Buddhism in Russia.

According to Russian law no subject of the Czar, whether born in or converted to the Russian Established Church, that is, the Greek Eastern Church, can abandon his religion under any circumstances whatever. And there is no punishment severe enough for the traitor to his religion. Neither gibbet nor bullet nor a Siberian mine is deemed enough for such a criminal. He must either return to his religion or die in an underground cell in some religious prison. Under such conditions Russia certainly would seem to be not a favorable soil for free religious thought. Yet no other country shows to-day such a powerful religious fermentation as Russia. The upper classes are fast abandoning the Established Church for deism, atheism, spiritualism, Free Masonry, positivism and Protestantism, and among the lower classes the Raskol or Russian Protestantism is assuming multifarious forms, from the purest rationalism to the crudest superstition.

By virtue of her geographical situation, Russia lies in the center of all the cardinal religions of the world. On the west she faces the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, on the south the Mohammedans and on the east the Buddhists, the Brahmanists and the Confucians. At home she has a great majority of Greek Catholics, 8,000,000 Roman Catholics, 3,000,000 Hebrews and as many Protestants, besides several million pagans. Since steam and the printing press have irreparably destroyed the barriers between the nations of the world, a momentous question has presented itself: "Which religion will be the religion of the world?" To-day, in the immense domains of the Czar, a powerful religious struggle is going on, of which no other country has any idea, and it is here in Russia that the principal and final battles will be fought that shall forever settle the question as to where humanity shall look for moral guidance.

What curious things would happen here if religious freedom should be proclaimed in Russia. Now, there are millions and millions of Russians who hold a double belief, one for the Czar's sake and one to suit their own conscience. But with freedom of religions many who are now officially orthodox would at once turn Roman Catholics, or Protestants, or Raskolniks, or Mohammedans, or positivists, or atheists, or spiritualists, or Buddhists, or the followers of Brahma-Somaj.

The propagation of Buddhism in Russia is of rather recent origin, and it is spreading among the educated and well-to-do classes exclusively. I have long seen Russians entertaining in secret all sorts of beliefs and unbeliefs, but it is only a few days since I first made the acquaintance of Russian Buddhists.

"I am only a novice in Buddhism," an aged Russian holding the office of Justice of the Peace said to me," and hardly consider myself as being fully initiated into the principles of my new religion. Yet I feel that Buddhism has a stronger hold upon me than Christianity ever had. While I was a Christian I had to believe in many things against which my mind revolted, and so I knew no peace in my conscience. Buddhism brings that peace and harmony for which every human soul longs."

"Do you believe that Buddhism can be inoculated in Europeans?" I asked.

"I do, indeed," he answered. "There is a notion that religions are formed according to the characteristics of race or nationality. It is wrong. Christianity was of Eastern and Jewish origin, and yet it holds all the European nations. Consider that truth, eternal truth, can be but one. There is only one system of mathematics in all the world, one science of astronomy, one exposition of physics and physiology, and so on. Now, if religion embraces truth, it can be only one for all the world. I am sure that to-day more than three-quarters of mankind hold to this or that religion only through mere habit, cultivated from childhood. Do not force upon your children any things but pure moral principles, and you will see that all men, whether in Europe, or Asia, or Africa, or America, will have the same religion, which will be the true one."

"And that religion will be——"

"Buddhism in substance."

"Are there many Buddhists in Russia?"

"Well, yesterday there were were hundreds of them, and to-day there are perhaps thousands. But who will and who can count them? Buddhism is spreading also in Germany, England, and, I believe, in the United States. But leaving out the Buddhists of Europe and America, Buddhism is already the prevailing religion of the world, counting at least a hundred million souls more than all the Christian denominations taken together, yet it never has been spread by force, like Mohammedanism or Christianity. Christians will find in Buddhism the commandments and moral precepts familiar to them, but they will learn also that Buddhists regard knowledge as a virtue indispensable for those who long for Nirvana or paradise. To believe is not enough for Buddhists. It is necessary to practice a sweeping charity of which Christians have no idea, and to cleave with the thunderbolt of science the mountain of ignorance, in order to reach the state of bliss."

I learned from other persons that the Buddhism that is spreading among the Russians is of a purified form, a "unrepeanized Buddhism," as they style it here. For instance, they do not intend to part with music, songs, and the theater, and they find it impractical in our age to abstain from taking gold and silver, although Buddha counts all of these among forbidden things.

