

# CURRENT TOPICS

**L**ONDON NEWSPAPERS SAY THAT THE British consul general at Canton has made a report in which he says that there is great demand for American flour in China, particularly among the immigrants who have returned from the United States. This consul reports that in 1902, the flour imported exceeded the flour importations of 1901 by 95,831,328 pounds; also that the 1902 importations were 78,000,000 pounds in excess of the average for the past five years. The value of American flour now sold in China is estimated at \$4,600,000 per annum.

**A** CHAPTER ON HORSE INSURANCE IS CONTRIBUTED by James L. Workman, United States consul general in Munich. The Washington correspondent for the Chicago Tribune presents a synopsis of Mr. Workman's report. In that report the consul general says that Bavaria has, within the last thirty years, made remarkable progress in the domain of governmental insurance. The centralizing and modernizing of insurance by the government against fire in 1874 was followed in 1884 by an insurance provision against hail, which the state officials and farmers alike consider a most unique institution. In 1896 Bavaria provided government insurance of cattle, recognizing the great importance of the cattle industry to this kingdom. After that provision had stood the test of time, the minister of the interior, Dr. Baron von Feilitzsch—the originator of hail and cattle insurance—took steps leading to the solution of the more difficult problem of the insurance of horses.

**B**AVARIAN HORSE INSURANCE, ACCORDING to the consul general's report, went into effect November 1, 1900, and of this form of insurance it is said: This latest benevolent institution of Bavaria awakens the deepest interest among horse owners, and is furthered by the state and the townships. It has already overcome the initial difficulties and developed so surprisingly that it may be reckoned as one of the greatest of horse insurance institutions. Like all other Bavarian governmental insurance, it rests upon the foundation of unions. These unions embrace entire districts as subdivisions. There are now 398 combined unions, with 34,748 horses, and an insurance capital of 28,666,540 marks (\$6,822,636). This remarkable success is due to the co-operation of the Bavarian government and influential people interested in horse breeding. The management has eschewed all bureaucratic tendencies, and the state and township officials have been mainly friendly counselors to the parties directly interested.

**T**HE UNITED STATES GRANTED ITS FIRST patent July 31, 1790. According to the Washington correspondent for the New York World, this patent was issued to Samuel Hopkins and protected his method of making potash and pearl ash. This correspondent says: "Probably the most important of early patents was taken out the same year by William Pollard, Philadelphia, for a water-power spinning machine. Three patents were granted the first year, thirty-three the second and eleven the third. None of these early models survived the destructive fires of 1836 and 1877. One commissioner and an assistant, appointed by the president, and over 1,000 clerks, are now required to transact the business of the office."

**F**OR YEARS NEW JERSEY HAS BEEN famous for its mosquitoes and the people of that state do not appear to have enjoyed the consequent notoriety any more than they have the mosquito pest itself. It may not be doubted, therefore, that New Jersey people found considerable satisfaction in two dispatches that recently appeared in the New York Tribune as follows: "St. Louis, July 20.—Mosquitoes stopped a 700 horsepower engine in the plant of the Pittsburgh Reduction company at Alta Sita, a suburb of East St. Louis. For several days the engine had not run smoothly, but Engineer Robinson could not locate the trouble. Raising steam to an unusual pressure had no apparent effect, and finally the big drive wheel stopped dead. Renewed examination showed that mosquitoes, attracted possibly by the oil on the engine, had been washed to death on the crossheads and along the piston

runs until they formed a gummy mass that even steam pressure could not overcome. The factory now has screens." "Vancouver, B. C., July 20.—One of the worst plagues of mosquitoes ever suffered by ranches in the Fraser River valley now infests that district. This summer the river flooded the lowlands, leaving pools from which were bred millions of big, fierce mosquitoes that have attacked and killed men. At Mount Lehman, a large district protected by a dike, the plague of mosquitoes is so bad that life is a burden to those compelled to labor in the open air."

**A** FAMOUS CHARACTER ON THE WESTERN frontier, "Calamity Jane," died at Terry, S. D., August 1. The real name of this woman was Martha Burke. Her strange personality is said to have inspired Bret Harte to write his most popular story, "The Luck of Roaring Camp." Mrs. Burke is said to have been the original of the character of "Cherokee Sal." The Deadwood correspondent for the New York World, referring to "Calamity Jane," says: "Though she was known for more than thirty years as 'Calamity Jane,' her real name is said to have been Mrs. Clinton Burke. She was married to Burke in 1885, long after she had obtained her odd sobriquet, and it is said this was not her only marriage. According to her own story of her life she was born in 1852 in Princetown, Mo., and her maiden name was Martna Canary. When she was thirteen years old her parents started overland for Virginia City, Nev., but never reached their destination. Her mother died in Montana in 1866 and the girl went with her father to Salt Lake City, where the latter died the following year. Inured to outdoor life and an expert rider, the girl, thrown on her own resources at fifteen, determined to become a scout. Her only associates were soldiers and Indians and she speedily adopted their ways. She soon became a dead shot, and at the same time also learned to swear 'like a trooper.' She donned male attire in 1870, when she volunteered to go as a scout with Custer in one of his Indian raids, and wore it during the greater part of her remaining years."

