

THE Pacific Commercial Advertiser.
A MORNING PAPER.

WALTER G. SMITH EDITOR
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IS AMERICA CORRUPT?

Corruption in the United States is a favorite theme among aliens, who believe, or affect to believe, that the entire official and political system of the republic is decayed. How far is this postulate from the truth may be inferred from the dispassionate estimates of public honesty made by Mr. Bryce at the seat of government and from the general knowledge every observant American has of the character of the masses of his countrymen. Mr. Bryce estimated that five per cent. of the 34,000 officials in Washington were "approachable," a percentage which is probably as low as that shown by any other public service in the world. And as every American knows, the percentage throughout the country, in and out of office, of those who betray public and private trusts is even lower; while the general attitude of the public on all questions of moral conduct is indubitably sound.

There have been many corrupt kings, but the United States has never had a corrupt president. Ministers of the crown have enriched themselves by the spoils of office; no cabinet secretary of the United States has ever done so. The constructive statesmen of at least four European countries today, supply examples of tolerated malfeasance; the grand dukes of Russia are notorious for rascality in office and one sovereign was but lately accused in parliament of the private use of public money to which he had no claim. In the higher walks of official life in the United States—a country as large and as populous as many European kingdoms put together—official dishonor is so rare that it is uniformly treated in the press as news of the most exceptional gravity; and it is so abhorred that the courts visit it with special and particular rebuke and punishment.

It is true that foreigners hear much more about public scoundrelism in the United States than they do of such conditions in their own lands, but that is largely because of the rigor of their own press laws and the irresponsible political declamation of the American partisan newspapers. Everybody is accused of anything in the midst of our political campaigns. Grant was a "nepotist" to his political enemies; Hayes, "a fraud" and the receiver of stolen presidential goods; Garfield, a man who sold his honor for \$329; McKinley, a "tool of Wall street." All these libels were part of the thunder of politics, assaying no lightning bolts. They are not history; they are not even approximately true. But they have served a purpose at home and left the impression abroad that corruption is the rule and not the exceptional thing in American public life.

In many European countries the press is under a strict censorship and can not tell of official villainy. Even in England a similar censorship is achieved through libel laws of singular severity, based upon the principle that "the greater the truth the greater the libel." In Latin countries the press is so often particeps criminis that it gives no sign. Only in the United States does it follow every scent of iniquity with full hue and cry; and by compelling the world to hear it often creates the false idea abroad that the republic is given over, almost hopelessly, to the devil and his works.

It is true there is much misgovernment and plundering of cities, but this is mostly done by men of alien birth or surroundings, who misuse the liberty they enjoy; and it is against them and their practices that typical Americanism directs its high public spirit—against the rule of the Schmitzes, the Ruffs, the Crokers, the Murphys, the McCarrans and all the rest of the imported scoundrels to whom the old New England and Virginian faith in public and private honor is an enigma or a joke. But character is slowly asserting itself even in the government of cities, despite the vastness of the whole problem in America as compared with that in the compact, almost miniature and easily handled European lands.

American character, wherever it dominates, needs no apology. Said Vice President Fairbanks, the other day in a noble public address: "We hear much said of vice and corruption, much of the subtle enemies of the state and social order, but the great heart of the people is as sound and incorruptible today as at any hour in all of our matchless history. The conscience of the people has not been seared. Pure materialism has not achieved the mastery. All of the forces which make for the intellectual, the moral, and the social advancement of the people were never more powerful and never in fuller play than they are today. Honor among men was never more regarded, and dishonorable practices, either in public or private life, were never more abhorred than they are today. There has been upon every hand a demand that those who hold place and power shall be clean men, and that they shall consecrate themselves completely to the utmost advancement of the public welfare. The American people are going forward and upward with tremendous momentum. They are advancing in all of the ways which make a strong, upright, patriotic people. They respect right and condemn wrong in every relation of life. Those who would contaminate the state or who would carry into the business world low ideals of business morality can lay no claim to the general respect. The American people are not to be judged by the standards of the exceptional wrong-doer, but by the generous purpose of the great body of our countrymen; the currents which course the veins of the American people are essentially as pure now as those which filled the veins of our ancestors."

THE PRAYER CHAIN.

Hundreds if not thousands of people in this Territory are in receipt of a written prayer, some four lines long, with a request, attributed to Bishop Lawrence of Maine, that it be copied and sent to nine persons. Each person of the nine is expected to copy it and send it to nine more, thus constituting an endless chain. The prayer is an invocation to mercy, in no sense objectionable; but the facts that it is traveling under false pretenses and is urged forward by an appeal to the grossest superstition, are enough to justify common sense Christian people in breaking the chain.

