

TALKING THEOSOPHY.

SWEDISH COUNTESS TEACHES RELIGION OF KARMA.

She Was a Devoted Friend of the Late Mme. Blavatsky the Former Head of the Revived Faith—Soon to Return to Europe.



MME BLAVATSKY during the last years of her life had no more intimate friend than Countess Wachmeister, the lady who is just now teaching American students something of the esoteric cult. The countess, as was Mme. Blavatsky, is a cosmopolite. The efflorescence of continental and insular society, widely traveled, at home in a Syrian desert or in a Paris salon, she has all the fascination that perfect repose can give. Her great devotion to theosophy springs from pure altruism, based upon a deep conviction that the occult philosophy is the only true philosophy, and that the religion of Karma is the only true and efficient religion. She is the widow of a great Swedish diplomat, and her social position in Europe was of the best. But she has spurned the world's folly to work for the world's good according to her own ideas of what that good should be. It was in 1885 that she was first attracted to Mme. Blavatsky by a mystic message from the inner world. At that time she was living in Stockholm. Not long



COUNTESS WACHMEISTER.

afterward she joined Mme. Blavatsky, and they moved to London from Germany. Until the death of the author of "Isis" the countess presided over what was called the theosophical household. She was a sister and minister to the founder of the theosophic school, and had more influence over the strange Russian than all others combined. She has been ever true to the ethical teachings of theosophy, and regards with pain the schism in the society—a schism that was certain to come even in spite of all that even the leader herself could have done to prevent it. American theosophists are in sympathy with that section of the society represented by the countess. She will remain in this country until spring, and will then return to England.

Our Agriculture.

The annual report of Secretary Morton of the department of agriculture gives a hopeful view of the condition of American farmers. More than seven-tenths of all the farms in the country, according to Mr. Morton, are entirely unencumbered by mortgages. Our exports of farm products last year reached the enormous total of \$570,000,000, a considerable increase over the preceding year. Of live meat arriving in Great Britain during the first half of the present year, we supplied three-quarters of the cattle and nearly one-half of the sheep. There is an increasing demand in England for American horses. The secretary attributes the saving of two million dollars in the expenses of his department during the last three years, largely to the improved personnel of the service under the civil service rules.

Who Shall Pay the Bills?

When the Anglo-Egyptian expedition for the reconquest of the Sudan was equipped, money for the expenses of the enterprise, to the amount of two million and a half dollars, was taken from the Egyptian reserve fund. The French and Russian commissioners of the public debt of Egypt promptly protested against this proceeding, which had the sanction of the English, German, Austrian and Italian commissioners. The matter was carried from one tribunal to another, and recently the highest Egyptian court decided that the money was improperly appropriated, and must be refunded by the Egyptian government. The British government has made the amount good, and will advance whatever further sums may be necessary. This proceeding will make the expedition primarily an English affair.

A New Government Recognized.

The new Greater Republic of Central America, composed of Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, has been formally recognized by President Cleveland, and Mr. J. D. Rodriguez, appointed minister to this country by the Diet of the new government, has been officially welcomed. The president expressed gratification at the union which had been effected, and a hope that it was the precursor of a consolidation of all the states of Central America as one nation, for all purposes of foreign relations and intercourse.

UNCLE SAM'S AUCTION SALE.

Annual Disposal of Accumulations of the Dead Letter Office.

One of the queerest "institutions" of the national capital is the annual clearance sale of the dead letter office, in which a vast accumulation of articles gone astray in the mails is sold to the highest bidder, says the Indianapolis Journal. The auction house where it is held is continually crowded with excited men, women and children and beside it the bargain counters during the holidays are as havens of rest, for when Uncle Sam goes into the junk-shop business great things are expected. As in the church-fair raffle, you pay a small amount of money and trust to luck to get back more than its value. The articles, previously listed in a wholesale sort of way, are tied up in bundles of from three to a half dozen and "auctioned" for what they will bring, the average bids ranging between 10 cents and a dollar. Nobody is permitted to examine the goods before purchasing and no money is refunded to the disappointed. Everybody hopes to pull a genuine plum from the pile in the shape of a diamond ring, a silk dress pattern or a silver teapot and, although comparative blanks are the rule, there is always the possibility of a prize. For example, the auctioneer holds up one of these odd-shaped bundles, listed "Pictures, underwear, music, cigars. Going—going—gone" for 90 cents to a dapper young gentleman who was caught by the word "cigar." He opens it on the spot—an unwise thing to do if one objects to good-natured ridicule—and this is what he finds: Six cigars broken into bits, so strong an odor that one wonders how a sledge-hammer could have done it; music, soiled copy of "I Love You, Mah Honey, Yes I Do"; underwear, a female 10-cent "jersey"; pictures, collection of newspaper cuts, designed for amusement of some small child. The lot would be dear at a quarter and is of no use to the buyer. In the dead-letter office proper—that chthonal house which swallows nearly half a million missives every month, it is positively harrowing. More than forty bushels of photographs have accumulated there, awaiting the annual cremation. There are tresses of hair, enough to stuff a dozen mattresses, grandmothers' silver locks and babies' golden curls, many no doubt cut from dead brows; and small sums of money which poor workmen send home to feed their wives and little ones and servant girls save from their scanty wages for needy parents—gone to Uncle Sam's rich purse, not because the United States wants it but because the senders' writing or orthography was beyond mortal ken. It is hard to realize that in this land of schools at the close of the nineteenth century there are so many people so ignorant or so careless as to send several millions of letters a year without stamps, or addresses, or with addresses which no man can make out. People seem to be so intent on what goes into the letters that they forget all about the superscription. It is estimated that \$4,500,000 in drafts and \$80,000,000 in cash is received every year through dead letters.

