons of All Nations.

WHAT is the logic of keeping criminals at the public expense? Why should the community give a man free board and lodging for his life because he has broken the law? If a man is unfit to be at large in society, then, if self-preservation is the first law of nature, society has the right to eliminate him. This it does, foolishly, at present, by locking him up for a term of years or for life. In a few cases society kills the criminal, and thus gets rid of him irrevocably and cheaply; but this is hard on the criminal who may not be incorrigible. Hence capital punishment would be too severe for crimes less than the most heinous. The maintenance of prisons, however, is a heavy drain upon the taxpayers. Moreover, prisons are not reformatories, but rather colleges for education in the criminal arts and for the formation of the professional criminal character. Therefore, they are menaces as well as burdens to society.

Some nations have made a compromise with logic by establishing colonies, where felons are permitted, in a measure to shift for themselves. But these colonies are only half-way measures. The logical, humane and most effectual solution of the problem would be the setting apart of some great territory—say the heart of Africa or some large island, not too fertile—as a general dumping ground for the criminals of all nations. There the outlaws could set up a society of their own. Necessity would compel them to dig and build for themselves. They would have to work or starve. The frontiers or coasts of the felons' land could be policed by a patrol composed of detachments from the armies and navies of all the nations in order to prevent escapes. Summary death should be, of course, the penalty for breaking bounds. The powers, however, could refuse to take any part in the internal administration of the territory set up. The criminals could do what they pleased, have anarchy or a communism, a republic or an autocracy, whichever suited them.—San Francisco Bulletin.

At What Men Work.

A TABLE of the division of labor in different countries, published in the "Industrie Zeitung," of Berlin, presents some interesting facts and offers some profitable suggestions. Occupations are divided into three classes—namely, agriculture, horticulture and forestry; manufactures and mining, and commerce and transportation. It is interesting to observe that in the last named class America leads all the world save only Holland. With that one exception a larger proportion of our people are engaged in commerce and transportation than of any other in the world. That is doubtless because of the enormous development of railroads in America. Our percentage of men thus engaged is 16.3, while Holland's is 17.2, England's is only 13, Germany's is 10.6 and France's 9.4.

In manufactures and mining America has a comparatively low rank, her percentage being only 24.1. Scotland leads all, with 60.4, followed closely by England and Wales with 58.3. Germany has 37.4 and France 33.6. Belgium, Holland and Switzerland also, of course, rank high, each of them having more than one-third of the working population thus engaged. In the first class, of agriculture and allied occupations, America has a percentage of 35.9, while Germany has 37.5, France 44.3. Austria and Hungary, respectively, 58.2 and 58.6, and Italy 59.4. The only nations having smaller proportions in this class than America are Holland, with 30.7; Belgium, with 21.1; Scotland, with 12, and England and Wales, with only 8.

It may be seriously questioned whether it is well for a nation to show so great a disproportion among its occupations as England does, with only 8 per cent agriculturists against 58.3 in manufactures and 13 in commerce; or as Hungary does in the opposite direction, with 58.6 per cent engaged upon the land and only 12.6 in manufactures and 3.3 in commerce. A more even balancing among the classes would seem to be preferable, such as that of the United States, in which the balance is most even of all, with the possible exception of Holland. There is an old warning against carrying all the eggs in one basket, and farmers have long since learned the disadvantage of depending upon a single crop. So it is not well for any nation to devote itself too much to a single department of industry. The more varied and well balanced its ocupations are, the more self-contained and independent it wil be.—New York Tribune.

May Test Britains's Strength.

