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Xmas Present

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NOTE AND COMMENT

The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway company, on its Lake Superior branch, has broken all records in alphabet making, the letters stretching along a line of stations for a distance of no less than 177 miles. The company began alphabet making on the main line between Winnipeg and Wainwright, and has improved on the idea. The Montreal Herald says:

There is an impression that the region is desolate, but as a matter of fact there is considerable traffic to the lumber camps and mines, and the company has already a good deal in sight that had been preparing for the opening day. The line runs alphabetically from Alba to Zara, and has exhausted the alphabet in 177 miles. The Canadian Pacific and other roads have been notified to receive freight billed to any points on the branch. The section of the National Transcontinental between Lake Superior Junction and Winnipeg is expected to be ready for opening next fall. The government contractors are pushing ahead between Winnipeg and Wainwright. An improved time table on the Grand Trunk Pacific comes into force at the end of the present month. It provides for a fast service. The needs of the settlers required it, and the management responded. There will be a stop overnight on the divisional points as at present. The Canadian express have cars running on every train and offices at every station. Here is the schedule with mileage: Westfort, Fort Willian, 0.0; C.P.R. crossing, 0.6; Albe, 7.4; Baird, 13.21; Crest, 20.90; Dona, 26.42; Ellis, 32.83; Flett, 38.82; Griff, 45.72; Horne, 51.05; Dexter, 56.94; Linke, 62.34; Jakes, 67.83; Knowlton, 99.57; Oscar, 107.31; Petry, 114.34; Quorn, 121.99; Reba, 127.07; Snowdon, 134.45; Tanain, 139.14; Unaka, 145.28; Valora, 151.72; Weke, 160.26; Hunt, 166.60; Yonde, 170.80; Larn, 178.05; Alcona, 185.23; Superior Junction, 188.77.

The Montreal Witness, in a recent issue, had the following respecting the possibilities of the pulp industry, which will appeal with a special interest to the people of British Columbia:

That the Pacific coast has great possibilities in the line of pulp manufacture is borne out by a reference to what is being done in other parts of the world. The Kankanne, Wisconsin, Times, in discussing the pulp industry, says that "nearly $2,000,000 worth of pulpwood has been distributed among the mills from the railway yards there since the first of the year, only a small portion of it going to the mills at Combined Locks, Little Chute, Kimberley and Appleton. The total number of cords of spruce received here since the first of January is 112,000, which costs on an average laid down here $11 per cord. The spruce shipments alone consequently amount to $1,225,000. During the same time the receipts of hemlock amounted to 65,000 cords. This wood is less expensive, but at the same time represents over half a million dollars. It required between 14,000 and 15,000 cars to handle the wood. The wood is shipped here from the northern part of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, and large quantities are also received from Canada. Most of the Canadian wood is not included in the above amount. The shipments by water are made direct to the mills and amount to thousands of cords, the exact figures not being known. The shipping season closed last week, all the mills being overstocked." When the cost of $11 per cord for wood is compared with the price at which it can be laid down to the mills here and it is further taken into consideration that the rate of 71 cents on paper is charged to the coast it can be seen that in so far as the local markets are concerned and the Oriental trade there is a splendid opening for pulp works on the British Columbia coast.

The Rossland Miner sees signs multiplying that British Columbia is at last coming into her own and cites reasons in support of this belief that will be generally accepted as most convincing. Says the Miner:

British Columbia is rapidly coming into her own and many straws show that it will not be long before the large golden stream of grain grown on the prairies instead of all flowing toward the east will be divided and a considerable portion of it will come west. Grain, like every other commodity, moves along the line of least resistance and if some of it can be shipped to Europe cheaper by way of the west coast and Cape Horn it will go that way. It is claimed that this can be done on grain grown on that portion of the prairies that is situate closest to the Rocky mountains. The Canadian Pacific has been engaged for a considerable time and at a large cost in boring two large tunnels and making approaches to them for the purpose of lessening the gradients in the Rocky mountains. This is believed to be preliminary to hauling grain from the prairie provinces to its Pacific coast terminals for shipment to Great Britain, China and elsewhere. The Calgary Board of Trade, it is announced, will shortly take up the question of the shipment of grain from Alberta to Liverpool by way of Vancouver and Cape Horn. The Grand Trunk Pacific railway is being constructed through the prairies and in time will be in a position to carry grain from the north-western provinces to its Pacific coast terminal at Prince Rupert. All of these facts point unerringly to the fact that it will not be long before iron wind jammers and tramp steamers will be loading wheat at the British Columbia coast terminals for Europe and other points. When the Pacific coast terminal towns become wheat shippers the number of flouring mills will increase and breadstuffs in large quantities will be made for consumption at home and abroad in the Orient and elsewhere. This will add greatly to the importnce of Vancouver, Victoria, Prince Rupert and other centres located on the water along the coastal line of this great province.