A FLYING SLED.

A Keystone State Invention That Is Right in Season.

The accompanying cut represents a flying sled recently invented at Vinondale, Pa., the propelling arrangement of which is admitted by mechanical experts to be very perfect, and a masterpiece of ingenuity.

To work the machine the operator sits astride it as he would a bicycle, with a foot on each lateral rest, that is secured to the knee of the sled. By turning this handle of the sprocket wheel motion is imparted to the fan by an arrangement of friction bevel gears. The fan is mounted on a U-shaped frame that can be swung horizontally in any direction. The radius of the swinging frame is half the breadth of the sled, which allows the fan to be turned to a right angle, thus pulling the machine in the direction the fan is turned. The steering lever is shown within easy reach of the operator. Moving it to the right or left fully controls the movement of the sled. Side brakes are also provided that work in conjunction with or independently of each other, to arrest the momentum of the machine, or to assist the steering arrangement in making a very abrupt turn. The inventors are sanguine of running on a clear stretch of ice at the rate of 60 or 75 miles per hour. On a public road in good sledding condition a speed of 20 or 30 miles per hour may be reached with safety. The in-



FLYING SLED.

ventors also claim that their machine will be a boon to arctic explorers, to a degree beyond their power of calculation.

In the above cut it will be observed that, for the sake of simplicity, the common form of sled is used to show the details of steering and propulsion, but one may deviate from this and adopt any ornamental style of sled, so as to suit the most exacting and fastidious tastes.

Our Lord's Candlestick.

A curiously shaped plant growing in Arizona and other desert regions of the great southwest is called "Our Lord's Candlestick."

Varieties of Plants.

It is estimated by naturalists that there are not less than 100,000 varieties of plants already known and classified.

LATE MR. HEADLEY.

WAS ONE OF THE FEW AMERICAN HISTORIANS.

Compiler of "Washington and His Generals" and Other Notable Works, Including the Campaigns of Napoleon the First.



JOEL T. HEADLEY, ex-secretary of state of New York and a historian of some note, died in that city the other morning. While walking about his room he fell, striking his head on the floor. Paralysis resulted and a severe and fatal illness followed. Mr. Headley was 82 years of age and was one of the few historians reproduced by America. His contributions to the historical literature of the United States have a distinct value, while his writings on history of other countries are among the most entertaining works in a sometimes uninteresting field. He began life in the church, but after a ministry of two years he abandoned the arduous duties of the profession and went abroad for his health. On his return he tried writing some sketches of his profession, which were so well thought of that he determined to devote his life to literature. For a time he sat at the editorial table in the New York Tribune. After spending a long time in the Adirondacks for health he wrote a book about life in the woods and mountains, which was accepted with a public gratitude equal

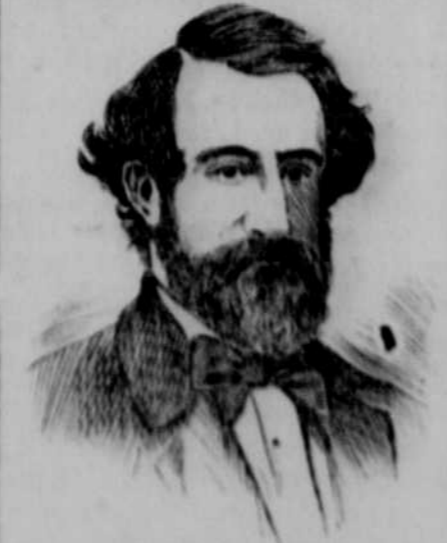
FLORENCE WALLACK.



Florence Wallack (Sewell), a granddaughter of Lester Wallack, will shortly make her debut, modestly but hopefully, in a minor part, in support of a well known star who is to present a series of plays at Wallack's Theater. She is now about 19. She is not without some stage experience, gained, however, in amateur theatricals, aside

to that which was accorded his first work.