The question of a universal religion is warmly discussed here at private tea parties, and the statistics are conned over which show that in the world there are 8,000,000 Jews, 370,000,000 Christians, 100,000,000 Mohammedans, 150,000,000 Hindus or Brahmanists, 480,000,000 Buddhists, about 200,000,000 Pagans, and a few positivists, spiritualists, Free Masons, and atheists.—*St. Petersburg Cor. N. Y. Sun.*

How Ben Hardin Fooled a Literary Society.

"Ben Hardin was a brilliant fellow, and he had a strong sense of humor. When he was elected to Congress in 1815 he had already served several terms in the Kentucky Legislature, and was noted throughout the State as a lawyer. He started, however, for Washington dressed in the rough clothing of a frontier state, and he wore the slouch hat and the long buff overcoat of the West. As he was passing through Virginia two young smart-looking fellows overtook him and fell into conversation with him. Hardin saw at their first words that they took him for a greenhorn, and he put on such manners and accent as to confirm their illusion. The meeting took place within a few miles of the town where they were to stop for the night. In the course of the conversation the young bloods told him there was to be a literary society meeting that night, and that if he would attend he might hear some fine speaking, and at this point one of them, slyly winking to the other, said: "And perhaps, stranger, you will join the debate yourself?"

"I don't know," replied Hardin. "I have spoke some in old Kaintucky. What mought your question be?"

The question was not new to him. It was one of the leading ones of the day—a political issue upon which he was thoroughly posted. As old Ben Hardin heard it, however, he shook his head and said: "Boys, you will hev to excuse me on thet. I ain't up on thet subject. Now, if it was whether pursuit was better than possession, or some of our old subjects, I allow I'd tackle ye. But about this yere politics I don't know."

After much persuasion, however, he promised the young men that he would attend and he "would say suthin' anyhow." The party separated at the hotel, and the young fellows went off laughing at the fun they expected to have that night. They told their friends, and in a short time the whole town knew of the green Kentuckian's arrival, and when the literary society opened every seat was filled. The exercises went off quietly until the debate commenced, when every one looked at Hardin. He sat quietly until the close. The two young fellows made their speeches, and very fair ones, too. As the second one closed and Mr. Hardin arose, each one in the audience nudged his neighbor, and every face was ready to smile. Their expressions changed, however, as old Ben took up the subject and treated it most eloquently. He tore to pieces the speeches of the young fellows who had tried to play the trick on him, and as he was finishing the two were so bored that they got up and left. He referred to them as they went and closed after an eloquent peroration by telling the society that he was a Kentucky member of Congress on his way to Washington. At this the society gathered round him and wanted to shake his hand. He chatted with them for a while, and the remainder of his visit was an ovation. The whole town came out to the hotel the next day to see him off, and the smart young fellows were the laughing-stock of all.—*Cleveland Leader.*

How to Make Ice Cream.

The secret of making good ice cream of any grade, lies in the freezing. The old way of freezing cream, which is still in use among small confectioners, consisted of occasionally stirring the cream while it was freezing in a tin can, set in a tub of ice and salt. A more easy and expeditious method is within the reach of the average housekeeper in these days of patent freezers. The same principle underlies all the best known patents, i. e., the mixing of the cream by a wooden beater, which revolves inside the can by the same motion that slightly changes the position of the can in the outer tub of ice and salt. This freezing mixture should be composed of three parts of crushed ice to one of coarse salt, of which care should be taken that it does not reach high enough around the sides of the can to penetrate to the interior, and so spoil the cream: the water formed in the outer tub by the melting of the freezing mixture need not be drawn off while the cream is being frozen unless it is likely to get into the can, because the water is intensely cold. If it is desired to pack the cream after it is frozen, the water may be drawn off and enough more ice and salt placed around the can to reach nearly to the top. Ice cream packed in this way can be kept over night, or longer, if the freezing mixture is properly renewed. When ice cream is "molded" or packed in the molds of fancy shapes all the openings should be closed with butter, or oiled paper fixed about the apertures of the mold with paste or gum tragacanth.