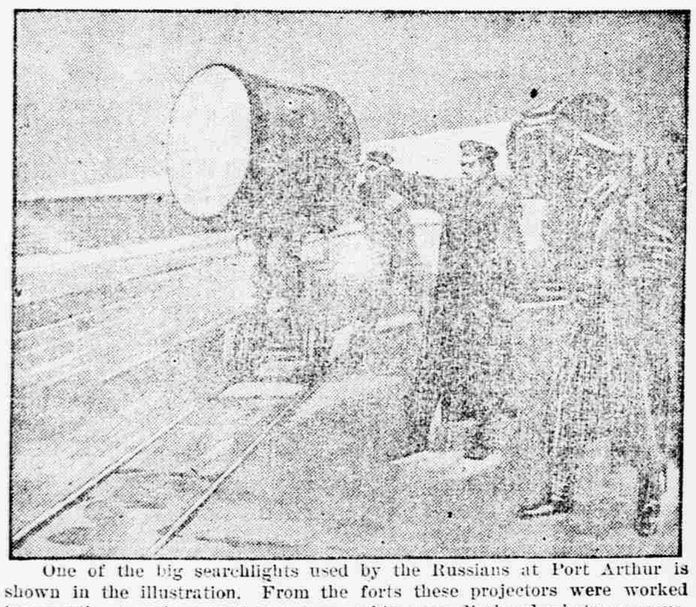
IT is evident that in some Continental capitals the idea is cherished that the opportunity for a blow against British sea power is to be expected before the end of the conflict between Japan and Russia. Any Power that is to be drawn into the attempt will be expected to use not only its navy, but as much of its army as can be made available. We think that bold and far-sighted statesmanship might prevent any such combination being brought into existence. But if the possibility exists, it ought to be the basis of all Great Britain's naval and military arrangements. It is such a combination as this which ought to be the hypothesis in every scheme of imperial defense. The people of this country ought to be well aware that a combination against them is possible. They ought to know that this is the one danger against which their preparations should aim at rendering them reasonably secure, and that security against the most dangerous attack would involve greater security against less formidable forms of conflict. Recent ministerial accounts of the ideas of the Committee of Defense hardly carry the conviction that the hypothesis has been worked out. Yet there never was a time when both the political and the strategical vigilance of a British Government were more urgently necessary than at the present moment.—London Morning Post.

TRAVEL BY AIR.

Using Collapsible Air-Bag Inside Balloon Proper Meets with Success.

To regulate the height to which a balloon shall rise or fall is one of the interesting problems of aeronautics, and it usually has been solved by throwing ballast overboard or allowing the gas to escape. In ballonet-balloons, which have recently been tried in successful experiments, this is accomplished by having collapsible air-bags inside the balloon proper, into which air can be forced or withdrawn. While the idea is old, going back to the time of the first hydrogen balloon in 1783, it has only recently been put into successful application, though in 1884 air-reservoirs were employed to regulate the shape of balloons. During the first year Henry de la Vaulx and Henri Havre have made improvements whereby successful ascents and voyages have been made, and the altitude of the balloon nicely regulated. The ballonet is an annular compartment of lens-shaped section placed around the lower part of the balloon proper and provided with suitable valves. By forcing air in or out of the ballonet the displacement, and consequently the buoyancy, is altered. Thus in the first ascent made by M. de la Vaulx a crossing of the English Channel was made at a height of about 1,000 feet with the ballonet filled. On rising above the clouds the sun's rays would have expanded the gas within the balloon proper and carried the aeronauts to a strata where they would have been driven toward the Arctic Sea by the prevailing southerly winds had they not been able to descend to a lower level by using the ballonet. Thus they were able to proceed in the desired direction on this particular voyage, landing in Yorkshire after a trip of sixteen hours. By regulating the position of the balloon with the ballonet it is possible to save ballast, so that much longer trips can be taken with favorable winds. Further trips in this balloon were equally successful, and demonstrated the success of the ballonets, and this arrangement should be advantageous in dirigible balloons or on air ships, as they would supply a simple means of regulating the buoyancy of the envelope containing the gas.

POWERFUL SEARCHLIGHTS AT PORT ARTHUR.



