

NEW YORK HERALD

BROADWAY AND ANN STREET.

JAMES GORDON BENNETT, PROPRIETOR.

All business or news letter and telegraphic dispatches must be addressed New York Herald.

Letters and packages should be properly sealed.

Volume XXXVI, No. 359

AMUSEMENTS THIS AFTERNOON AND EVENING.

BOOTH'S THEATRE, Twenty-third st., corner Sixth av., JULIEN OPERA.

GRAND OPERA HOUSE, corner of 34th av. and 2d st., THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2—WAGNER.

WOODS MUSEUM, Broadway, corner 28th st., Performances of THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

FIFTH AVENUE THEATRE, Twenty-fourth street—THE NEW OPERA OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

LEMA EDWIN'S THEATRE, No. 7 Broadway—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

WALLACK'S THEATRE, Broadway and 10th street—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

NIBLO'S GARDEN, Broadway, 20th street—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

AMERICAN OPERA HOUSE, 23 Broadway—HARRIS BLUFF, Matinee at 2.

BOVEY THEATRE, Bovey—MAGNETA—GALT BRIDGES, Matinee at 2.

OLYMPIC THEATRE, Broadway—THE BALLET PATRONESSE OF RUSSIA'S DUFFY, Matinee at 2.

STADY THEATRE, No. 48 and 47 Bovey—THE IRON MARE.

STRENGTH HALL, Broadway street—HARRIS' OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

MRS. F. E. CONWAY'S BROOKLYN THEATRE—THE THREE GUARDIENS, Matinee at 2.

BROOKLYN ACADEMY OF MUSIC, Montague street—AMERICANS IN PARIS—HIS LAST LEIG.

PARK THEATRE, opposite City Hall, Brooklyn—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

THEATRE COMIQUE, 84 Broadway—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

UNION SQUARE THEATRE, Fourteenth st. and Broadway—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

TORT FACTORY'S OPERA HOUSE, No. 39 Bovey—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

BRYANT'S NEW OPERA HOUSE, 231 st., between 24th and 25th—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

SAN FRANCISCO MINSTREL HALL, 68 Broadway—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

THIRTY-FOURTH STREET THEATRE, 1047 Third av.—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

NEW YORK CIRCUS, Fourteenth street—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

NIXON'S GREAT SOUTHERN CIRCUS, 723 Broadway—THEATRE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

WASHINGTON HALL, Williamsburg—BLIND TOM, THE MEDICAL PHOENIX.

DR. KAHN'S ANATOMICAL MUSEUM, 74 Broadway—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

NEW YORK MUSEUM OF ANATOMY, 618 Broadway—OPERA HOUSE OF LEAVE MAN, Matinee at 2.

New York, Monday, December 25, 1871.

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Christmas—Progress and Power of Christianity—The Mission of America.

At no other season of the year are all the sweet and sacred sentiments of the human heart so universally awakened as at Christmas. This is because the immortal system founded by Him whose birth the season celebrates is so perfectly adapted to the nature and necessities of mortals. When the reign of perfect peace and universal brotherhood shall have been established Christmas will have then become the day of days, the universal holy day among all the nations. Though that promised period, "which kings and prophets waited for," has not yet arrived, chimes of consecrated bells in Christian countries will this morning summon multitudes to celebrate the anniversary of the nativity of Jesus. And in response to the summons of the chimes and their own convictions millions of worshippers will assemble for that purpose in churches and cathedrals. To those who are less impressed by simple services than by imposing religious ceremonials the effect of songs of adoration and of praise will be increased by the aid of magnificent instrumental music, and the solemnity of the scene will be augmented by the "dim religious light" that shines through the crimson and purple of the painted windows. The Christmas carols, songs and symphonies that will be chanted by choirs and congregations are but the echoes of the celestial voices of that heavenly host which accompanied the angel who announced to the astonished shepherds the advent of the Messiah whose appearance had been prophesied for ages. They are but the echoes, also, of the songs of faith and praise that have subsequently lingered on the lips and immortalized the memories of martyrs.

