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THE CHINESE QUESTION

OCCUPYING PUBLIC ATTENTION OF EUROPE AT PRESENT.

The German Government Reticent—It Does Not Know Where It Stands or How Far the Other Powers Will Allow Her to Go—Port Arthur An Expensive Port to Maintain—Japan and Germany to Arrive at an Understanding—Christmas Among the Royalties

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Berlin, December 25.—China has occupied public opinion to the exclusive of everything, throughout the week. The government and the foreign office continue reticent, even the occupation of Port Arthur having failed to elicit any official statements, with the exception of a denial of the extravagant utterances of the Cologne Gazette and other usually inspired papers. The reason for this exceptional taciturnity lies in the simple fact that Germany herself does not know where she stands, or how far the other powers will permit her to go. Germany, Russia and France are still negotiating, and while there is strong pressure to bring about another joint action of these three powers in the far east, equally potent influences are at work to frustrate such plans. It depends largely upon the outcome of these negotiations as to what instructions Prince Henry of Prussia will find awaiting him when he arrives at Hong Kong early in February. In the meanwhile the mission of Prince Henry may be characterized as mainly a display of spread-eaglesism.

A prominent diplomat, in an interview with the correspondent here of The Associated Press said: "Russia's occupation of Port Arthur is permanent. She thereby secures a much desired terminus for the Siberian railroad which will forthwith be extended from Vladivostok to Port Arthur, making Russia the undisputed mistress of Manchuria and the whole of north China. Her interests in China in no way collide with those of France, whose sphere of action is in south China. Between all the schemes she has been preparing for the past two years. Therefore, Germany is the only friend and ally Japan can look for in the coming events. That is, if she knows how to play her cards and establish a basis of mutual interests, which I hear there is considerable prospect."

From a missionary, the correspondent here of the Associated Press fears that the bay of Kiao Chou is by no means so valuable as at first believed. Part of the harbor freezes during three months of winter and ice-breakers are required to keep it open. The hinterland is barren and treeless and the nature of the ground necessitates the erection of costly, large fortifications in order to hold the bay and adjoining territory against attacks. If Germany concludes to retain it she will have to spend large sums of money.

Prince Hohenlohe, the Imperial chancellor, is much distressed at the sudden death of his wife, on Tuesday last. He spent the previous three days at her bedside, without sleep and his octogenarian frame has been greatly enfeebled thereby. His physicians are urgently advising him to retire from public life, at any rate temporarily, but the emperor wishes to keep in office in the present critical times. The remains of the princess will be interred on Sunday in the family vault at Schillingen-forest. The body was consecrated on Friday, in the presence of the ministers, military dignitaries, etc., by the Prince Bishop of Osnabrück, in the conservatory of the chancellor's palace. The empress and the empress of Germany sent floral wreaths.

At the reconvening of the reichstag, the members of the opposition intend to make much of the fact that, according to official figures just obtained, the imperial treasury receipts for the current year show a decrease of 20,000,000 marks. They will point out that, in view of the naval increase and the reorganization of the field artillery the large additional funds needed can only be raised by new taxes, contrary to the promises of the government.

The government will introduce at the reconvening of the Prussian diet on January 11th another anti-Socialistic bill, but not so comprehensive as the one rejected last summer. It will merely apply to private lecturers and universities, who will be brought under government supervision.

The two eldest princes arrived here on Tuesday from Ploen. The Christmas trees and the distribution of gifts were more lavish than ever. This part of the celebration took place in the Shell hall. Most of the gifts were purchased by the empress personally at various Berlin stores. They include hundreds of presents for the servants and court officials.

At a secret session of the municipal council on Tuesday, a new year's address to the emperor was adopted, for the first time in many years. The address deals largely with national politics and is couched in patriotic terms when referring to the naval increase and the recently adopted vigorous foreign policy.

Voluntary collections for naval purposes are taking place at the pupils of many of the public schools.

Influenza in a severe form has been spreading alarmingly in Berlin. There have been thousands of cases, especially in the wealthier districts and the death rate is rapidly increasing.

Negotiations are proceeding in Berlin between Germany and Austria with a view to hold an international conference at Brussels on the subject of the abolition of export bounties. France has intimated her willingness to join in the deliberations.

A ROYAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

AT THE COUNTRY RESIDENCE OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

The Prince and Princess of Wales Purchasing Christmas Presents—House Parties by the British Nobility—Jackson, the Explorer, to Make Another Search for the North Pole—Understanding Between England and Germany as to the Chinese Question.

(Copyright by The Press Association.)
London, December 25.—The temperature is reasonable, the yellow fogs in the middle of the week have given way to comparative brightness. The week has been the coldest of the season, ten to twenty degrees of frost being registered and skating has commenced. All who could do so have gone to the country, where Christmas house parties are more numerous than usual. Of the United States embassy, the United States ambassador, Colonel John Hay, and Mrs. Hay, alone remained in town.

A CHRISTMAS CASUALTY.

Explosion of a Can of Powder at Asheville While Firing a Christmas Salute—Many Persons Injured—An Appalling Scene

Asheville, N. C., December 25.—A crowd of 100 or more men and boys were firing a Christmas salute from an old cannon on the outskirts of the town today, when a can of thirty pounds of powder exploded in the thick of the crowd. Thirty or forty persons were injured, but none, it is believed, fatally. The cannon stands on the crest of a hill just north of the city, overlooking the French Broad river, and has been used for years in celebrating holidays. This forenoon, however, proved immolation for the salute, a party of one hundred set out for the hill. The cannon was loaded and fired several times and then Jos. Finch, an employe of the Southern Railway Company, running on the Asheville and Spartanburg division, picked up the powder can and began to re-load the piece. The gun had not been scrubbed and the moment the tiny stream of powder struck the heated metal, there was a flash and thirty pounds of powder exploded with a report that made the earth tremble. A moment later there was a scene that made sick the hearts of those watching the hill from their homes on the river. In the smoke that followed the explosion they saw human beings run blindly here and there over the hill, falling and rising only to fall again as they frantically rushed about, blinded and powder-burned and madly trying to extinguish their flaming clothes. Those who were unhurt ran to the aid of their unfortunate playfellows, smothering flaming clothing or cutting the garments from their bodies. One man was blown or rolled completely down the high bluff 200 feet nearly to the river.

People in the neighborhood ran to the scene and the work of giving assistance to the injured began. The hill was dotted with blackened, groaning figures, some of whom lay almost perfectly nude. A number of the injured were able to walk from the scene while cots were provided and gentle hands placed the more seriously wounded on them and conveyed them to an old residence near by, which was improvised into a hospital.

Those seriously injured followed: Joseph Finch, Edward Miller, John Ingle, Barton Means, Clarence Ledford, Vernon Sentell, Charles Edwoud, Hay Eaton, Eugene Wynne, D. Bennett, Dexter Aldrich, John Powell, B. L. Gowan, Henry McIntyre, Buck Trivett, Bell Bishop, George Eaton, J. E. Hamilton, James Warren, Frank Pratter. The porch and hall of the house were soon filled with anguished relatives of the injured and the scene was pitiful.

Joseph Finch had his nose and mouth torn out of all shape and he is probably blinded.

Clarence Ledford, who stood near the cannon when the powder ignited, was thrown more than fifty feet. His clothing was torn and burned entirely off and a part of the skin on the forehead burned loose. Several others probably will lose their sight or be disfigured for life.

A Quiet Christmas at the White House

Washington, December 25.—Christmas day A. D., 1897 was the most quiet and peaceful on record at the White house. Owing to the recent bereavement of the president, all official functions were suspended and throughout the day the front doors of the executive mansion rarely swung on their hinges. President and Mrs. McKinley early in the day went for a short drive about the city. The weather was perfect, clear, cloudless and crisp. Early in the morning a messenger arrived with a great basket of pink roses, orchids and lilies of the valley, marked simply "For the President." A little later the president's carriage pulled up at the door and Mrs. McKinley came down stairs leaning on the president's arm. Mrs. McKinley seemed as well as at any time since her arrival at the White house while the president was the picture of health. The only guests in the house were Mrs. Duncan and Miss Barber, who remained at home during the morning. The Christmas dinner was purely a family affair.

Vice president and Mrs. Hobart spent the day at their Paterson, N. J., home. All the members of the cabinet, with the exception of Secretary Bliss, who is in New York and Postmaster Gary, who is in Baltimore, spent the day with their families here.