One of the big searchlights used by the Russians at Port Arthur is shown in the illustration. From the forts these projectors were worked incessantly at night, and their intense white rays disclosed whatever movements the Japanese made. The light, when thrown on an advancing enemy, also tends to dazzle and confuse them. In conjunction with the electric projectors the Russians also used star shells, which in exploding brilliantly lighted up the immediate territory.

Webster's Lost Opportunity.

The campaign of 1840 had a dramatic and unexpected sequel. Thurlow Weed, before the meeting of the whig convention, sought out Webster and urged him to take second place on the ticket with Harrison, but the suggestion was rejected with scorn. An acceptance of Weed's advice would have made Webster President in little more than a year.

Fish's Tenacity of Digestion.

A singular instance of tenacity in the digestion of fish is reported from a fishing village on the Atlantic coast. The fish, which is a ling, four feet long, had what appeared to be an abnormally hard liver. But the cutting up process revealed something far stranger. The supposed hard liver turned out to be a piece of stout netting, over two yards long and fourteen inches wide, which had been pressed into the form of a football. How this great mass of indigestible material came to be swallowed by the creature is a mystery, and the suggestion that the fish caught in the toils of a fisherman's net solved the problem of how to escape by devouring his prison walls is not considered scientifically practicable.

Not a Favorite Breed

Lovers of good, plain dogs which have been allowed to grow naturally will appreciate the story of the English peddler who went to a dealer in dogs and thus described what he wanted:

"Hi wants a kind of dog about so 'igh an' so long. Hit's a kind of gry'ound, an' yit it ain't a gry'ound, because 'is tyle is shorter nor any o' these 'ere gry'ounds an' 'is nose is shorter an' 'e ain't so slim round the body. But still 'e's a kind o' gry'ound. Do you keep such dogs?"

"No," replied the dog man. "We drowns 'em."

When an attorney offers to settle, listen.

COSSACKS GET BUSY.

BECOME UNEXPECTEDLY ACTIVE DURING THE WEEK.

Kouropatkin's Cavalry Make a Sortie and Tear Up the Liao-yang Railroad, on Which the Japanese Depend for Their Supplies.

General Kouropatkin's Cossacks were unexpectedly active during the week. Undeterred by the snow and the frost a formidable body accompanied by a regiment of infantry and several guns swept around the Japanese left flank and struck at several points south of Liaoyang the railroad on which the Japanese depend for their supplies. They were able to tear up the tracks in many places, but the Japanese report that the damage was quickly remedied. Either the Russians have not learned the art of railroad destruction so thoroughly as federal raiders did during the Civil War or the Japanese are well prepared for unpleasant emergencies.

The object of the attack on the Japanese line of communication is assumed to be to hinder the dispatch to Marquis Oyama's army of General Nogi's troops and artillery, which have been released by the surrender of Port Arthur. Possibly with these reenforcements Oyama will be in a position to resume the offensive in spite of the inclemency of a Manchurian winter. Indeed, it may be easier for him to move at this time than it will be in the spring when the streams are up and the roads are bottomless. The audacious dash of the Russian as far south as Newchwang and Yinkow proves that they at least can campaign in the winter season.

While Oyama will be greatly strengthened when he gets the reenforcements which are now on their way, no one knows how many men he has. There is equal ignorance as to the force at General Kouropatkin's disposal. It may be assumed that he has about all for whom supplies can be brought over the Transsiberian Road. It is reported that he has 35,000 Cossacks and at least two able and enterprising cavalry generals. Last week's raid may be the precursor of many.

Admiral Rojestvensky's fleet has not returned to European waters, but appears to be lingering at Madagascar. The long stay at that French possession has provoked unfavorable comments by the Japanese, who say that France is showing disregard for the obligations of a neutral nation by allowing Madagascar to be made a base of operations. It is reported that a strong Japanese squadron is at the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean, south of Ceylon and northeast of Madagascar. Probably there are at the most only a few vessels there which have ventured so far for scouting purpases.