His first dip into history was taken with the production of "Napoleon and His Marshals." The book was vigorous, brilliant, fascinating even, but, was not considered history by the critics, who argued that Mr. Headley had sacrificed accuracy to splendor of style. His next work of any considerable importance was "Washington and His Generals," a book that met with great kindness, but which fell under the same shadow that overclouded the first. Apart from the hypercritical opinion as to correct detail and cautious study, these works were ably written. Condemned by the critics, they were read largely by the public, and so far back as forty-four years ago his books had reached an issue of 200,



JOEL T. HEADLEY.

300 volumes. He wrote in all twenty-four books.

The Irish Language.

Irish is still generally used throughout a considerable part of the west of Ireland. There are six schools in which the language is taught.

TRAINING A DOG.

The First Thing to Teach Him Is to Retrieve.

Never be too familiar with a young dog. He must have a certain respect, not necessarily a fear of you; but he must learn to obey, says Harper's Round Table. Any intelligent puppy will learn his name in a few lessons. Once you have given it to him never change it. Mind you this—when he has once recognized you as being his master, his one idea is to please you and to deserve a pat on the head and a word of praise. Never tussle with him with a stick and never deceive him under any pretense. More dogs have been spoiled by their masters not playing fair with them than one could reckon. Be honest with your dog and he will be honest with you. If you possess a gun, and your dog is of that kind which has inherited the scent for game, the first thing to teach him is to fetch and carry—that is, to retrieve—and this without chewing or mutilating the object which he brings. A way to break a dog of this is to take an old glove, put a few tacks with the points extending forward, and fill it full of cotton. He will find by picking it up gently he can carry it without discomfort, while if he attempts to worry it the consequences are not agreeable. The lesson is much better for him than any amount of whipping and he will remember it much longer. If you wish to shoot over your dog, the next thing is to make him find the bird. To do this the best way is to procure a live quail, which can easily be had from any bird-fancier; put it in a small cage and show it to the pup, warning him not to touch it. Then conceal the cage in a cove of fern or grass and bring him carefully in that direction. Never let him nearer than within four

WINS ROYAL HONORS.

ARTIST SARGENT, THE AMERICAN, FAVORED ABROAD.

Recently Promoted to Regular Membership in the British Academy—Some of His Notable Portrait Productions of Prominent Persons on Canvas.



JOHN S. SARGENT, the American artist who has just been promoted from associate to regular member of the British Royal Academy, has been painting many years. His first exhibited work was shown in the salon of 1877. It was a portrait of a young lady, and cleverly done. The following year he painted a group of fisher girls on the shore at Cancale. In 1879 he exhibited "Neapolitan Children Bathing," and in 1882 "El Jales." Following these Mr. Sargent's work was a series of triumphs, which placed him in the first rank of painters. In 1883 came "Children's Portraits" and in 1884 "Mme. Gauthier." In 1885 Mr. Sargent went to London, and his canvases exhibited year after year at the Royal Academy excited great interest and were the subject of wide discussion. Among the most notable are the Misses Vickers, Miss White, Lady Playfair, Mrs. Playfair and a portrait group which he called "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose." Mr. Sargent came to America in 1887 and again in 1889, and the results of these visits were a number of portraits in his best vein—Mrs. Mar-



JOHN S. SARGENT.

quand, Mrs. Bolt, Mrs. Elliot Shepard, Mrs. Jack Gardner, Mrs. Kissam and others. The French government purchased his more recent canvas representing the Spanish dancer Carmenita. Mr. Sargent's art is commended for precision, truthfulness, utmost fidelity of sight and ability to record what is visually perceived. In his panels for the Boston public library and other panels he has opened a new field for himself, which has only served to bring him more honor.

Bicycling and Women's Feet.

It is curious to see how the bicycling craze has already altered the size of ladies' boots. Year after year doctors have been preaching against the high heels and the compressed toes of the French shoe. They have preached, but they have not been listened to; and all sorts of little limps and shuffles have got to have a kind of vogue, and girls have treated their toes as disrespectfully as if they were their waists. And now comes the bicycle and sets things right. The myth of the very small foot is being exploded. Indeed, it was most inevitable that it should. When you see almost level with your eye a thing you were accustomed to look at far beneath it, you get a true idea of its size. A girl's foot on a pedal, now a common wayside object, shows that good-looking girls have fairly proportioned feet. There has come a reaction against the Chinese deformity and a sympathy with nature. You cannot pedal with a foot like the castor of a pianoforte. If you do risk your life or, what is more thought of, your appearance. And so fashion rushes in where physicians may not tread. But the doctors bear no malice. Indeed, they order the bicycle for their patients, many of them being surgeons as well as physicians.—Westminster Gazette.

Armenian Orphans.

