

CURRENT TOPICS

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, the heroine of the Crimean war, is living in London in her quiet old house in Park Lane. Although she is very old, she is wonderfully active and spends a great part of her time in reading. Her home is nearly always filled with the choicest flowers from admiring friends. In an interview recently, Miss Nightingale, pointing to her flowers, said: "You see that the people of England have not quite forgotten an old woman who tried to do her duty as she saw it. In fact, sometimes I really wish that they would forget me once in a while, for reading of the hundreds of letters which come to me every day is sometimes more than my eyes will stand." Miss Nightingale is still very much interested in nursing and follows the war in the far east with great interest. She says: "I should like to meet, before I die, Mme. Stoessel, the wife of the hero of Port Arthur. She is a true heroine, and when I read of her suffering and of her tireless work among the poor Russian soldiers I often feel like crying. War is an awful thing, and I do not see why England and the United States do not at once put an end to the terrible bloodshed in Manchuria and Port Arthur. I had always hoped that I should have been spared the sight of another war."

THE Westchester Gazette contributes an interesting article on the different kinds of postage stamps used by the nations of the world. That paper says: "According to the 'Universal Standard Catalogue of the Postage Stamps of the World' the total number of all known varieties of postage stamps issued by all the governments of the world up to the present time is 19,242. Of this number 205 have been issued in Great Britain, and 5,711 in various British colonies and protectorates, leaving 13,326 for the rest of the world. Dividing the totals among the continents, Europe issued 4,603; Asia, 3,623; Africa, 4,005; America, including the West Indies, 6,095, and Oceania, 1,425. Salvador has issued more varieties of postage stamps than any other country, the number being 450. Poland and Wadhwan have each found a solitary specimen suffice for their postal cards."

SOME interesting statistics are given by a writer in the Review of Reviews, upon the occupations of the Italian people. This writer says: "In the Riforma Sociale (Rome), Professor G. Ferraglio summarizes the economic condition of the Italian people. He draws his information from the census of 1901, by which the population of Italy is estimated at 32,000,000. Of these, 16,883,881 exercise a profession, 9,666,467 are occupied in agriculture and the varied industries, 3,980,816 are engaged as artisans, while 3,227,598 can not be included in the agricultural and kindred classes and the varied industries. In these 3,227,598 must be comprehended the commercial classes, various employees in banks, insurance companies, hotelkeepers, dealers in real estate, who make up a total of 1,196,741 persons, of whom 1,025,839 are men and 170,905 women. This leaves 2,030,854, to whom belong the classes devoted to intellectual and literary pursuits as well as those engaged in domestic and other service. Besides these are people of capital and independent means, who are estimated in the census as 511,279, of which 272,720 are women and 239,259 are men."

OF THE people who engage in an occupation not included in the preceding classes, this writer says that the army and navy, numbering about 204,012 persons, must be reckoned, and adds: "To the same class belong those occupied in the service of religion, who number 89,329 men and 40,564 women, giving a total of 139,893. After these classes comes the teaching population. In the profession of teaching, 62,873 are women and 29,559 are men. In the medical profession, in the widest sense of the terms, including nurses and midwives, there are 69,913 employed, of which 49,030 are men and 20,883 women, 1,000 of the latter being midwives. The legal profession absorbs 33,746 persons. Engineers, land surveyors and accountants make up a total of 22,775. The artistic classes number only 39,877 persons, of which 33,487 are men and 7,370 are women. In the profession of

painting and sculpture, artists and their models number 13,857 persons, of which only 790 are women. Belonging to the musical and dramatic stage, including circus performers, etc., there are 26,020 persons, 20,420 being men and 5,600 women."

MODERN day surgery, apparently, has no limitations. Recent experiments indicate that not only physical but mental diseases can be corrected by its use. A writer in the Boston Transcript, referring to the use of surgery to cure mental illness, gives this interesting instance: "The story is told of Jesse Beard, a lad 15 years of age, who manifested a violent temper and criminal propensities. He was disobedient to his parents, and detested the discipline and instruction of the schools. He ran away from home and when upbraided threatened to kill his mother and sister. He showed tendencies somewhat similar to those that gave Jesse Pomeroy his unique notoriety; but fortunately science took him in hand before those tendencies had expressed themselves to the same deplorable extent. Finally he was brought by his parents before the juvenile court as an incorrigible. The chief probation officer was a woman, and very likely a mother. At any rate she took an interest in what seemed a desperate and hopeless case, and had the boy taken before an expert for examination. Investigation disclosed the fact that when 3 years old he had fallen into a trench, his head striking some timbers, after which he was quite ill, and was threatened with brain fever. Following this lead the surgeons located the old injury, and trephined the skull at that point, disclosing a fracture and brain depression, with chronic inflammation of the brain covering. The pressure was removed and the brain restored to its normal condition, since which time the subject has shown an entirely different disposition. He has become kind and obedient and anxious to make up for the opportunities he had previously thrown away."

