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## ARBOR DAY ABROAD

An article in the French periodical, *La Nature*, gives a glowing description of the growing popularity of Arbor day in Europe. The writer of the article says the holiday originated in Nebraska, U. S. A., as the result of the proposal of "a certain Sterling Morton" in the year 1872 to set apart a day for tree planting. Continuing, the author says that "in Italy the 'annual school arbor festival' became in 1902 a state institution. In Spain the 'association of friends of the arbor festival,' which was formed in the same year, celebrates annually very successful fetes, and a decree of 1904 instituted the arbor festival throughout the kingdom. Belgium held its first arbor day festival quite recently. In Russia, Sweden, Austria-Hungary, Switzerland, Portugal, Japan—everywhere the necessity of reforestation has been recognized—children are interested in trees by similar methods.

"France has not been behindhand, and, while considerable efforts toward reforestation are being made by the government, attempts have been made in various directions to associate children in the movement by establishing arbor day festivals. In the spring, under the leadership and direction of teachers, the school children go to the open fields to plant trees that shall be future forests. . . . These festivals encourage the establishment of forest associations among students and graduates, whose number is constantly increasing and some of which are very active. . . ."

"The French 'forest society of friends of trees,' whose president is Senator Calvert, has given a strong impulse to reforestation and to all institutions in its aid, and has actively encouraged the establishment of forest societies among pupils of the schools.

"Arbor day celebrations are to be held in France still more widely after the present year. The society just mentioned will organize meetings in important centers with the aid of rectors, prefects and the forest administration; festivals of this kind have already been arranged at Toulouse, Nice, Clermont-Ferrand and Bordeaux."

## THE MORMONS.

No more remarkable religious development is recorded in modern times than the rise and persistence of the sect who call themselves "Latter Day Saints," and are indiscriminately cataloged by the rest of the world as "Mormons." It is now becoming more clearly known to the popular mind that there are two branches of the Latter Day Saints. The first has its ecclesiastical headquarters in Salt Lake City and is associated with the practice of polygamy and with a long continued struggle, half political, half religious, with the "gentle" population of Utah, Idaho and neighboring states. The other branch of the Latter Day Saints has its headquarters at Lamoni, Iowa, where it has just held the past week its fifty-fourth annual world's conference. This conference was attended by hundreds of enthusiastic members of the church and plans were made for the continued evangelization of the world to their doctrine. This reorganized Latter Day Saints church, as it styles itself, has about thirty thousand members in the United States, as

against over one hundred and fifty thousand members of the Salt Lake City branch. The reorganized church has its greatest strength in Iowa and Missouri—several thousand adherents in each state. Its membership in Nebraska is between one and two thousand.

The reorganized Latter Day Saints accept three books as having divine origin—the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Covenant. They believe in "special revelations," made by God from time to time to the elders of the church. Joseph Smith, son of the original Joseph Smith, is the head of the reorganized church. He is now past seventy-five years old and has been the medium through whom the revelations of God have been made to the reorganized saints. As is well known, this branch of the Mormon church repudiates polygamy and is composed of industrious, law abiding people, principally farmers, who have no trouble with their neighbors of other religious complexion. They are, however, like nearly all other small denominations, intense believers in the religious truth they profess and most persistent proselytizers. They have over three hundred missionaries at work in different parts of the world. Here in Nebraska, though few in numbers, they are very active, and Mormon meetings and distribution of tracts advocating their doctrine is one of the familiar phases of religious life in many parts of this state.

What is there back of the Latter Day Saint doctrine which gives it vitality and continuance? This question is a deeply interesting one to the student of comparative religion. Here is a new faith, born within the lifetime of men now living, claiming the most remarkable credentials of its miraculous revelation, implicitly believed and sacrificially propagated by a considerable body of people living in an age and country of enlightenment. On the one hand its revelations are pronounced the rankest kind of fraud and its sacred writings the most palpable imitations and forgeries. On the other hand they are believed and read with the most devout faith. Is the test of religious truth the number of its converts, the social and industrial virtues they practice, or the scientific and critical rules of logic and philosophy? These questions strike deep root into the thinking conscience of the time.

Meantime the phenomenon continues of a small but growing denomination, having for its saint and martyr a man who is generally esteemed by other religionists of the time and place where he lives as an ignorant pretender; having for its sacred book a volume which most people outside the faith cannot read with patience, and yet filled with the fire of apostolic missionary enterprise and going forth by the hundreds to convert the world.

Surprise is expressed by a reader of *The Journal* that bail should be denied to a man charged with murder and then granted after he has been convicted of the crime and has begun to serve out his sentence in the penitentiary. This apparent inconsistency of the law is only superficial. In the case of Kennison, which seems to provoke the inquiry, the charge was murder in the first degree, an unballable offense. But he was convicted of murder in the second degree, and under the Nebraska statutes can be released on bond after complying with certain formalities satisfactory to the court.

