

CURRENT TOPICS

THE town of Belvidere, N. J., is suffering from a "pumpkin plague." A Belvidere correspondent for the New York American tells the story in this way: "Asher Brands, a huckster, who has a patch two miles up the Delaware river from here, experimented last year with a new variety of pumpkin, which grew as large as sugar barrels. He had them all ready for harvest, when the memorable freshet of last October came along, uprooted his vines and washed the fruit down the river.

"By a curious action of the current, the fruit was washed into the lower section of this town. Most of the pumpkins were smashed to pieces, and the small portions and the seeds were strewn in the most inconceivable places.

"Early this summer the seeds took root and vines soon sprung up. The fruit has now grown to its full size, and the scene presented is a wonderful one. In every direction great yellow pumpkins can be seen, and in some quarters it looks as though a county fair was being held. Out of every conceivable nook and crevice can be seen a vine bearing fruit. The public streets are full of them, as are also the door yards, gardens and cellars of the citizens.

"Some vines sprang up in Josiah Ketcham's coal bin and he has a bin full of fruit now. The yard in the rear of the Warren Journal office looks as though a score of delinquent subscribers had been in settling up their subscription accounts.

"Sharple Mellick has a couple of vines running up the side of his house, and the parlor window is a resting place for two pumpkins, either of which will weigh thirty pounds.

"Pumpkin pie is the latest thing in Belvidere now, and housewives are putting up enough stewed pumpkin to last for several years."

THERE are seven schools in Germany devoted to the training of locksmiths and blacksmiths. A writer in the Dubuque, Iowa, Telegraph says that these schools are in the cities of Burgstadt, Grossenhain, Frankenberg, Meissen, Glauchau, Rosswain and Zittau. Only graduates of public schools are admitted. The course of instruction in three of the schools lasts three years; in three of the others it is shorter. To the school at Rosswain are admitted such students only as have completed a course in one of the other six schools, and the curriculum is highly advanced, covering physics, chemistry and electricity, with particular reference to practical construction of machinery. The schools are supported by the blacksmith and locksmith guilds, aided by subventions from the government of Saxony and private beneficence.

HENRY DUNANT, the founder of the Red Cross society is dying friendless and alone in a hospital at Geneva, Switzerland. A writer in the Sioux City Journal says: "For several years he has made his home in a poor little cabin, a dependency of the pauper farm belonging to the village of Heiden, Appenzell, Switzerland.

Henry Dunant was born March 8, 1828, in this city. He came of a noble family, who for two centuries held important positions under the state. He read with great interest of the wonderful work accomplished by Miss Florence Nightingale in the Crimean war. A few years after Dunant visited Italy, and in 1849 was at Solferino, where he assisted in taking care of the sick and wounded soldiers.

"In 1853 Dunant published his famous book, 'A Souvenir of Solferino,' in which he drew a vivid picture of the suffering endured by the soldiers in that war. He therefore proposed that a society should be formed which should take care of the wounded in battle. Later on he laid his plan before Gustave Moynier, of Geneva, president of the 'Society of Public Utility of Switzerland,' Dr. Louis Appia, a distinguished physician who died recently, and a number of other well known residents of this city. These men held a number of conferences, and the outcome was the famous Geneva convention, when the Red Cross was established. Dunant had no connection with the Red Cross society after that time."

DUNANT spent three-fourths of his immense fortune furthering his philanthropic ideas and according to the Journal he gave up the woman he

loved and the hope of raising a family, arguing that "for their sake he would have to rob humanity." The Journal writer adds: "While working for the public good he had to leave the care of his finances to others, and, as usual in such cases, lost all he possessed. Twenty-two years ago he woke up one morning to find himself a beggar but the discovery gave him no uneasiness. His work was done, he could afford to retire, no one would miss him.

"As he was a very sick man at the time, he went straightway to the poor farm at Heiden and has been there ever since. Once out of it, the world soon forgot Dunant, and it was the merest accident that the empress of Russia granted him a paltry pension of a few hundred francs a year in 1896."

PARIS dispatches announce the death of Louis Deibler who for twenty years directed the guillotine at Paris. Deibler died at the age of 81. During recent years he has been confined to his bed, being succeeded as chief executioner by his son Anatole Deibler. A Paris dispatch printed in the Sioux City Journal says: "Deibler was one of the quaint figures of the city, owing to the large number of executions he had successfully conducted. He came from a family of executioners, succeeding his father, who was chief executioner, and then surrendering the office to his son Anatole Deibler.

"Louis Deibler began his career as executioner in Algiers. Later he became chief executioner in the provinces, and finally, in 1879, chief executioner of Paris. His guillotine was usually erected on the square fronting the prison La Roquette, in the suburbs of the city, where vast crowds frequently assembled. Deibler had no expression of fierceness. He appeared to be a simple man of the middle class. He took pride in his work and had expressed the hope that the government would reward his faithfulness by bestowing on him a decoration. Deibler, who was retired and pensioned six years ago, lived quietly in considerable comfort with his son and successor, Anatole. Among the persons Deibler executed were four anarchists, Lieut. Anasty and scores of criminals.