Last week the Russian vice admiral, who is a member of the international commission to investigate the North Sea incident, was quoted as saying that "we tend toward not far off peace"—a peace during which Russia could build a powerful navy and be ready to try conclusions again with Japan. At the moment the statement was thought to be significant, but the address of the Czar to his army and navy has no promise of peace.

After announcing the fall of Port Arthur and praising the gallantry of its defenders, the Czar exhorts the soldiers and sailors not to be dismayed, and says "with all Russia I join in the belief that the time is coming when God will give strength to our glorious army and navy to arise and break the forces of the enemy."

This means continued war—that Kouropatkin is to drive the Japanese out of Manchuria if he can, and that the Russian fleet, when raised to the highest possible degree of efficiency, is to go in search of the enemy.

FROM FOREIGN LANDS

The Anglo-Russian arbitration commission met in Paris and organized.

Tribesmen have surrounded Alcazar, Morocco, and threaten to sack the town.

Wealthy European Hebrews have formed an organization to assist the Russian Jews in emigrating to the United States.

President Castro of Venezuela deposed the judges of the Superior Court because they acquitted a prisoner whom he wanted convicted.

Herr von Vollmar, the Socialist leader, severly criticised the policy of the German Government in a speech in the Reichstag at Berlin.

The Czar of Russia is considering the memorial of the zemstvoists, and while the demand for a legislative body will not be granted, it is authoritatively stated that some of the reforms have been approved.

Official statistics, covering twenty-six years, show a steady decrease in the birth rate in the large cities in Germany.

Among the diplomatists in London connected with the Balkans the suggestions of the possibility of a Turko-Bulgarian war are discredited.

Robert Burns' family Bible, containing interesting family entries, was sold at auction in London for $8,250. The purchaser was a London dealer.

The situation in Morocco is extremely grave. All foreigners have been ordered to leave Fez, and the powers are preparing for a naval demonstration.

CONGRESS

In the House Friday the Senate amendments to the Philippine government bill were non-concurred in and the measure was sent to conference. Mr. Sheppard of Texas introduced a bill prohibiting the payment of mileage to members and Senators who ride on free passes. Discussion of the charges against Judge Swayne occupied the time until adjournment. The legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill was passed by the Senate after the chair had sustained a point of order against the amendment increasing the salaries of civil service commissioners from $3,500 to $4,000. Mr. Beveridge sought to have a day fixed for a vote on the statehood bill, but Mr. Corman objected and the calendar was taken up. Bills were passed amending the law governing the distribution of public documents, granting pensions to the families of Indian policemen killed in the capture of Sitting Bull in 1890, extending the law relative to the intimidation of witnesses in Federal courts to witnesses before United States commissioners

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In the Senate Saturday another unavailing effort was made by Mr. Beveridge to secure unanimous consent to fix a day for taking a vote on the statehood bill. Mr. Bate spoke for the opponents of the bill, saying there were still a number of speeches to be made. There was much discussion of a bill permitting American women who have married foreigners to regain citizenship in the United States, but it was deferred for a day. A bill was passed which makes it a felony to counterfeit the great seal of the United States. Pension legislation at the rate of 459 bills in 108 minutes was the feature of the House session, all previous records for speed in legislation being smashed. Then unanimous consent legislation held sway for an hour and not a measure presented under this head came under the ban of objection. Among the measures adopted was one revising the copyright law with reference to trademarks and another authorizing the use of stone, earth and timber from forest reserves and public lands for the construction of irrigation works.

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By a vote of 30 to 24 the Senate on Monday decided to consider the crosstown street railway bill for Washington. The statehood bill was discussed for three hours by Messrs. Simmons and Heyburn, who favored the elimination of Arizona from the bill. The Senate resolution fixing Wednesday, Feb. 8, as the time for counting the electoral vote for President and Vice President was adopted by the House. A resolution was agreed to providing for the collection of additional cotton statistics by the census bureau. The legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill was sent to conference.