When the Almanac Originated.

The origin of the word "almanac" is derived from the Arabic words aland manah— to count—and thus aptly applies to the measurement of time. Almanacs in ancient days were employed by the Alexandrian Greeks, but it is uncertain when they were actually introduced into Europe. In 1150 A. D. Solomon Jarchus published an almanac, but the first printed one was brought out in Vienna in 1457 by the great astronomer Purbach. The most celebrated almanac maker was the dabbler in magic, Nostradamus and since his time almanacs with predictions have been in vogue, and their weather lore and pictorial prophecies have invariably appealed to a large number of people who are apt to put unswerving belief in the cryptic remarks of Zadski and Old Moore.

Calgary, Dec. 4.—The local board of trade is in receipt of a letter from Mountain Lumbermen's association, of Nelson, B.C. The Association is taking up the matter of holding a lumbermen's convention in Calgary in February next.

ABOUT PEOPLE

An interesting parallel in the peerage of Scotland to the Barony of Fairfax, the claim to which has just been decided, is the Newburgh Earldom, the holders of which have for more than a century been Italian nobles. In 1757 Cecilia, granddaughter of Charlotte Maria, Countess of Newburgh, became the wife of Benedict, Prince Giustimani, and in 1793 her son Vincent became de jure the sixth Earl, although he did not claim the title. Since that time the Scottish peerage, which was confirmed by the House of Lords to Vincent's daughter, has been distinctly foreign and quite dissociated from this countrty. On the death of the third Baron Gardner the claimant to the title was one Alan Hyde Gardner, the son of a Mahometan princess and the husband of an Indian wife.

Big Ben has been stopped three times by snow freezing on the hands and jamming them.: A curious episode in its history took place in December 1861 just before the Prince Consort died, when, owing to the failure of an experimental piece of apparatus, the clock struck a hundred or more strokes without stopping. People who were unaware of the cause saw, according to the "Captain," in the occurrence an omen of the great loss which shortly afterwards befel the nation. Another sensational prank was played by the clock on April 9, 1886, when it stopped while Mr. Gladstone was making his famous speech in favor of Home Rule for Ireland. This was taken by some as an augury that the Bill would not pass, and as regards the event the prophets were justified, though the cause of the trouble was easily traced to a want of lubrication.—Belfast Whig.

The French Government have taken in hand the restoration of the tapestries of La Chaisse Dieu in Puy, the chief town of Haute Loire, and other ancient works in this picturesque city which have not been able to resist the ravages of time are also being overhauled. The Chaisse Dieu is the abbey in which the celebrated Cardinal Rohan took up his residence when in exile. Puy is noted for its ancient Cathedral from the sixth to the twelfth centuries, its manuscript Bible of the ninth century, and its colossal statue of the Virgin on Mont Cornaille, standing nearly 90 ft. in height, made from cannon taken at Sebastopol but it is with Rohan, l'affaire du Collier, and its laces that Puy is best known.

A curious club has been formed in New York—or at least a contemporary so informs its readers. It is known as the "500 lb Club," and its members consist of heavyweights. The president turns the scales, it is said, at 500 pounds. The statutes enact that honorary members are admitted if they weigh 450 lb, and on attaining 500 lb they become life members—that is, "ad vitam aut culpam," the "culpam" consisting of falling below 500 lb. If the diminution of weight continue the member may have to withdraw, but the five-hundred-pounder, should he put on flesh, would be entitled to special consideration should he fall upon evil days, and sink below the statutory weight, which, by the way, is about two-thirds that attained by Daniel Lambert.