Viewed in whatever light it may be, the mission of Jesus Christ to humanity is supreme in its importance. We need not enter into a discussion of the character of Christ or of the system which He founded. Rival religions may rejoice respectively in their opinions. Whatever peculiar forms of faith sects of modern Christians may adhere to, it is enough to know that all concur in acknowledging that Christ was the most perfect character that ever trod the earth, and that the safest and sublimest rules of human conduct are those which He expounded. Though faint, sublime in its simplicity, questions not but justified "the ways of God to man," those ways are only known to us as mysteries. And among the most marvellous of these is the manner in which the Creator has at different times revealed Himself unto His creatures. In the Old Testament He assumes the character of awful majesty to whom burnt offerings and sacrifices were essential in order to appease His wrath and stay the avenging hand of justice. In the New Testament He assumes the character of wonderful humility, combined with infinite love, gentleness and mercy. This is the character in which He appears the dearest to human beings. It is more in harmony with, as we have said, the nature and necessities of mortals, and with the intelligence which has superseded the ignorance of departed ages. Hence we gladly turn from the thunders of Sinai to the Sermon on the Mount, and from the majesty of Jehovah to the simplicity of Jesus.

Without following the fortunes of Christianity through all its eventful epochs we may remark that though its march has been attended with wonderful vicissitudes, and has been temporarily impeded at various intervals, its career has been one of progress from its foundation to the present period. The history of the Church is the most remarkable in human annals. Judaism had flourished and failed, the civilization of Greece was on the wane, the supremacy of the Roman empire was sinking under the power of paganism, when there arose from the most humble origin a system which, soon spreading along the shores of the Mediterranean, has since fought and won its way over the whole of what is now denominated Christendom. For centuries persecutions followed it into Asia Minor, Greece, Italy and Africa, until they were in a measure arrested under Constantine. But while paganism was extinguished and Christianity extended the Church became corrupt and continued to become corrupted. The most serious assault that Christianity has sustained came from the system founded by Mohammed, who claimed to be commissioned to restore the true religion revealed by God to Abraham. By the power of conquest his system was carried triumphantly from Arabia over countries where Christianity still flourished; it spread into Spain, even France was threatened, and for a time the cause of Christ seemed to be seriously endangered. But Christianity had not lost its vitality, though the Church was weak and its affairs were improperly administered. The Reformation inspired by Luther came when reformation was most needed. Luther understood the true idea of Christianity, and he, more than all his conditors, labored successfully to restore it in its spirit. Though it has passed through seas of blood, the system of salvation born with the Babe of Bethlehem has survived all the shocks of ignorance and heathenism, and is destined not only to make the world synonymous with Christendom, but to make the true spirit of Christianity the guiding principle of every individual.

Christianity is love, and love is the most potent power in all the universe. The mission of the Messiah was not so much to found a Church or sect as to establish and exemplify immortal principles. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men, is the aim and substance of the Christian system. Christ was the link that united man to his Maker. He came to show the sympathy existing between the Creator and His creatures; to elevate humanity by presenting in His person a living example of what humanity might be, and to point out the way to a glorious immortality. It is because Christianity is so perfectly adapted to the complex character of mankind that it wins its way to our affections. It not only commends itself to the highest order of intelligence, but it appeals with force and feeling to the sweetest and tenderest of human sympathies. We have an abiding faith in the divinity of humanity, and none in the "total depravity" that is preached from some orthodox pulpits. We cannot associate the goodness of God and the immortality of mankind with the idea of everlasting punishments. Assuredly every

human soul will sooner or later receive its full measure of happiness according to its capacities. And to show how these may be increased by the cultivation of our moral faculties was one of the objects embraced in the mission of Jesus. This could not be better accomplished than by showing us an example that we could understand and attempt to imitate. It is this union of the divine with the human so perfectly presented before us in the person of Jesus that has led, and is leading, the heart of humanity to appreciate and cherish His character and teachings.