Strict Inspection of Contract Wheat in Chicago

Chicago, December 25.—A question as to the quality of about 8,000 bushels of wheat in the hold of the steamer Iron King, belonging to the Seaverns Company and which they tendered to the Leiter clique as contract grade has developed the fact that the bull crowd is insisting on the strictest inspection of all wheat tendered for December deliveries. When this wheat was first tendered it was refused by Leiter, who claimed it was not of the contract quality. In this he was backed up by the board of appeals. Later, however, the board reversed its decision. The Leiter people refused flatly to bow to the new decision of the appeals board, and now it is said the case will be taken to the board of trade directory or to the courts.

CHRISTMAS AT RALEIGH.

BUSINESS SUSPENDED AND THE PUBLIC OFFICES CLOSED.

The New Railway Commissioners Sworn In—They Transact No Business—The Governor Telegrams for Adjutant General Cowles—Chief Justice Faircloth Committed for His Stand in the Railway Commissioners Case—Bateheler's Report on the Guarantee Company.

Messenger Bureau,
Raleigh, N. C., December 25.

There was crisp weather here today, with the mercury well down in the 20's. There was almost general suspension of business. The public offices were closed. The national and state flags were displayed on the capitol. There were services at the Episcopal, Catholic and Methodist churches.

At the railway commission office the new commissioners, Pearson and Caldwell, were sworn in this morning. Clerk Brown of the commission arrived this morning. He said "I am just telling these gentlemen that as the supreme court recognized them as commissioners I give them my services. I would have been here yesterday but had a delayed train." Pearson and Caldwell said: "We are doing no business. Nothing of any kind will be done until after the holidays. We will probably go home this evening."

Adjutant General Cowles arrived here today upon a telegram from the governor. It was at the latter's instance that he was appointed receiver of the Piedmont bank at Morganton. The governor's telegram called him here on that business. The governor was very angry because a story got abroad yesterday that Cowles was sent for to protect the new railway commissioners in their office. Cowles said today that he had given the \$20,000 bond and would take charge of the bank next Monday. Certain matters which were obstacles have been removed and it is arranged that the \$57,000 of the bank's collaterals held by other banks shall be turned over to the receiver, to be collected. The amount due other banks is only \$25,000. The saving to depositors will of course be the difference between the two sums, as there will be no forced sale at a sacrifice. Cowles says he will give a \$25,000 bond to the banks to cover the debt.

Railway Commissioner Otho Wilson, arrived this morning. Chairman Wilson who arrived yesterday morning, was here only a few hours. It seems that there are now five commissioners, and will be until January 30th when the United States court hears the matter.

Many compliments are paid Chief Justice Faircloth for the stand he took in the matter of the railway commission. Prominent men say he stood for law and order and for good conservatism.

W. P. Bateheler, who went to Baltimore to examine into the status of the guarantee companies, says that he was told by one company's officials that it cost them over \$2,800 to get into our state. He says in his report to the secretary of state that so far as the bonds of employees, officers, administrators and guardians are concerned, the business is properly guarded, but as to bonds in attachment and those guaranteeing performances of contracts, bonds in injunction cases and other court proceedings there is some doubt and an element of speculation, but the companies say the safeguard is ample.

The secretary of state licenses the Merchants and Manufacturers fire insurance company of Baltimore. He will in a day or two license the Guarantees Finance Company, a new one of Philadelphia, as soon as the appointment of general agent is accepted.

Work here at once on a new ceiling of steel to replace the plastered one in the supreme court room.

It is asserted here that James H. Young, colored, is figuring on a transfer from the state agricultural department to the office of revenue collector here. He is one of Governor's Russell's main supporters.

The farmers are glad to see cold weather, as a great many hogs are to be butchered; the greatest number since the war, it is said.

The supreme court meets again in February, for the spring term.

The superior court declares that the law requiring all practicing physicians and an examination and have license is constitutional and just.

A rumor is current that General Superintendent Green of the Southern railway will resign in January and go to the Seaboard Air Line.

Chairman Wilson of the railway commission telegraphed to Otho Wilson at Washington, D. C.: "Return ye wandering sinner, return."

In the dissenting opinion by Justices Montgomery and Clark in the case against ex-Clerk S. P. Satterfield, the latter is well "roasted" and the charge of fraud is made plain by giving the testimony. The republican judges found for Satterfield, a republican.

A Large Flour Mill Burned

Cleveland, December 25.—A special from Fostoria, Ohio, says: The Harter mill, the largest winter wheat mill in the country, was destroyed by fire last night. The loss is estimated at \$150,000.