In the first place Bishop Lawrence of Maine did not start the endless prayer chain and the only request he has made in the premises is that his name should be eliminated from it. He is especially indignant that his high office should be used to support the assertion, which follows the prayer in the written copies, that those who will not send the invocation to nine persons "will have some misfortune" and that those who "will write the prayer for nine days beginning the day he receives it will, on or before the ninth day, experience some great joy" and be "delivered from all calamity."

A thing like this belongs in the dream-world of sorcery and kahunaism and has no place in the life of an intelligent Christian community. Both promise and threat as well as the attributed source of the prayer and of its system of rewards and penalties, are most unworthy fakes, insulting to religion and to common intelligence.

A gentleman writes the Maui News opposing the idea of forts for Honolulu on the ground that they could not defend the other islands. But islands without safe harbors, to be used as naval bases, are not wanted by an enemy. In case of war it is doubtful that a hostile fleet, if able to enter these waters, would assail any other point than Oahu; that is, unless Hilo had, meanwhile, acquired an artificial harbor. When American warships went to the Ladronez they seized Guam for its harbor and left the other parts of the group untouched. The writer in the Maui paper suggests that a fortified Oahu could be starved out by a blockade, ignoring the fact that, as a preliminary to war, the island would be supplied, as Malta, St. Lucia and other insular fortresses are, with at least three years' stores. A final objection, to wit, that an undefended port is never attacked, ignores an enemy's choice of two opportunities—that of putting the place under contribution or fortifying it for use as an offensive base.

The Senate has accepted part of Secretary Taft's estimate for Hawaiian forts and inserted an additional \$100,000 in the Fortifications bill, making \$200,000 in all. As our readers will remember, the House passed the Fortifications bill with the original Hawaiian item excluded, something that might not have happened if Hawaii had enjoyed the services of a representative on the floor. Now the bill as amended by the Senate will go into conference and it is possible, if Messrs. Hatch, McClellan and Thurston take the matter up, to get Colonel Hepburn, or some other good friend of Hawaii, to champion Hawaii's interests in the House. Meanwhile there are \$200,000 in hand which might easily start the dirt flying.

The Honolulu chapter for the Encyclopaedia Britannica needs several repairs and the Supervisors, instead of attending to the work themselves, would do well to turn it over to Dr. Alexander.

ANOTHER AUSTRALIAN STANDS UP TO KELLY

Editor Advertiser: Mr. Kelly in his remarks on Australians in general, makes a statement relative to a Melbourne bank. I wish Mr. Kelly would kindly give out the name and location, as I intend to probe farther in the matter. I may mention that I have heard of Chinese "pah-ka-pu" banks closing three days to draw the tickets, and somehow, I think that Mr. Kelly in his ardor for information has made what we Colonials call a "blunder." As to the "Adventure of the Antedeluvian Jeweler," I must own up to the fact that Australians as a rule are too prone to judge by appearances. With regard also to the absence of "hustle," so accentuated as Mr. Kelly says in most Australians, I will remind the gentleman with the good "ould," I sh name of the old saw, "Those who live in houses of crystal should refrain from the propulsion of fragmentary pieces of granite formation," and it strikes me very forcibly that Mr. Kelly's house is crystal from the cellar to the top of the stove pipe. I have yet to hear of his initiation into the "Society of a No. 1 Speed Artists." Australians can take their fair share of "Joak," but when a man comes back filled with "hot air," and exaggerated accounts of the land he has visited, then it puts their teeth on edge. I can assure Mr. Kelly and all good Americans, that even without those good American attributes which Mr. Kelly says we are lacking, Australia and Australians will slowly but surely forge ahead on good solid British lines, work out their own destinies and take their places among the men and nations of the earth, and in the foremost ranks too. Thanking you in anticipation, I am,
NEW SOUTH WELSHMAN.

NEW ELECTRIC LIGHT.

NEW YORK, January 13.—Prof. H. C. Parker of Columbia University, working with W. G. Clark, has invented an incandescent light which he hopes will revolutionize electric lighting. He says that it has forty-five times the efficiency of the ordinary lamp with a carbon filament. The particular feature about the lamp is the new filament, which Prof. Parker calls helium because its spectrum is similar to that of helium. It looks much like the filament of an ordinary light.

Another claim for the new lamp is that the light will last nearly twice as long as with a carbon filament. In the tests made the lamps have burned steadily from 485 to 1270 hours, with an average of 1000 hours. At a current density that will give only a dull red color to the carbon filament the new lamp burns with a bright, white light which increases in intensity as the current is increased. When the ordinary current is running the illuminating intensity is four times that of a carbon lamp, while there is a much lower consumption of electricity per candle power. The lamp has the further advantage that it will carry a large overload of electricity without breaking.

OUR Annual Sale Table Linens Towels Friday, Feb. 1st

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