## THE CHINESE FAMINE

Over seven hundred dollars telegraphed from Lincoln is now feeding starving Chinese ten thousand miles away. This is a wonderful triumph, both of human love and human science. The yellow-skinned Mongolian is feared and hated by the American working man, caricatured by American artists, shunned and avoided by middle class Americans. And yet he is dying today by the hundred thousand in central China. And the American dollars are dropping into the relief fund for him all over the land. A dollar will save a human being—a yellow Chinaman—perhaps a helpless child—from starvation until the first fruits of another crop can be gathered in June. So the dollars fall thick as April snow into the relief treasury today. Tonight they are telegraphed to China. Tomorrow they are transformed into rice and flour and are feeding hungry Chinese lips.

Into this broadened world state of today, of which every human being is a citizen there should come the widened world-knowledge to accompany the widened world-sympathy. Since we are fellow citizens, with the Chinaman and the Hindoo we need to know them better. No time so opportune to study Chinese lessons as when our dollars are going to China.

Take a map of China. The two great rivers, whose names we learned in our childhood geography, are the Yangtsekiang and Hoang-ho. They flow eastward almost parallel with each other for the last 700 miles of their courses and empty into the Yellow sea about 500 miles apart at their mouths. Between the lower courses of these two rivers lies the famine district. It borders the Yellow sea for 200 miles northward from the mouth of the Yangtse-Kiang and extends back into the country about 200 miles more. It has, therefore, about 40,000 square miles, a little more than half the area of Nebraska. And upon that 40,000 square miles are huddled between 15,000,000 and 20,000,000 Chinese. In the province of Kiangsu, where the famine is most severe, there is a population of 362 to the square mile. In the province of Anhwei, part of which suffers equally with Kiangsu, there is a population of 432 to the square mile. These are farming populations for the most part. They are not manufacturing districts like Holland and Belgium. Four hundred people, living upon the land, and supporting as part of the product of an old civilization, leisure and cultured classes in their midst. And this upon an allowance of an acre and a half of surface soil for each individual, from which must be subtracted all that is used for streets and roads and buildings and private grounds before they actually arrive at the size of the piece of land from whose dirt the individual must dig his daily bread.

Here is the cause of Chinese starvation today expressed in the simplest terms of political economy—over-population. No out-pouring of western sympathy and western dollars, glorious as an index of benevolence and sympathy can save over-crowded China and India from a recurrence of famines. This famine district of China is watered by the great canal and by numerous lakes and rivers. It was, in fact, the over-

flow of these waters which destroyed the crops last year and left the people destitute. The country is a splendid garden when in cultivation as every traveler upon the grand canal testifies. But no cultivation, however painstaking, can save a people from suffering and death who live from hand to mouth and multiply without forethought. This is a phase of homely truth which many writers upon India and China do not discuss. But it is just as susceptible of proof from the facts in China as is its analogue by any Nebraska farmer who will plant a handful of corn in a hill instead of three or four grains.

The best book written upon China is "Village Life in China," by Dr. Arthur H. Smith a Congregational clergyman. His descriptions of the conditions of the common people are vivid and disclose the scientific eye of the sociologist as well as the heart of the gospel missionary. Dr. Smith has the courage to state the main cause of Chinese misery in a few words, and these words were written eight years ago. He says:

"Over-population. The whole Chinese race is and always has been given up with a single devotion to the task of raising up a posterity, to do for the fathers what the fathers have done for the grandfathers. In this particular line, they have realized Wesley's conception of the ideal church in its line, where, as he remarked, the members are 'all at it, and always at it.' War, famine, pestilence, sweep off millions of the population, but a few decades of peace seem to repair the ravages of the past, which are lost to sight, like battle fields covered with wide areas of waving grain.

"However much we may admire the recuperative power of the Chinese as a whole and individually, it is difficult not to feel righteous indignation toward a system which violates those beneficent laws of nature which would mercifully put an end to many branches of families when such branches are unfitted to survive. It is impossible to contemplate with equanimity the deliberate, persistent and uniform propagation of poverty, disease and crime, which ought rather to be surrounded with every restriction to prevent its multiplication, and to see this propagation of evil and misery done, too, with an air of virtue, as if this were of itself a kind of religion, often, indeed, the only form of religion in which the Chinese take any vital interest.

"It is this system which loads down the rising generation with the responsibility for feeding and clothing tens of thousands of human beings who ought never to have been born, and whose existence can never be other than a burden to themselves, a period of incessant struggle without respite and without hope. To the intelligent foreigner, the most prominent fact in China is the poverty of its people. There are too many villages to the square mile, too many families to the village, too many 'mouths' to the family. Wherever one goes, it is the same weary tale with interminable reiteration. Poverty, poverty, poverty, always and evermore poverty."

## THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY.

One year ago Thursday beginning at thirteen minutes past five o'clock in the morning, an earthquake caused widespread damage in the bay region of California, and left San Francisco at the mercy of fire by breaking the water mains. For three days a fierce