A Murder at Dunn

(Correspondence of The Messenger.)
Dunn, U. C., December 25.

A man was murdered here last night. John Campbell, colored, an employe of Mr. King's factory here was found dead this morning from a cut in the back. Tom Adkins, a negro, was arrested for the crime, with strong evidence of foul play.

The murdered man was well thought of by all classes while the accused does not bear a good character. It is supposed jealousy of a woman and whiskey was the cause.

The negroes threatened lynching, but the sheriff and marshal promptly quieted them.

Western Cotton Mills in Eastern Markets

Denver, Colo., December 25.—The Overland cotton mills of this city have carried the war "into the enemy's country" with a vengeance by securing contracts which will place their product in Boston, Mass. They have also secured, in close competition with the eastern manufacturers, the contract for furnishing Claus Spreckles material for sugar bags. This contract alone is sufficient to keep a large mill in almost constant operation.

THE CHICAGO WHEAT MARKET

Chicago, December 25.—The wheat market during the past week, considering the effect of the nearness of the holiday season, was fairly active and in the main strong, may showing an advance of 2½c, while December, notwithstanding the enormous receipts of contract grade wheat and the amount delivered to the bull clique, has fairly well maintained its position, closing but ½c lower. Taken all in all, it was a scalping market throughout. Both the strength and activity were marked during the first part of the week. The Leiter interests were especially active in the buying on Monday when the greatest advance was scored. Persistent rumors that the immense stock of wheat accumulated by their was to be moved away and that contracts for shipment all right to the seaboard had been sent, strengthened the belief that the December deal was to be extended into May. A peculiar feature of the week's trading was the business done in July and September contracts, indicating a tendency on the part of the directors to keep out of May under the present circumstances. The firmness of outside markets and the strength of coarse grains were both sustaining influences. Deliveries of December contract wheat during the week were enormous. They were principally from Armour and nearly all were taken by the Leiter interests. It is believed, however, that a large short interest and the final day of settlement is looked forward to with interest. The stock of contract wheat now here amounts to about 7,200,000 bushels. The range of prices in May was between 94½ and 91½c, the close yesterday being at 91½c.

ment and protesting against the "insultation of bad faith on the part of the United States government, which has been thoughtlessly and unjustifiably made in England" and Japan's withdrawal from the attitude she had assumed in connection with Hawaii as indications of a desire for Anglo-Japanese-American alliance.

The alleged attempt of the Prince of Monaco to "bleed" the Casino Company has led to the publication of a pamphlet by a group of shareholders, full of interesting reading. While everybody is aware that the casino contributed largely to his revenues, few people knew that, besides the subsidy of the prince, the establishment keeps up the judges, police, lighting, water, post-office, clergy, and charitable institutions. An interesting item of last season's expenditures is "press subventions \$25,000."

The pamphlet says that it is absolutely necessary to expend a large sum in securing the good will of the continental press and it is said that over half of the cases of suicides are only bids upon the part of Riviera newspapers for a share of "boodle."

It appears that the Prince of Monaco attended a recent meeting of the shareholders and offered to renew the concession for fifty years, the terms being a gradual increase of his personal subsidy until the sum reaches £100,000 annually, a new port to be built at the cost of £320,000, an opera house to be built, costing £80,000 and various other items making a total of £190,000 additional annually.

Although the prince has signed the new concessions, it remains to be seen whether the forthcoming meeting of the shareholders will approve accepting these exorbitant terms.

Two Fires in Chicago

Chicago, December 25.—Three firemen were injured, one fatally, and two seriously and \$125,000 of damage was done by a fire which broke out this morning in the six-story building, Fifth avenue and Monroe street, occupied by the Knickerbocker Shirt Company, and a number of other concerns.

Chicago, December 25.—For the third time flames this morning destroyed the building of the Quadrangle Club of the University of Chicago. There were seven persons in the building at the time, but escaped. Two of these, however, were more or less hurt.

The janitor and his wife were asleep on the third floor when the fire broke out, and without stopping to dress, they made a rope of their bed clothes, as the escape to the stairway was cut off and lowered themselves safely out of the window. The loss on the building will amount to \$5,000. The Quadrangle club is composed of professors and post-graduate students of the university. The building was owned by the institution and the loss will fall on that institution.

