

form. The Jews were equally considerate of their deity, and put bells on the skirts of the robe that the high priest wore when he entered the holy of holies; this, it is explained, was to avoid surprises. When they came in captivity to Babylon, they found the inhabitants of that city adoring with a whole band; the orchestration has even come down to us; the Babylonians, in worshipping a certain golden image, performed upon the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery and dulcimer, and the result must have been very gratifying to the indwelling spirit. In the Roman Catholic church today a bell is sounded when the officiating priest holds up the host, or consecrated wafer, in view of the congregation.

The rattling and bumping that proceed from the sacred inclosure of the Indian medicine tent, and the discords that the Chinese laundryman plucks from his long-tailed banjo before the gaudy god who is never missing from his wall, are similar manifestations with which most of us are familiar.

The explanation of so wide-spread a custom must manifestly be purely a matter of theory. To account for these phenomena is the province of students of primitive man. Many of them have set their hand to it, but nobody knows much the more. One view of the matter is, that bells are rung to frighten away harmful spirits at critical times: it has been found to help in cases of eclipse of the sun; and the church-bell is still tolled in eastern towns immediately after a death, and also during an interment. Another is that bells are purely instruments of worship; attention is called to the form of a bell, which resembles the pyramids of Egypt, and also the flame of fire, the purifying and life-giving element, which must have received man's grateful adoration while he was yet a very humble biped (or quadruman) indeed.

It is a matter that has many ramifications, and altogether it is a very deep subject.

BIG MAJORITIES. Nothing is more demoralizing to a political organization, county or state, than the established fact that a nomination at its hands is equivalent to an election. And nothing is more disastrous to a county or to a state than to have such an overwhelming majority obtain in any political organization within its borders. Whenever such a condition exists and the dominating party brags that it can "elect a yellow dog" to office over the best type of citizenship that its adversaries can nominate the people are in danger of a canine administration of affairs.

This has been proved by democrats in Douglas county and by republicans in the state at large. The yellow dog candidate has frequently succeeded in each and not a small sum has been lost in

each because of such success which was only possible by a party ascendancy that made a nomination equivalent to an election.

Branding a citizen democrat, republican or populist does not impair personal character for ability and honesty, nor does it improve it, nor change it in the slightest degree. But the suspected character, the citizen without much integrity and with the least real regard for the public weal, generally, if he seeks office, joins with great enthusiasm, and much expression of fervid zeal and ardent devotion, the party which has an assured majority. In such an organization he is more likely to get a job of holding office. This has been proved in the political and public life of Douglas county, Lancaster county and the state of Nebraska very clearly a great many times.

Any political party with a big majority—no matter what the best men of the party think, advise or propose—is liable to give its nominations to mere machine office seekers and to thus foist upon the state men who are intellectually and morally incapable of appreciating and properly performing the duties of public servants.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. The message of President McKinley to the fifty-sixth congress of the United States was delivered Monday, December 5, 1898. The document is not marked by any fixed views on the reform of the currency. Upon this vital matter it is luminously inane and unsatisfactory. Every gold standard advocate, from the Atlantic to the Pacific will revel in the force and vigor of President McKinley's statement "*that our domestic paper currency shall be kept safe and yet be so related to the needs of our industries and international commerce as to be adequate and responsive to such needs is a proposition scarcely less important. The subject, in all its parts, is commended to the wise consideration of congress.*"

And the courage with which "in all its parts" this question—without any dictatorial suggestion—is tranquilly submitted "to the wise consideration of congress" makes Dewey, Sampson and Shafter lacking in bravery.

The Scientific American says "the drinking cups of schoolhouses have for a long time been recognized as a means of spreading diphtheria and other contagious diseases. Out of 4183 children excluded from the New York schools, 265 were for ailments liable to be communicated by the use of a common drinking cup, such as diphtheria, scarlet fever, whooping cough and mumps. Of other diseases more or less liable to be spread by the same means were measles, chicken pox and 702 contagious diseases of the eyes.

A REVENUE LAW FOR NEBRASKA. Property owners taxpayers in every precinct, town, city and county of Nebraska should think, and formulate thought in straight American language, upon the vital importance of a more perfect revenue system for this state.

Bankers, merchants, manufacturers, farmers, lawyers and other laborers, should have theories of taxation and advocate them with earnestness, whether good or indifferent, until the present miserable, unjust, incomplete and inefficient laws for levying and collecting taxes shall have been repealed, and a truthful, equitable and efficient revenue system instituted in their stead.

Public meetings for the reform of the revenue laws of Nebraska might possibly result in judicious and intelligent legislation upon this very vital subject, if held soon in Omaha, Lincoln, Beatrice, Fremont, Hastings, Nebraska City and other populational and industrial centers.

OVERFLOWING CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION. From reading expansion, island-absorbing and continent-annexing organs of McKinleyism, one must conclude that, notwithstanding negro slaughtering in the Carolinas and negro banishment from Illinois, that the United States is so chock full of Christian civilization and piety that it slops over.

We have too much goodness for "the home market." We are too civilized for our own health. We are too Christianized to live in isolation. Per capita piety is too high.

We must have islands and islands, in both the Pacific and the Atlantic, over which our Christian civilization, with its senators like Quay of Pennsylvania, its governors like Tanner of Illinois, and a few state treasurers like Bartley of Nebraska may pour an inundation of political and social beatitudes until those bestial savages of the Philippines are up to their chins in civilization and Christianity.

NEW TEXTILE SUBSTANCE. There will shortly arrive in England from Assam a trial shipment of a new fibre for textile purposes. The rough outer covering of the pineapple is the raw material from which the new fibre is made. A sample of it was recently submitted to the Imperial Institute authorities, who advised an Assam planter to make a trial shipment of several tons. The new material will have important commercial uses. It is very like flax, and may supplant other materials in the manufacture of twine, while it can be softened so as to be available for fabrics. Its estimated value is from £20 to £25 a ton, so that a paying industry will probably be developed in connection with it. —Westminster Gazette, November 10.