There seems to be a busy time among the fakers of celebrated masters just now in Paris, and actions are frequent by amateur connoisseurs to recover sums which they have been invegled to part with. The picture faker does not only deal with dead masters, but he is daring enough to fabricate the works of living artists. The courts just now are investigating the claims of a collector for the return of a large sum for a picture said to be by Claude Manet. The artist being in Venice, the picture was submitted to him, and he declared that it was not his work, although the signature was perfect. Another action pending concerning a picture alleged to be by Charles Jacque, the pastoral painter, which had been sold for £680.

There is a touch of irony, says the Pall Mall Gazette, in the prohibitive duty which the Government has placed on flint-lock guns imported into Nigeria, a move which has caused the Birmingham gunmakers to declare once again that their trade is being ruined. Years ago, when the percussion cap was introduced, these enterprising Midland gentlemen shipped off to Africa all their stock of flint-locks which were unsaleable in this country. They taught the black man (who was their brother) what a superior weapon lay ready to his hand but apparently he has learned the lesson too thoroughly. By the way, one might ask how the Nigerian decision will affect the flint trade of Brandon, where the industry has been carried on from prehistoric times.

Diaz, Nation Builder.

Though Mexico holds her next presidential election in 1910, the movement is already on foot to induce President Diaz to extend his service for another six years, though he has said that thirty years in office are enough for him, and that he would decline a re-nomination this time. What would happen—or what will happen—to Mexico when Diaz is replaced by another president is one of the political puzzles of the time. Forecasts and prophecies are hazardous. There is no precedent form which to judge. There is no parallel. Diaz has made the modern Mexico, and he has done exceedingly well. His nation has prospered and law and justice have gained impressive force under his intelligent and honest direction. But if he has built a nation in the true sense his departure from office will not jeopardize that nation. It is the real test of the nation builder so to construct that when his personal influence and direction are removed the structure will stand firm. Time will tell if Diaz has so built. His best friends think he has.—Boston Advertiser.

From Plain Smith to a Peerage.

Lord Carrington, a popular member of the present British Ministry, owes his title to an accident which happened to one of his ancestors. In 1769 Robert Smith, the banker and founder of the family, had a house which fronted on the Green Park, which park of course, was the property of the Greens. Mr. Smith sought a right of these to the park from his house. The request was duly conveyed to King George III., who replied: "I cannot grant him this privilege, but I will make him an Irish peer if he likes." This alternative was accepted and the great family of Smith was thus enrolled in the peerage.

Miss Dubley—She was bragging about how successful her dinner party was. She said it wound up "with great eclaw." What's "eclaw" anyway?

Miss Mugley—Why, I guess that was the dessert. Didn't you never eat a chocolate eclaw?

BRITISH OPINION

Those who followed the licensing bill through committee know that—in the words of Mr. Salter—it consists of thin layers which have been discussed and thick layers of which no detailed examination has been made. The major portion of the bill, indeed, has passed through committee unchanged except for government amendments, on which no discussion has been possible. The minor portion, says the Morning Post, which has been discussed has received, on the other hand, such a bewildering load of amendments and re-amendments that nobody, least of all the government themselves, seems to have an inkling as to what will be the practical effect of many of the provisions. It is this vagueness as to its outcome, this shirking of the true issues, which is the most serious objection to the government conduct of of bill. Whatever sympathy we may have with the proposal for a time limit, it is impossible to support a measure which is so drafted and amended that at the present moment nobody can say what will be the position when the time limit expires. It is only too evident that the consequences of the bill have not been adequately thought out. As things stand at present the government are attempting to institute a complete revolution in a particular trade without having more than the vaguest idea as to what will happen afterwards. It would certainly be a gross neglect of duty were the peers to allow the bill to become law while its provisions remain even substantantially as they are at present. It is an open secret that many supporters of the government would rather see the bill rejected at the hands of the Lords than be called upon to bear the onus of what in its present form they know to be an unpopular measure.