**I**T WAS IN 1872 THAT, ACCORDING TO THIS Deadwood correspondent, Mrs. Burke was christened "Calamity Jane" by Captain Egan, then commander of the army post of Goosecreek, S. D. Mrs. Burke had saved Captain Egan's life. The captain had been shot from his horse by an Indian. The Deadwood correspondent says: "The woman scout killed his slayer, and picking up the wounded officer she placed him across the saddle and rode off to the fort under the fire of other Indians. When Captain Egan, who was unconscious at the time, learned the circumstances of his rescue, he said to his preserver: 'You are a good person to have around in time of calamity and I christen you Calamity Jane, the heroine of the plains.' About four years later she met William Hickok, better known as 'Wild Bill,' beside whose body she asked on her deathbed to be buried. A strong friendship sprang up between the pair, but a few months later 'Wild Bill' was shot dead in a gambling house in Deadwood by 'Jack' McCall, a notorious desperado. 'Calamity Jane' led the party which captured and lynched McCall. In her career 'Calamity Jane' took part in scores of battles with Indians and fatal affrays with white men. In 1877 she met the stage from Cheyenne just as a band of Indians had killed the driver, mounted the box herself and drove the passengers safely into Deadwood. Two years ago 'Calamity Jane' was found ill and deserted in a cabin near Horr, Mont., by Mrs. Josephine Winfield Drake, the novelist. The latter took the sufferer to her own home near Buffalo, N. Y., but when 'Calamity Jane' recovered she could not resist the longing to return to her old life in the west."

**S**OME IDEA OF THE CHARACTER OF THE immigrants of 1902 is shown by a report received August 1 by Mr. Sargent, commissioner general of immigration. In this report it is said that 600 of the foreigners who landed in New York during the past twelve months are now inmates of penal or charitable institutions in that city and state. It is also said that during the year 8,000 immigrants were sent back to Europe. Speaking

to a correspondent for the New York World, Mr. Sargent said: "These figures form only a part of what the whole investigation is likely to disclose. I have no doubt but that the other big cities are going to show a similar condition. The situation is certainly starting and we have decided to make the matter of landing undesirable aliens more stringent than ever. We are now somewhat hampered by the looseness of the law, but certain changes have been suggested which are likely to mend matters. We are working in Europe, where we hope to prevent the undesirable people from sailing for this country only to be sent back again."

**A** PLAN TO "NATURALIZE" A BOAT IS BEING considered by a resident of New York. Watertown, N. Y., correspondent for the World explains: "W. W. Dyckman, of New York, who has been spending the summer with his family on the St. Lawrence, has recently had a house-boat built which bids fair to be a most noted craft. It is expected it will be made the subject of a special bill to be presented in congress. Mr. Dyckman's new house-boat is fifty-five feet long and luxuriously fitted up. She cost several thousand dollars. She was built in Kingston, Ontario, and is therefore a Canadian boat, and is under the international commerce laws, which provides that leaving one American port with passengers or goods she cannot land them at another American port. Mr. Dyckman is an American and wants to use the boat for the most part in American waters. So these laws will naturally mean great inconvenience to him. His only means of relief is to have the boat naturalized, as it is called, by an act of congress. This, it is said, he is planning to do."

**G**ENERAL MILES' NINETY-MILE RIDE prompted a writer for the Chicago Chronicle to make investigation concerning officers on the retired list and revealed that there are now on the list no less than 108 retired major generals and brigadier generals, as against thirty-eight of these officers in active service. In all, there are 800 officers on the retired list—and a large part of these officers, although past the maximum age of 64, are quite able to do service. In the navy, where men are retired at 62, there are sixty rear admirals on the retired list, as against twenty-four in active service.

**S**TATISTICS OF ATTENDANCE AT THE leading universities of the country is made the subject of an interesting article in the World's Work for August by Franklin J. Turner. Mr. Turner says that while these statistics show that great universities which rest upon private foundations take the lead, they are closely followed by the state universities in the middle west. According to Mr. Turner, Harvard has 5,468 students, Columbia 5,352, Chicago 4,296. The state university of Michigan comes next with 3,764, followed by California, 3,696; Minnesota, 3,505, and Illinois, 3,288. The privately endowed university of Cornell has 3,281, after which comes the state university of Wisconsin with 2,884. The Northwestern university, on private foundations, shows a total of 2,875. The ancient institutions of Yale and Pennsylvania are closely pressed in numbers by the young state university of Nebraska which has 2,289. Both Indiana university and the university of Missouri surpass Princeton and Leland Stanford in numbers and have more than double the attendance of Johns Hopkins. When it is remembered that but a few years ago ambitious students in search of the higher education flocked in great numbers from the middle west to the eastern institutions, the significance of this showing is still more highly emphasized.

**S**OME ONE HAS PREPARED STATISTICS showing that Germany heads the list as a reading nation. The London correspondent for the Chicago Inter-Ocean refers to these statistics although he does not say who compiled them. In a cablegram to the Inter-Ocean this London correspondent says that these statistics show that in 1893, 23,607 books were published in Germany, as compared with 8,082 in Russia. In regard to newspapers, the inhabitants of the United States are catered to by 22,000 journals, while Russia, with a population of 130,000,000, has only 800.