The progress of Christianity in the world can never again be seriously interrupted. The periods have passed when paganism could assume the ascendancy. Much ignorance and superstition prevail among peoples yet, we admit, but ignorance and superstition have been for centuries gradually giving way under the regenerating influence of Christianity, and at no period since the Creation has mankind attained a higher stage of development than at the present. Never before have the principles of progress so prominent or the signs of the times for the future so full of promise. The arts and sciences, the handicrafts of Christian civilization, are everywhere aiding the completion of the work commenced by Christ, whose nativity we now commemorate. Steam, electricity and the press are each and all contributing toward the consummation of the grand design of the Creator for the amelioration of humanity. By means of rapid communication all the nations of the earth are being brought closer together, and with it we have repeated evidence of the interchange of kindly sympathies, which is one of the fundamental principles of Christianity. With universal liberty we shall have universal intelligence, and this will inaugurate the era of universal brotherhood and universal peace—the feeling of the whole human race that as the children of one Father they have a common sympathy and a common destiny. In this grand and glorious work we must not forget our mission as Americans. The eyes of the oppressed in other lands are turned toward us, and in our influence and example are centered the hopes of liberty everywhere—civil and religious. Already the influence of the United States has been felt and followed to a greater or lesser extent in other and older nations. We believe that within the present century Christianity has received an impetus in the United States greater than it has ever yet received in any other country. The "manifest destiny" of the United States is to establish, firm as the Rock of Ages, on the whole of the American Continent, the highest possible development of Christian civilization, and to be a bright and shining light among the nations. Each has its mission to perform and each can render to the other sympathy and assistance in promoting the cause of Christianity, which is the amelioration of mankind by the cultivation of all the gifts and graces which will enable us to enjoy the benefits and blessings of a glorious immortality.

The New Charter Proposed for New York City by the Committee of Seventy.

The draft of a new charter for the city of New York, published in the HERALD to-day, is the result of the deliberations of the sub-committee of the Committee of Seventy; and while it is yet incomplete, the groundwork is sufficiently set forth to show the character of the reforms it proposes. It certainly contains some very excellent points. Its underlying principle is to secure to the political minority in the city a substantial representation in the government. To this end large and controlling power is vested in the Board of Aldermen, while the Mayor has few save executive functions to perform. The number of Aldermen is fixed at forty-five, nine of whom are to be elected in each Senate district of the city. Every elector has the privilege of voting nine Aldermanic ballots, each containing one name, and he can vote for the same candidate nine times, or distribute his votes in such proportion as he may choose. This, of course, renders certain the election of a good share of the candidates of the minority party in each Senate district. Following out the same principle in the various branches of the government, all the important departments—those of Public Works, Public Parks, Docks, Public Charities and Corrections and Finance—are placed under the control of five Commissioners, one of whom is to be appointed by the Mayor, while the other four are to be elected by the Board of Aldermen. In such election each member of the Board is entitled to cast four open ballots, containing each one name, and an Alderman may cast his four ballots for one candidate or may distribute them in such proportion as he may choose. This again enables the minority of the Board of Aldermen to make certain of electing at least one candidate in each of the above departments, and thus secures the representation of the minority party in the city throughout the whole municipal government. While our experience in New York has not taught us to place much reliance in the honesty of those republican politicians who have managed to obtain a recognition under democratic city administrations, it is, nevertheless, a healthy principle to secure an opposition representation in all the city departments as well as in the Board of Aldermen.

The power of the Department of Public Works is greatly increased; among other things, taking in the duties of the present Department of Buildings, of the Department of Parks, so far as regards boulevards, streets and avenues about Central Park, and probably of street cleaning. In the Department of Finance the member appointed by the Mayor is to be Comptroller of the City and County Treasurer, while the four members appointed by the Board of Aldermen are to be called Commissioners of the City Treasury. The office of City Chamberlain is to be abolished. As a matter of course all the present office-holders are to be legislated out of office; even Comptroller Green will not be spared, but will have to take his chance of re-appointment by the Mayor, who is to be elected next April, or of election to the Finance Department by the Board of Aldermen to be chosen at the same time. The Mayor and Aldermen are to be elected for a single year's term, and in the latter is to rest the whole legislative power. No money whatever can be raised for any department of the municipal

government except through the Board of Aldermen, and the most stringent rules are drawn to protect the funds and credit of the city even from that body. The powers of removal of heads of departments are somewhat less simple and direct than they should be, but the Mayor is to be removable by the Governor for cause in the manner provided by law in the cases of sheriffs and county clerks.