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In the Senate Tuesday Mr. Lodge presented the conference report on the Philippine bond and raidroad bill and it was ordered printed. Mr. Mitchell of Oregon made a statement on his recent indictment in connection with land frauds. Bills were passed transferring the control of forest reserves from the Interior Department to the Agricultural Department and abolishing the office of the assistant attorney general for the Postoffice Department and providing a solicitor for that department. Mr. Heyburn concluded his speech on the statehood bill. A resolution was adopted, setting Feb. 17 as the date for receiving the statue of Francis E. Willard from the State of Illinois to be placed in statuary hall. In the House the Swayne impeachment charges were debated at length and it was agreed to begin voting at 3:30 o'clock Wednesday. The postoffice appropriation bill was reported.

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Wednesday in the House was devoted to the Swayne impeachment proceedings. There was considerable debating of the various features of the case, and each of the twelve articles of impeachment was adopted and ordered reported to the Senate. The charges of impropriety made in connection with the campaigns of 1896 and 1904 were revived for a time in the Senate by Mr. Stone, who spoke in support of his resolution providing for an investigation of the charges. He used with much freedom the names of President Roosevelt, Judge Parker and Chairman Cortelyou, and again related the allegations that Mr. Cortelyou had used the information secured by him as Secretary of Commerce and Labor to secure money from the trusts. The discussion of the statehood bill continued, with Messrs. Clay, Nelson, Bailey, and Stewart as speakers.

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In the Senate Thursday the bill for the relief of American sufferers through seizure of far sealing vessels was debated, but no action was taken. The statehood bill was taken up and Mr. Stone, speaking against the measure, occupied the time until adjournment. In the House consideration of the army appropriation bill was completed. A proposition to abolish the Porto Rican regiment was defeated, 89 to 47, after debate in which Commissioner Degetau of that island made his maiden speech. The provision for the army transport service was retained in spite of a vigorous attack by Mr. Humphrey of Washington, who said the service was rotten and a national disgrace. Feb. 17 was fixed as the date for the acceptance of the Frances Willard statue from the State of Illinois. A bill was passed extending the extradition laws of the United States to the Philippines. The Senate amendments to the bill transferring jurisdiction of the forest reserves from the Interior to the Agricultural Department were concurred in and the bill was sent to conference.

In the National Capital.

Brazil desires to be represented at Washington by an ambassador.

A resolution has been offered in the House asking whether the President ought to retain Secretary Morton.

Congressman Mann of Chicago has a bill to transfer to the President the powers of the Panama canal board.

Chaplain Joseph F. McGrail has been dismissed from the navy by order of the President for alleged misconduct.

President's veto of a bill to take groves of giant trees from a California park may uncover a new land fraud.

Defining His Position.

Years ago there was a member of an eastern legislature named Murphy, a good politician, but hardly a statesman. Indeed his notions of parliamentary order and debate were crude. He was so frequently out of order that the speaker got in the habit of crying as soon as Mr. Murphy rose, "The gentleman is out of order!"

Murphy sat down, but presently he was on his feet aagin.

"Mr. Prisidint, I rise to a point of order. In justice I must explain that the thing I intinded to say just now when you called me to order had nothing to do with what I did not say."

Heroism in Animals.

Animals are capable of what we should call heroism in man. In one field was a donkey, in another a horse. Through the first went a mastiff and made for the ass, seized him by the throat, pulled him down, and that so suddenly that the donkey looked likely to be killed. The horse in the next field leaped the hedge dividing the two pastures, collared the dog with his teeth, swung him on the fall—ball teeth, swung him and like a baseball player caught him on the fall—with his heels. The mastiff was whisked over the hedge which the horse had just crossed, and the donkey was left in peace to recover from his wounds.

Such Dear Friends, Too.

Jennie—I had such an awful fright last evening. Just as I was about to enter our front gate a big, horrible man jumped from behind a tree and actually tried to kiss me.

Fannie—Poor fellow! I wonder what lunatic asylum he escaped from?