Ice creams of the most ordinary sort are made with milk thickened with arrowroot or corn starch, in the proportion of a tablespoonful to a quart, dissolved in cold water, and then boiled in milk, which is cooled, sweetened and flavored before it is frozen. The sort of ice cream usually made at home is composed of milk, with a small proportion of cream, with eggs and sugar added to it; for instance, dissolve half a pound of sugar in a quart of milk: place it over the fire and let it heat to boiling point: meantime beat three eggs to cream, pour the boiling milk into them and then return to the fire and stir until it begins to thicken: then at once remove it from the fire: stir until it is smooth; then flavor it, cool it, and when it is cool freeze it according to directions given. Frozen custard is made in the same way, only five eggs at least are added to a quart of milk.

French ice cream, thick and yellow, is made by boiling a quart of cream with a long vanilla bean, and then cooling and straining it; then the yokes of two eggs are beaten smooth with three-quarters of a pound of sugar; the flavored cream is then mixed with the eggs and stirred over the fire until it begins to thicken; directly the cream begins to thicken, take it from the fire, and stir it for five minutes: then cool it and freeze it.—*Juliet Corson.*

The Diminutive Widow.

The little Widow Thumb is casually a resident of New York and a welcome visitor in a considerable number of rather wealthy and fashionable families. She is now a lady so mature and dignified, notwithstanding her diminutive size, that nobody in the way of social intercourse dares, or is much inclined, to treat her as a human trifle. To see her in the midst of a round of calls is to get the impression, at first sight, that your eyes have somehow become telescopic inversely, so exactly is she a miniature of the conventional dames of ceremonious society. She dresses for an afternoon of formal visiting in a toilet of semi-mourning, suitable in style for a quiet woman of forty-five—which age she acknowledges—and orders from a livery stable one of those coupes that, as to liveried driver and general appearance, are scarcely distinguishable from private equipages. Provided with a visiting list, and easily commanding an air of well-bred balance, she lacks only in stature to be the ideal of a middle-aged millionaire's wife. Of course, she attracts staring attention whenever she alights; but her manner of silent reproof is usually effective as a cure for impudence, and she is able to go about with far less annoyance than might be supposed. She is about three feet and a half in height, or a foot more than when she was put on exhibition by Barnum, and it was only within a few years that she stopped growing. "It would not surprise me," she lately said, "if I should take to growing again at any time. My case is one of retarded development, you know, and I may yet catch up with the rest of you. The majority of the dwarfs exhibited are really children, phenomenally small, but by no means the adult midgets that they are represented to be, and consequently they grow out of the profession. That has been the case with many a 'freak,' as the showmen call them."

The pertinence of the fair, fat and forty-inch widow as a typic here is the fact that she has a suitor for her hand. The account current in her circle of acquaintance says that Mr. John Spencer Coyne, a mine operator, who came eastward a year ago with a comfortable fortune, began to seriously woo her soon after making her acquaintance in this city. He is a handsome man of no more than forty, with cultured taste, good morals and about a hundred pounds, his stature being limited to an inch or so more than five feet. That he is deeply in love with Mrs. Thumb is not doubted by any of her mutual friends, but he does not seem to have made much progress toward capturing the estimable dwarf. It is said to be her firm intention not to marry again.—*N. Y. Cor. Albany Herald.*

—There is some comfort for a child who swallows a two-cent piece, as one child or another is in the habit of doing almost daily; an eminent French physician says that copper absorbed into the system is a sure preventive of cholera.—*Boston Transcript.*

A Stamp Fraud.

Stamp collectors in all parts of Europe are just now considerably excited over the very recent discovery that a couple of rogues have been swindling them most outrageously. It appears that Afghanistan stamps are dear to the hearts of all collectors. The first stamp ever issued in that country appeared in 1870-71 (Mohammedan date 1288), during the reign of Shere Ali. It is a large circular stamp with the head of a tiger in the center and the value written in characters above this head. Other issues appeared in subsequent years, but all such stamps are extremely scarce, and therefore valuable.

The brilliant idea of personally profiting from these facts occurred to one Hafez Hamed, who arrived in Paris some short time ago and proceeded to the old stamp-exchange in the Avenue Gabriel, Champs Elysees, where he informed buyers that the ex-Postmaster-General of Cabul had arrived in Marseilles, but that in one of his trunks, still retained at a port in the Persian Gulf, were stamps of the early issues, particularly those issued in 1293, and valued at from one hundred and twenty-five to one thousand francs. Hafez said he had written to the ex-Postmaster-General to telegraph to the port and have his trunks forwarded without delay, and that immediately on their arrival he would be in a position to furnish collectors with some rare stamps.