Some idea of the frightful extent of Turkish cruelty may be gained from the report of the United States consul at Erzerum that the number of Armenian children who have been made orphans by the massacres is estimated at 50,000. British, German and American missionary and charitable societies are establishing orphanages for these unfortunates, and the British government, through its ambassador at Constantinople, is trying to settle a number of widows and children on the island of Cyprus. The consul mentions one city in the province of Erzerum, where not a single adult male Armenian was left alive.

The Bruswitz Case.

It is announced that, at the request of Emperor William, the German military court will reopen the case of Lieutenant Baron von Bruswitz, the lightness of whose sentence for killing an artisan in a cafe at Carlsruhe has been the occasion of severe criticism, in and out of the reichstag. There are conflicting reports as to the emperor's purpose in the matter. One is that he favors the accused officer, and hopes for some advantage to him from a new inquiry; another that he regards as inadequate the sentence imposed by the military tribunal which condemned him.

NEW WORK FOR WOMEN.

Weaving Silken Fabrics with the Hand Loom Pleasant and Profitable.

An English woman, a Mrs. Bayley, has discovered a new industry for women, or, rather, an old one revised, in weaving artistic-patterned silk fabrics by hand. Power looms, she says, are unable to produce these fabrics of the high artistic merit of which the hand loom is possible. For rich silks Mrs. Bayley asserts that the hand weaving is a cheaper and even quicker mode of weaving than power-loom work, and that since country farms over England cannot obtain the requisite number of hands to produce the work that is ordered in consequence of the revived demand for costly silks, she says that hand-loom weaving can be carried on with profit in ladies' own homes. From four to five dollars a week can easily be earned by any woman in this work. Mrs. Bayley says, and that is in England. The same work can be productive of better returns in this country. The suggestion is not made merely for working girls. Mrs. Bayley believes that there is a paying field in the production of high silken fabrics that is worthy the attention of cultivated women of small means, who would find the work not only lucrative but attractive. In commenting upon Mrs. Bayley's proposition, the Dry Goods Chronicle of this city says: "It is not so many years ago since women, strong, healthy English, German and French women, worked hand looms in Paterson. They operated both shaft harness and jacquard looms, weaving intricate patterns and superb satins, swinging the shuttle by hand and working the harness and jacquard by foot power. Almost every mill then of any size boasted of a hand loom department. Hand looms were also to be seen in many of the homes of these foreign weavers. At that time the hand loom weaver looked upon the power loom attendant as little better than a day laborer, or part and parcel of the machine he was attending. It is time that the old hand loom weaver possessed much more knowledge of the intricacies of the jacquard and loom detail than is known by the power loom weaver to-day, many of whom do not understand the formation of the Darby chain. The hand loom weaver always declared that he 'had served his time at weaving' and 'wound quills' for a year or two before he was permitted to 'pick a warp' or 'throw a shuttle.' The advent of the power loom signaled the degeneration of the hand loom weaver. Many of the old hands have developed into loom fixers, but the majority are simply 'minding' the power loom—they don't call it weaving."

WOMAN CIVIL ENGINEER.

Miss Marian S. Parker is in the Van of "New Women."

Miss Marian S. Parker of New York enjoys the unique distinction of being the only practical woman civil engineer in this country. She is a slight, young girl, apparently about 20 years of age, and has a womanly, gracious manner, that makes her very charming. Miss Parker seems quite unconscious of the fact that her peculiar position as the one woman in her profession makes her interesting. "Really, there isn't anything to tell," she replied to an inquiry. "I made up my mind to be a civil engineer, studied for it, and am now working hard for promotion. It was the most natural thing in the world, for I just followed my inclinations. I wouldn't do anything else. At first," she continued, "I thought to study architecture, for plans and designs have always had a great attraction for me. Then, as I became more and more interested in mathematics, I realized that branch of science would be more to my liking. Civil engineering was just the thing, so at 15 I began earnest preparation." Very probably Miss Parker inherits her liking for problems and all such mathematical things from her father, who is a prominent patent lawyer in Detroit, Mich. In the office where she is daily engaged, Miss Parker has her desk, table, and high stool, just as the other assistants do. For the past year and a half she has been employed on



MISS MARIAN S. PARKER.

the Astor hotel, now in process of construction. She has worked on all parts of the structure detailing and designing and also making the shop drawings at times. These last are the plans for the workmen to follow, and must be absolutely correct, even to the smallest fraction of an inch. These have to be proved and checked, every calculation being gone over the second time by an accurate and careful civil engineer. Miss Parker has sometimes been intrusted with this duty. The work is of a difficult nature, and involves great responsibility on the part of whoever is given it to do. Estimating the amount of material needed is another of the things she is sometimes called upon to calculate.

Mustard Plaster.

A mustard plaster made with the white of an egg will not leave a blister.