On one point the Committee of Seventy make, we believe, a great blunder. They adopt the principle, first advocated by the HERALD, of requiring publication of all amounts expended, contracts made, resolutions and ordinances passed, &c., by every public department at short, stated periods; but they defeat the whole object of the reform by establishing another edition of the Transcript job, under the name of The City Record, in which these publications are to be made. This probably may be designed to save the city the expense of newspaper advertising, but it is a "penny wise and pound foolish" policy. No person cares to look in any such sheet for city doings, and not one citizen out of every ten thousand would ever see a copy of the Record. "Publicity" is the only object of requiring these detailed statements of their operations from the departments, and this cannot be secured by printing them in a job concern such as the Transcript was, and such as it is proposed the Record shall be. The people desire to see what their public officers are doing. They know that had the policy of publishing weekly statements of all bills paid, contracts made and liabilities incurred, prevailed during the rule of the Tammany Ring, no such frauds as have been perpetrated against the city would have been practicable. Our citizens will not begrudge the money expended in laying before them the information they desire, and no parsimonious idea of saving a few dollars should prevent this most valuable feature of publicity from being fully engrafted on any new charter that may be enacted. Whatever amount might be used in the publication of The City Record would be thrown away, and the people have had sufficient experience in the Transcript's swindle not to desire to see the experiment revived. We shall have more to say of the committee's proposed charter hereafter, but the blunder of this proposition is so self-evident that we do not suppose there will be any attempt to adhere to it. Of course the rough draft now published has yet to be revised and completed, and there will come the question of its acceptance by the Legislature. As it is not as much as it might be in the interests of the republican majority at Albany, we do not think its rejection at all improbable. The Legislature will, no doubt, have views of its own to carry out in connection with our future municipal government.

Songs of the Poor Can Hoarse in Stormy Weather—A heart bowed down by weight of 'whoe!'

Christmas Facts and Speculations. One common thought and one theme agitated the Christian pulpits of this city, and probably of the whole land, yesterday. The thought was of the wondrous love of God, and the theme the manifestation of that love in the birth of Jesus Christ, whose natal anniversary the Christian world commemorates to-day. And such has been the progress of Christianity in these latter days that not only throughout Christendom, but in heathendom also, this marvellous event celebrated on this 25th day of December. The subject and the occasion are such as to invite speculation, and some of the pulpit preachers yesterday indulged a little therein. The Rev. Dr. Foss, in St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal church, while introducing his audience to the manger-cradle of Bethlehem and its Divine occupant, and dwelling on the object of the Saviour's mission, gave them also some historic facts and speculations regarding the magi, whom he considered to be Persian astronomers, chosen by God to receive this announcement, because the Persian religion was then the least impure, they believing in and worshipping one God, the Creator of all things. The ancient fire worship the Doctor considered was derived from Moses' interview with God in the burning bush, which was well known to the ancient heathen. The fire was taken as the best expression of the Deity, and thus the unseen God was worshipped. Because of the fulness and freeness of the salvation provided in the Gospel and by the life and death of Christ Dr. Foss had good hopes to see Socrates and other heathen philosophers in heaven, and so have we. And many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first there, notwithstanding our theological notions and dogmas.

THE HERALD AND DR. LIVINGSTONE.

The second coming of Christ was suggested to the mind of Dr. Thompson by the recurrence of this festival, and he called the attention of Christ church (Protestant Episcopal) to it, and encouraged them not to become disheartened nor weary by the length of the journey nor the roughness of the way with the thought that by and by they shall enter into rest. Dr. Ogilby saw in the Christmas anniversary an occasion for humility in the example of Him whose birth we celebrate, and urged the Trinity congregation to bow their heads and their hearts if they would know the Saviour and be like him. But, according to Mr. Frothingham, the coming of Christ or His life and teachings has not added anything to the teachings of the old classics and ante-classic sages of the world, and hence there is no more benefit in trying to be like Him than there is in being like Socrates, Zoroaster, Confucius or any other man. Such faith may do for Mr. Frothingham, but it evidently does not suit the Christian world, nor indeed the heathen, who are rapidly forsaking Confucius and Buddha and following Jesus of Nazareth. And, as Dr. Hall beautifully and eloquently explained, it is only through His blood that we can be cleansed and made meet for heaven. And were we to scale heaven's high wall, and thus enter, we should have no fellowship or sympathy among the blood-washed throng who day and night praise and magnify His love.

ALLEGED DOUBLE MURDER.

A correspondent of the Erie Dispatch says a horrible tragedy occurred at Keno, Pa., ninety-four miles east of here on the Philadelphia and Erie road, on the night of the 20th inst. The wife and child of Patrick Burns were found dead Thursday morning under a barn near their home. The physicians who examined their bodies say there is no doubt that both were murdered, the wife having been strangled and the child's skull broken. Burns had been committed to jail to await the result of the coroner's inquest.

THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST FROM A READER'S VIEW.