THIS writer, concluding his interesting article, says: "There may be a belated and unintentional recognition here of the claims upon which phrenology is based. There are cases of crime in which it might be more just and more humane to turn the offender over to the expert surgeon than to the executioner. The last hanging in Connecticut, we believe, was of a boy 18 years old, who had committed murder for no reason that he could give or any one else imagine. Yet along the line of his ancestry, for two generations at least, epilepsy and habitual drunkenness were the distinguishing characteristics and he had manifested merely hereditary traits; but the law had made no provision for these, and he was hanged all the same. Probably the Indianapolis boy would sooner or later have come to a similar end had he missed the good fortune to attract the attention of those with more advanced ideas and better sympathies than the common. The suggestion opens up a great field for science, philanthropy and humanity."

THE railroad locomotive will be a thing of the past within two or three generations, if the experiments with electricity upon railroads prove successful. A writer in the Philadelphia Inquirer says: "Five years ago a commission of expert railway men and electrical engineers carefully considered the question of using electrical power on railways, and it was generally agreed that for the time no such change could be made. Since then there have been new inventions and discoveries and new engineering processes, and the application of electricity to a limited extent on the present steam roads is practically an accomplished fact. The entire Long Island railway is to adopt electrical power, and the New York Central will use this motive force for thirty miles north of its New York terminals. The Pennsylvania will install it exclusively on its new tunnel lines into New York."

THE same writer says that this may be considered only a beginning, adding: "All the efforts by physicists the world over to secure a higher potential from coal, or in other words, to

conserve more of the 80 or 90 per cent of heat that is now wasted, have had in view stationary engines. It has seemed impossible to make any saving on a locomotive. When the latent heat of coal can be used to better advantage it will make electricity a much cheaper force than now, and in the end steam will be relegated to such roads as can not secure cheap electrical power. Already there are outside of the cities about 15,000 miles of electric trolley lines and thousands of more miles are either under construction or projected with promise of construction. The result of electrical development on steam roads will be a great gain to all concerned. It will make traveling swifter, safer and more comfortable. The first electric locomotive built for the New York Central goes seventy-five miles an hour without difficulty, and it is not of the most powerful type. There are electrical engineers who hold that inside of a decade it will be possible to operate 30,000 miles of road from Niagara falls. Our grandchildren may come to look upon the locomotive of today with the same archaeological interest that we do on the stage coach of the past."

A WRITER in the Chicago News gives some remarkable instances of the endurance of animals. This writer says: "It is questionable whether those who delight to store tales of feats of endurance in animals will accept the latest claimant to notice—that of the dog who had just been dug out alive from a rabbit hole in the Scilly Isles, after having been lost for a fortnight. Instances of remarkable endurance among the animals, however, are numerous. Several years ago a man in England fell into a deep crevasse. With him, when he was last seen, was his favorite dog. Six weeks elapsed between the date of his disappearance and the discovery of his remains. There was but the skeleton of him. Beside the bones was the dog, alive and flourishing."

APPARENTLY trivial ills often cause death. Even among the strongest animals, for it is said: "Whales, elephants and eagles come at the head of the table of creatures which longest survive the ills to which they are heir. Yet a whale has been found dead from a dislocated jaw; an elephant has died from gangrene in one of his feet, set up by a gunshot. In a Scotch deer forest not long ago a stalking party came across a magnificent eagle, dead caught in a fox trap. He had been caught by the center claw of one foot and had died of exhaustion in attempting to escape. By his side were two grouse and a partly eaten hare which other eagles had brought to sustain him in his fight for life. If a rat had been caught by his leg in a trap either he or his comrades would have bitten off the imprisoned limb and released him. The poor despised toad is not built to stand physical violence, but he would fatten on imprisonment. Toads imprisoned in rocks for years—no one knows how many—come to light from time to time, fat and well. Unless microbes carried to them through the pores of imprisoning rock have been their fare, it is certain, according to naturalists who ought to know, that they have eaten nothing for an unthinkable period."

THE Kansas City Journal says that the Cherokee Indians are becoming cocaine fiends. The Journal says: "A little investigation shows that druggists are disposing of a great deal of this drug, but what is more startling still, is that there are a lot of persons who have been going into the country and selling cocaine to the Indians. It is a new vice for Indians, but it is wonderful how it is taking hold on them. It is said that the drug is being bootlegged as it has been the custom to bring in liquor. The authorities will start an investigation."

SOME men, many of them lawyers, have shown most remarkable powers of retention, even in advanced age. A writer in the Saturday Evening Post, commenting on this fact, cites this interesting instance: "Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, born in Boston, Mass., lived to ninety-one, and was brimming with mental energy to the last. His memory was so tenacious that, in speaking at the