Just nine days later a letter reached Hafez stating that the luggage had arrived, and very soon afterward the Afghan stamps were in the market.

Of course they were bogus, which fact was soon discovered, thanks to the shrewdness of an English gentleman residing in Paris, who, knowing that it was impossible for a vessel to come from the Persian Gulf to Marseilles in nine days, made a close study of one of the stamps. He got Hafez to write for him the address of the Postmaster-General of Cabul, and this address was made in characters that neither Dgemel ed Din, "the learned Afghan," nor any Arab, Egyptian or other Oriental in this city could read. They all said that not a single postmaster in Afghanistan would be able to do so either. Moreover, some of the stamps were obliterated in red ink, and the postmark was almost as visible on the back as it was on the front of the envelope. Now, as a matter of fact, postage stamps in Afghanistan are not sold to the public as in Europe; it is the invariable rule for the natives to take their letters to the office and money with them to pay the postage; the stamp seller takes both letter and money, and having first torn off a piece of the stamp, sticks it on the envelope and the operation is ended. This method, known to the Paris collectors, was overlooked by Hafez Hamed and his accomplices, hence the forgery was soon discovered and Hafez had to seek refuge in flight.

It is astonishing what a number of stamp collectors there are in the world. It is a passion which did not come into fashion until 1861, but since that year it has spread everywhere. Twenty years ago the divers stamps to be obtained did not exceed five hundred. Nowadays some albums contain at least three thousand. In the Berlin museum there are four thousand five hundred specimens, so it is said, of which two thousand four hundred and sixty are European and one thousand one hundred and forty-seven American. The rarest English stamps among those actually issued are the black penny with the obliterating mark in red ink, and the postal envelopes with pictorial borders, black for the penny and blue for the twopenny ones.

When Marshal MacMahon was President of France his wife was very anxious to see his image set in stamps, and some such designs were prepared, but the postal commission rejected them, and adopted the present design. There are collectors who believe that some of these MacMahon stamps got into circulation; hence they are supposed to be without price, as valuable, in fact, as one or two "Victoria and Albert" penny stamps, which some people also confidently believe were not destroyed, although never officially issued.

There exists in Paris a regular market or exchange for old stamps. As most people perhaps know, it is held every Sunday afternoon in the Avenue Gabriel, and is attended by two hundred or three hundred persons of all ages and social standings. Among the number can be regularly seen such famous collectors as Dr. Legrande, M. Campbell, M. de Ferraci, son of the Duchess of Galliera, the Baron Arthur de Rothschild, Mr. T. Tapling, M. Castle and M. Marco del Point.

A journal devoted exclusively to the interest of stamp collectors makes its appearance in this city once every month, and there are others printed in Berlin and Vienna. One of the members of the Paris exchange, an English gentleman, has a collection of two thousand five hundred postal cards, which is valued at upwards of fifty thousand francs. There are collections at Paris which cost their owners thousands of pounds, and which include stamps valued at one thousand five hundred francs. One amateur is now on his way to Europe from Australia who is said to have the best private collection in existence.—*Paris News.*

This in New England.

For the credit of New England it is to be hoped that Rhode Island law does not often lend itself to the perpetration of such cold-blooded, inhuman cruelty as, according to the Providence *Journal*, hastened the death of Peter McGrail. Peter, the *Journal* tells us, was sued for two debts. The larger one he declared he did not owe either legally or morally, and there was no proof in any case that he had been guilty of intentional fraud toward his alleged creditor. But judgments were obtained against him. A justice of the peace refused to let him take the poor debtor's oath. Rhode Island law, it seems, permits creditors to lock up men in state prison indefinitely under these circumstances, provided they pay their board. Peter's creditors availed themselves of their privilege. He was locked up last summer. He was then well along in consumption. The prison officers knew it; other people knew it; if the creditors did not know it, it was because they did not care to inform themselves. The air of a cell does not agree with the lungs of consumptives: Peter grew steadily worse. But he was long a-dying, and this spring the General Assembly, his case being brought to its notice, passed a special act directing that he should be allowed to take the poor debtor's oath and go free. The humane interference came too late. Peter died the other day in the prison hospital. "His suffering," remarks the *Journal*, "did not coin his blood into cash, and the only satisfaction his creditors could have had must have been in weighing his dying struggles against the amount of their judgments." To readers who are not Rhode Islanders it would seem that a law under which such cruelty not only can be perpetrated but has been perpetrated should be modified in the interest of common humanity—to say nothing of Christian and Yankee civilization. But it might be well, before offering advice as to the removal of the mote from our neighbor's eye, to make quite sure that there is no beam calling for surgery in our own.—*Hartford Courant.*