"Louis Deibler, or, as he was generally termed, 'Monsieur de Paris,' when he retired in December, 1898, in favor of his son, gave as his reason for so doing that he was getting too old, that his hand trembled when he was called to execute a criminal and that his long and extensive services gave him the right to rest.

"During thirty-nine years of service Deibler guillotined 327 criminals, and he boasted that he never had a mishap. At an execution at Nancy, however, he came near bungling owing to the violent struggles of the criminal. It was said of Deibler that he exercised a strange, almost supernatural power over his intended victim, and it rarely happened that he met with any resistance."

A BULLETIN recently issued from the census office shows that there were 1,750,178 or 18.2 of all children between 10 and 15 years old regularly employed in gainful occupations during the year 1900. An Associated Press dispatch says: "This is an increase of 2 per cent. over the child labor in 1890, when there were 1,118,356 children employed, or 16.8 per cent. of all the children in the United States. Alabama has the highest percentage of child labor, 27.2 per cent. of all the children under 12 years old being employed in that state. Massachusetts, with 5 per cent., is the lowest. In all the southern states the percentage of child labor is high, and in all the eastern states it is low. The percentage of children only 10 years old is 8.1. Boys predominate among the employed children."

THE bureau chiefs in all the departments of the federal government have been forbidden, according to the Washington correspondent for the New York Herald, to give out any information concerning the estimates they will send to Congress for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1905. The World's correspondent claims that such secrecy in public affairs has never before been imposed by a president and it is claimed that these precautions have been taken because of Judge Parker's speech in which he dwelt upon the extravagance and corruption under republican rule.

THE great growth of the West is pointed out by a writer in the Des Moines Register and Leader when he says: "It has required but two decades to shift the central of population from Ohio to Indiana, the centre of farm values from Eastern Indiana to Western Illinois, the centre of the farm income to the western banks of the Mississippi and the centre of farming area from Eastern Illinois to Central Missouri. Two centres have already crossed the Mississippi and two more decades will be sufficient to advance another across the Father of Waters."

IT IS related by a writer in the London Truth that throughout the Franco-Prussian war, Bismark "grumbled at the princes," who commanded under Prussian leadership. "The princes have taken all the comfortable lodgings," "the princes drink up the fine wines," "the caterers for the princes carry off the best joints from the butchers and the best vegetables and fruits from the green grocers," "the princes are a cause of constant friction and embarrassment."

The writer in Truth adds: "Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern's baggage as described in a French paper reminds me of Bismark's growls. His Royal Highness, who is brother-in-law of the German Empress, wanted to take to the Farthest East 500 coils or trunks, bales mostly bulky and weighty.

"Prince Khilkoff, director of railways, is said to have turned pale on receiving a letter from Prince Leopold's secretary. In his embarrassment he applied to the czar for guidance, reminding respectfully His Majesty that Russian officers could only take a single box and a hand bag.

"After an exchange of telegrams between St. Petersburg and Berlin, the Emperor William decided that his cousin could do with fifty boxes and bales. Members of the Imperial Japanese family are on the same footing as other officers and put up with the eternal rice cake and handful of dried fish."

THE World has never beheld such a combination of incongruous elements as the Russian empire presents today, according to a writer in the London Times. This writer says: "The educated classes include some of the best informed the most highly polished men and women in Europe, many of whom openly express ideas of an advance Liberal type. They include also an intellectual proletariat which has embraced, with all the ardor of the Slav nature, the wildest and most dangerous theories of French and German Socialists. These men have the tastes and the ambitions which education brings, with no reasonable prospect of gratifying either. Beneath is the dumb peasant order, permeated here and there with the new ideas which the villagers who have migrated to the newly established manufacturing centres or who have come into contact with the artisans and the urban workmen in the army bring home with them. Over all the bureaucracy and the police exercise what is too often in practice an irresponsible sway. The church in her own sphere is as intolerant and as unenlightened as the state. Most ominous of all, the economic conditions of nobles, of manufacturers and artisans and of the agricultural masses appear to be becoming more and more grievous. The most enlightened men of the empire deplore the evils they daily witness and recognize that profound constitutional reforms are indispensable to remedy them. Yet they are acutely conscious of the dangers which such reforms must almost necessarily bring, and they have so far failed to devise any known project which promises to effect the transition from the half-Oriental, half-mediaeval state, which Russia now is, to conditions essential for the development of modern life and civilization."

CHINA is the great slave country of the world. A writer in the Chicago Journal points out "Of a population of 400,000,000 people, there are slaves to the number of 10,000,000. Every family of means keeps its girl slaves and man's position is usually gauged by the number he keeps. At any age from three to fifteen girls are sold, seven or eight being the age at which most change hands. The girls are purchased to do housework,