The Standard says:—The Prime Minister, in moving the third reading of the licensing bill dealt with the criticisms of the Opposition by his customary method. It consists in avoiding the point at issue by inquiring why his critics had or had not done that to which they objected when they were in a majority, and also in assuming that because a certain arrangement is justifiable under one set of circumstances it must necessarily be justifiable for all time under any conceivable whatsoever. Mr. Asquith's arguments may be very good sophistry, but they are disastrous statesmanship. Mr. Salter, in moving the rejection of the bill, rightly described it as unjust, dishonest, and an interference with reasonable liberty, and Mr. Bonar Law, in a speech of singular clarity, laid bare the defects of the measure in a way which must have made many of its supporters extremely uncomfortable. Amid the inchoate mass of rigmarole clauses, obscure sub-sections, unintelligible amendments, incomprehensible definitions and undiscussed schedules, huddled through the House with an unprecedented disregard of the dignity and convenience of parliament, one principle is at least unmistakable—it is the principle of confiscation.

No doubt, says the Daily News, the vast body of its supporters welcome the bill first and foremost as a temperance measure, and it is for its effect upon our national drunkenness rather than our finances that they applaud the government, which has courageously launched such a measure against well-organised and powerful interests. The question now is by what weapons these powerful interests will seek to protect themselves, and how far they can be successful against the progress of the country. Naturally their hope lies in the House of Lords, for the hope of all reactionary, predatory and unpopular interests lies there. And we all know their confidence is only too well justified. What line the attack in the Lords will take is still uncertain. We must wait till next Tuesday's meeting in Lansdowne House before we can be sure of that. We do not question that there are amendments which may be accepted, and may prove to be even necessary. Provided the essential points of the bill are not thrown out, there are clauses that might be altered or removed, and still leave it worth the passing. We need not say that we should welcome the Lords' decision to accept the second reading. It would at all events be a proof that our country is not yet absolutely subject to a clique of titled people, led by a big financier.

The Morning Post says:—Mr. Balfour at Cardiff laid the greatest stress on the continuity of the foreign policy of Great Britain, irrespective of the party leanings of the government at any particular moment in office. Speaking for the Opposition, he said: "In no case shall we aim at any party advantage to the discomfiture of the national policy," and he went on to express his trust in the sincerity of the Prime Minister's expressions of the government's purpose to maintain the sea power of Great Britain. Mr. Balfour's attitude towards the national policy of the government was paralleled by that of Mr. Walter Long's admirable speech delivered yesterday evening at Newport. Thus it has come to be recognised almost as an axiom that questions of Great Britain's external policy, of her relations with other Powers, and of her means of defence are national questions in regard to which the distinction of parties is obliterated. This is a consummation which has long been desired, and many efforts have been devoted to its attainment. It may encourage some of our countrymen to observe that those efforts have not been altogether fruitless, and to note that as a result of them there is at this moment a unity of purpose in regard to national affairs such as we hardly hoped for, except by very few, some twelve or fifteen years ago.

The Skyscraper an American Type.

Whether the American city has been justified in permitting the skyscraper to flourish, or whether the American investor in the end will find the lofty tower and the huge office building a useful and profitable investment, time only can tell, but that the American architect and engineer have been able to meet the opportunity which has given rise to these structures admits of no discussion. Not only has a type of building based on pure utility and special conditions been evolved, but an artistic design and treatment have resulted that today justly earn the admiration of European cities. And in actual construction no less than in design have American ingenuity and engineering skill been manifest. Structural materials—especially steel, terra cotta and concrete—have been improved and their use has been developed along scientific lines, so that the construction of a modern skeleton building with due regard to all elements of safety can be carried on with a skill and certainty not excelled in any form of structural engineering. And with the experience of large fires and an earthquake to test his work, the engineer of the modern skyscraper surely can say that he, like his building, stands on a firm and safe foundation.—Reviews of Reviews.

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ROMANCE IN ADOPTION OF POOR ORPHANS

Wealthy But Childless Couple Adopt Charges at Marylebone

London, Nov. 30.—A real life romance by which two foundlings have been taken from the workhouse to a mansion, was brought to light at a meeting of the Marylebone Board of Guardians last month. About three weeks ago a letter was received by the workhouse committee. It was evident that the mother was a cultivated and wealthy woman.

"We have no children," said the writer in effect, "and we are anxious to adopt a baby boy and girl. Have you any foundings in your workhouse?"