"All people," says an exchange, "have not learned the art of leaving a room in an appropriate manner." The trouble, we think, arises from the custom so common anong fathers of wearing heavy shoes. *Boston Post.*

OF GENERAL INTEREST.

—An Indian cartar, about eight inches in diameter and five inches deep, has been taken from the top of a large bowlder, just north of Mansfield, Conn.

—Thomas Murray dropped his cigar while smoking in his bed-room in New York. It fell on a powder flask, and the explosion blew his right hand off.

—A spring of blood-red water, smelling like creosote and having a very pungent taste, has been discovered in a mine near Virginia, Nev.—*Denver Tribune.*

—Woodstock, Ulster County, N. Y., has a snow-ball quilt which is a curiosity. It consists of 7,650 pieces, and is the handiwork of a young lady named Miss I. Shultis.

—A Chambersburg (Pa.) florist has a rosebush from which, during the last three years, over ten thousand buds were plucked, which sold for fifteen dollars a hundred.

—Business is pretty poor in the diamond fields of South Africa. A man who refused $1,500,000 for his claim two years ago would be willing to sell it now for five dollars.

—An exchange says: "John Glasscock was run over by a train near Jones Junction yesterday, and being deaf he was killed." We presume that men who are not deaf can be run over without being killed.—*N. Y. Graphic.*

—A Mormon missionary has been arrested in Vienna and sentenced to a month's imprisonment. He tried to propagate the Mormon faith, and baptized a man and woman in the Danube canal in such cold weather that the man took to flight and the woman fainted.

—In the days when branding was a punishment for crime in England, murderers were stamped with an M, makers of frays with an F, and vagabonds with a V. The left cheek near the nose was the place selected for marking, by an act passed in the time of William and Mary.

—A seven-year-old son of Robert Tappinder, of Kingston, N. Y., left his bed in the night and wandered over fields and fences in his night dress, a long distance from home, recently. He says that when he first awoke he found that he had just fallen from a fence.—*Albany Journal.*

—Some packers at Annapolis, Md., are investing very extensively in the cultivation of oysters. Many acres of ground in the Severn River were being covered with old shells to receive the spat as it floats in the water, and large and permanent plantations are expected to be established.

—Camels utterly wild may be seen on the desert lands at the head of the Gulf of California, where they find a congenial home and multiply steadily. These are a remnant of a head which many years ago was imported by the Government to act as beasts of burden for the army in New Mexico and Arizona.—*San Francisco Call.*

—London *Truth* finds the following in the *Scots Magazine*, March, 1755: "There was lately presented to the Empress of Russia a laboring man who had two wives, the first of whom brought him four times four children at a birth, seven times three, and ten times two. The second wife once brought forth three children, and the other six times two. The whole number of children by the two wives amounts to seventy-two."

—A Boston boy, twelve years old, was arrested in Portland, Me., the other day, and in his pockets were found a quantity of cheap pamphlets containing Indian stories about "One-Eyed Dick, the Giant Scout," etc.; a revolver, a bag of cartridges, two brass watch chains, a cheap nickel-plated watch, worth, perhaps, two dollars; a toy pistol, two old jack-knives, a quantity of strings, a piece of leather, a strip of calf-skin with the hair on it, a button or two, a ragged handkerchief, several pieces of woolen cloth, some candy, a lot of dirty, broken lozenges, half a dozen filthy raisins, and a handful of fine dirt.—*Boston Transcript.*

—The Chicago *Times* publishes the following: "A man in Wilcox County, Ala., has a remarkable tree growing in his yard. It is of the China species, is ten feet in circumference, and its top has been blown away by a storm, but six and one-half feet up the trunk of this tree two more China trees have sprouted, taken root, and grown up as high as the old tree is; and just half a foot further up the trunk of the old original tree a peach tree has taken root, grown up to fair dimensions, and is now filled with fruit. At another place there is a blackberry vine and also an elm bush, all in a flourishing condition."