Fatal Railway Accident
Paris, December 25.—Two passenger trains came into collision at Lapage du Roussillon, department of Isore, during the prevalence of a dense fog last night. Captain Bouet, of the cruiser Foudre, of the French Mediterranean squadron; Captain Lota, an instructor at the military school of St. Cyr, and M. Mathieu, a naval engineer, were killed and fifteen other persons were injured.

What Cured the Baby.

"Hood's Sarsaparilla has cured our baby of running sores for which we doctored her for a long time. It has relieved me of rheumatism. My wife was troubled with sick headaches and could get nothing to relieve her until she took Hood's Pills." H. L. Pickney, Lock Box 9, Ellenboro, W. Va.

HOOD'S PILLS are the only pills to take with HOOD'S SARSAPARILLA. Easy yet efficient.

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AN APPEAL FOR CUBANS

Secretary Sherman Calls on Americans to "Contribute to the Relief of the Sick and Destitute of This People."

Washington, December 24.—The following appeal to the American people has been issued:

"Department of State,
"Washington, Dec. 24th, 1897.
"By direction of the president, the public is informed that, in deference to the earnest desire of the government to contribute by effective action toward the relief of the suffering people in the island of Cuba, arrangements have been perfected by which charitable contributions, in money or in kind, can be sent to the island by the benevolently disposed people of the United States.

"Money, provisions, clothing, medicines and the like articles of prime necessity, can be forwarded to General Fitzhugh Lee, the consul-general of the United States at Havana, and all articles now dutiable by law, so consigned, will be admitted into Cuba free of duty. The consul-general has been instructed to receive the same and to co-operate with the local authorities and the charitable boards for the distribution of such relief among the destitute and needy people of Cuba.

"The president is confident that the people of the United States, who have on many occasions in the past responded most generously to the cry for bread from peoples stricken by famine or sore calamity and who have by no less generous action on the part of the general communities when their own countrymen suffered from fire and flood, will heed the appeal for aid that comes from the destitute at their own threshold and especially at this season of good will and rejoicing, will give of their abundance to this humane end.

JOHN SHERMAN."
The appeal was issued after consultation with Minister de Lome. The Spanish minister called at the state department about noon today and conferred with Judge Day concerning the relief of the reconcentrados on the island. He made it clear that the Spanish government would co-operate in any relief measures, and that there was entire willingness that the supplies go direct to Consul General Lee, instead of through the Spanish relief channels. The negotiations have been proceeding for some time. The first active step in this direction was taken by the president December 1st, when he issued in the form of a request that the minister learn from his government whether the regular tariff duties would be remitted on relief supplies sent to Cuba. Minister de Lome soon afterwards answered that Spain had consented to grant even more than had been requested and that the duties would be remitted not only on articles which the president had referred to, but also on all medicines, soap, salt and similar articles of prime necessity which might enter into the plan of relief. The only condition attached was that the supplies should go through the regular relief committees and that the bishop of Havana is the chairman.

TWO MEN KILLED.

A Succession of Violent Explosions in the United States Acetylene Company
New York, December 24.—A succession of explosions at the United States Acetylene Liquefying company's place in Jersey City today caused the loss of two lives and \$20,000 damage to the works. The dead are: Thomas Fowler, the assistant engineer, and Max Grim. There were only three other employes in the building at the time of the accident and they received more or less injuries. Their names are Fred Burr, Fritz Eppol and Charles White. James Leeb, who was working half a block away was badly injured by a piece of the boiler. A fragment of the boiler tore the roof from a trolley car some distance away. It is said that the first explosion was due to the boilers bursting and as the fire spread to the various acid tanks there was a succession of deafening reports. Nearby buildings, as well as the Central Railroad of New Jersey trestle caught fire, but the losses were not serious in these instances. The machinery of the local electric lighting company was affected by the jar, causing the electric light in various buildings to go out. Max Grim's body was blown through a window and torn to pieces. The body of Assistant Engineer Fowler was found in the ruins of the wrecked building.

A Big Flour Mill Burned

Toledo, Ohio, December 25.—The M. D. Harter Company's flouring mill at Fostoria, one of the largest winter wheat mills in the country, is in ruins. Fire started in a botling chest at 8 o'clock and the facilities for fighting fire being too limited, the mill was entirely destroyed. The loss is \$150,000, covered by insurance.

Pure blood is absolutely necessary for perfect health. Hood's Sarsaparilla is the one true blood purifier, the great health giv'er.