In reply to a letter the writer called. She was a handsome and fashionably dressed woman. She was taken to the children's ward, and show two little foundlings. The babies are about fifteen months old, and they have been in the workhouse over a year. They are plump, pretty children, extremely healthy, and well nourished.

"How sweet they are!" said the woman, fondling the babies. "What are their names?"

"William Seymour and Mary Oxford," was the answer, but the explanation of these aristocratic names was a little grotesque. They were called after the streets in which they were found abandoned—Seymour street and Oxford street.

"Ah, we shall have to change them!" the woman said. She was prepared to take them away then and there, but was pointed out to her that there were certain legal formalities to be complied with.

Mrs. Barclay, a member of the committee, paid a visit to Kent, where is the country seat of the couple who wish to adopt the children, and interviewed them. Both made a stipulation that their name should not be divulged. They offer to enter into a bond for the care, maintenance, and education of the children. The place in Kent is a spacious mansion, standing in a park and in addition to this the couple have a large town house in the West End.

"The children shall be as our children," they said. "We shall make them our heir and heiress, and they shall inherit all our property."

Mrs. Barclay made her report to the workhouse commitee and the board of guardians agreed to the proposal. The deed was drawn up while the babies' adoptive mother was waiting impatiently in an adjoining room. The foundlings were dressed in rich clothes, and later were taken away to their new home.

CHICAGO TACKLES DIVORCE.

Action Taken for Legislation to Prevent Growth of Present Evil.

Matrimony and divorce are to be the subjects of discussion by the Chicago city council on Monday night. Unless the plans of Alderman Fred. A. Brittain, of the twenty-third ward, go astray, a start will be made toward procuring state legislation that will prevent a quick divorce being secured by warring couples.

As soon as the council has dealt with the ordinance forbidding matrimonial agencies, which has been recommended for passage by the judiciary committee, Alderman Brittain will introduce an ordinance directing the legistative committee of the council to prepare a bill obstructing divorce, for presentation to the state legislature. The principal points of the bill, which is being drafted by Assistant Corporation Counsel Howard Haynes, are to be as follows:

1. It shall be unlawful to file a bill setting forth the causes for asking a divorce until a year after a simple plea for divorce without particularization has been filed. This is intended to make it impossible to have a hearing in divorce cases for at least a year after the original bill.

2. It shall be a felony for any person to go to another state and obtain a divorce without residing in the other state at least a year previous to the granting of the decree.

It is probable that the Rev. Father Benno Schrum, of St. Michael's German Roman Catholic church will aid Alderman Brittain in the presentation of arguments in favor of the novel order.—New York Tribune.

REPAIR JOBS LOST TO LOCAL YARDS

Little Government Vessels Occupied Drydock and Work Went to Puget Sound Shipyards

The shipbuilding firms of Victoria have been handicapped this autumn by the drydock being occupied by government vessels, little craft which could easily be picked up on the smallest of marine ways. The hydrographic steamer Lillooet is now in the drydock at Esquimalt, and as a result a repair job which would have occupied nine or ten days has been lost to this city. A telegram received from the owners of a 4,000 ton steamer now on the Sound asking it repairs could be effected here was answered with the information that the Lillooet was in the drydock, and would be there for four days. The shipowner could not wait, and the work went to a Tacoma shipyard in consequence. When the Algeria was in the drydock some weeks ago undergoing repairs, four jobs are reported to have been lost to this port owing to the drydock being occupied.

UNIQUE PROPELLER IS FOUND SUCCESSFUL

Kosmos Liner Mera Made Fast Time With the Nekke Screw Invented By Duke of Oldenberg

The German steamer Mera, Captain Jurgenson, of the Kosmos line, now loading for the west coast and Hamburg at Tacoma, is equipped with a unique propeller, in fact, the only one of its kind in use on the steamers of the fleet. It is a radical departure from the usual propeller and has been used with great success on the Mera.

It will be remembered when the Mera was on Puget Sound last, which was in August, 1907, she was testing a new propeller, the invention of the Duke of Oldenberg, which had added a knot an hour to her speed. This record has been maintained, and, according to Captain Jurgenson, a great difference in the speed of the vessel has been noted, particularly in smooth weather.