—A negro recently passed through our county, says the Piedmont (Ga.) *Press*, representing himself as the second Christ; that he came to atone for the sins of the colored race as the first Christ came to atone for the sins of the white people. He claimed to be the identical Christ that was crucified by the Jews, and showed scars in the palms of his hands and soles of his feet where he was nailed on the cross, and the hole in his side which was pierced by the soldier. He created a great deal of excitement wherever he stopped; had crowds of people both white and colored, to visit him. He is very intelligent, had an enticing way, and will no doubt make an easy dupe of the credulous negro. At each place where he is known to have stopped the negroes fell down and worshipped him, placing implicit confidence in the words of the daring imposter.

Shoe Making by Machinery.

The *Shoe and Leather Reporter* justly remarks that the introduction of labor-saving machinery has been the most potent cause of the changes that have been wrought in the shoe manufacture within a decade. The genius of inventors has devised implements for doing pretty much all the work that is required from the cutting to the finishing of a shoe, and doing it so neatly that the inexperienced cannot distinguish hand-work from machine-work, and the experienced know perfectly well that the latter is for all practical purposes as good as the former. The instruments first contrived for sewing leather were crude and imperfect; there were so many little defects about them that they were not regarded with favor, and did not do satisfactory service. But by degrees the faults have been so completely remedied that they do their work admirably, until now three-quarters of the handsomest shoes sold in the country are put together by machinery. In the factories the hands are distributed into "teams," each team constructing a particular part of a shoe, many men contributing in their several ways to its configuration. Of course the closest attention has to be given to all the details; it is essential that the materials should be selected with discriminating judgment; that the cutting should be so skillfully done that there may be no waste of stock on the one hand, and no inferior material used on the other.

—"Mr. Dupree," asked the little ten-year-old, after the big sister's beau had taken his seat, "won't you let pa hit your breath just for fun?" "Why certainly, my little man; but why do you ask such a question?" "'Kause he said this morning that he could hit your breath any time and knock a quart of whisky out of it; I think it would be so funny to see anything knocked out of a man's breath, don't you?" Dupree didn't stop to reply.—*Atlanta Constitution.*

—The most important lesson of morality is this: Never do an injury to any one.

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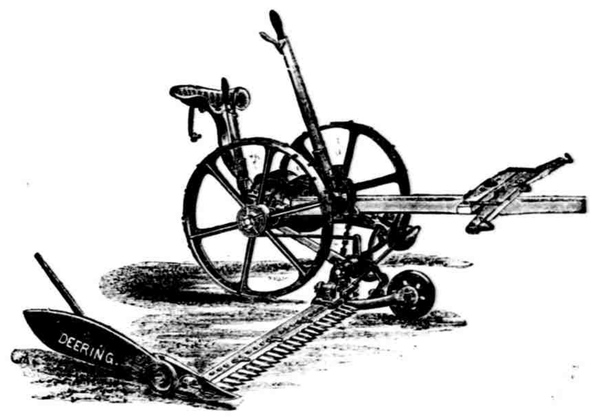

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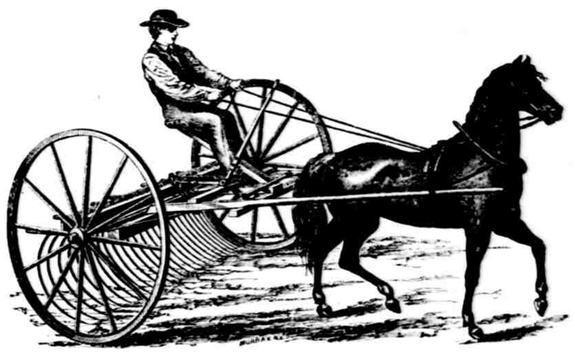

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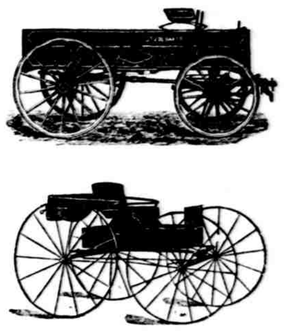

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