The invention of the Duke of Oldenberg is called the Nekke propeller and was first tried on the handsome private yacht owned by the duke. Later one was installed on a North German Lloyd liner and then on the Mera. It has four large blades, the same as the usual propeller, but they are set one behind the other instead of extending from exactly the same center point as on the usual propeller, though, of course, at right angles. Naturally the propeller constructed in this way requires a larger or rather a wider space in which to revolve. It happened that the Mera possessed a wide propeller well and the new wheel was installed on her. The invention has proven a success and, were it not necessary to remodel the present vessels of the fleet in order to use it, it would be installed on the others.

Mile Records on Land.

For convenience in comparing speeds made on land by various vehicles as well as by horses and men the following table of mile records has been prepared by a writer in the Metropolitan Magazine:

Electric locomotive, 27 seconds, 1903.
Automobile, 28 1-2 seconds, 1906.
Steam locomotive 32 seconds, 1893.
Motor paced cycle, 1 minute, 6 1-5 seconds, 1904.
Bicycle unpaced, 1 minute, 49 1-5 seconds, 1904.
Running horse, 1 minute, 35 1-2 seconds, 1890.
Pacing horse, 1 minute, 55 seconds, 1906.
Trotting horse, 1 minute, 58 1-2 seconds, 1905.
Man skating, 2 minutes, 36 seconds, 1896.
Man running, 4 minutes 12 3-4 seconds, 1887.
Man walking, 6 minutes, 23 seconds, 1890.

It will be observed that the difference between the locomotive and the automobile is trifling. For 100 miles the record of the steam locomotive is much better than that of the automobile. However, both the electric locomotive and the auto may be expected to show further improvement as their development is incomplete, while their steam brother has attained about the limit. The horse racing and foot racing records added to the table were all made in recent years. Evidently we breed better and train better than ever before.

The refusal of the House of Commons to adjourn over Derby Day recalls a story related of one of the Roman Catholic peers who took their seats some four or five years before the passage of the first Reform Bill, after an exclusion of a century and a half. He gave notice that on a certain day he would make a certain motion, whereupon there arose from his noble colleagues a general cry of "Derby!" The astonished novice named another day, only to be greeted with equally unanimous expostulation of "Oaks!" At this, he explained that he would have to ask the forgiveness of their lordships, but having been educated abroad, he was forced to acknowledge that he was not familiar with the list of saints' days in the Anglican calendar.

The Vanderbilt Fortune

The Vanderbilt fortune, once the greatest financial power in the United States, probably amounts at the present moment to not far from $300,000,000, writes Burton K. Hendrick, in McClure's Magazine. Of this, William Kissam Vanderbilt, who controls the majority of the family properties, holds in the neighborhood of $100,000,000, while 12 or 15 descendants of the commodore share among themselves the remaining $200,000,000.

Perhaps the most remarkable fact in the whole remarkable career of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt is that he did his really important work and heaped up his enormous fortune after he was 70 years old. He was born in 1794, and almost all his energies, until the outbreak of the American Civil War, had been absorbed in the management of his numerous steamboat and steamship lines.

Cornelius Vanderbilt, when running his steamboats up and down the Hudson river, had felt keenly the competition of the railroad along its eastern shore. Later developments led him clearly to perceive what most of his contemporaries saw only faintly, that transportation in this country would follow the line, not of the canal and the river, but of the steel rail. As soon as he had caught this glimpse of the future, Vanderbilt characteristically acted upon it. Fifty years before, foreseeing the possibilities of steam travel by water, he had sold his whole sailing fleet and bought steamboats; acting just as promptly now, he sold all his water craft and began buying railroads.

A Witty Bishop

Bishop Burgess of the Long Island diocese of the Protestant Episcopal church, is one of the few graduates of the University of Oxford among American clergymen, and so entitled to wear the Oxford hood.

At a service recently, another bishop also an Oxford man, nodded toward the officiating clergyman, and whispered excitedly to Bishop Burgess:

"Why, look, he has got an Oxford hood on!"

"So he has," said Bishop Burgess.

"But he is not entitled to it. He has no Oxford degree. That man is wearing a lie on his back."

"Don't call it a lie," said Bishop Burgess, "call it a false hood."—Short Stories.

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