

CURRENT TOPICS

A TIMELY warning is given the railroad managers by that conservative old publication *The Saturday Evening Post* (Philadelphia) in this form: "Our ingenious and able railway men are making an interesting campaign of education against public interference with them in the management of those public highways called railways. The arguments they advance are fully as convincing as the arguments against permitting the building of railways used to be back in the forties and fifties of the last century. But, for some reason or other, men nowadays refuse to be greatly terrified, much less convinced, by demonstrations of awful consequences of doing things which they feel the time has come for them to do. The people have decided to resume supervision—real supervision—of their highways. And they will do it. Lying and faking politicians may baffle them for a few years. Dividend-seeking railway magnates may get a little further extension of their present lease to work the railway business each year as if next year was to see the end of the world. But in a short time the people will have their way; and the less they are exasperated by corrupt hindrance the better it will be for those who own stocks and bonds."

JAMES HAMILTON LEWIS, now corporation counsel for Chicago, acted as toastmaster at a banquet given to President Roosevelt on Jefferson day. In presenting the president on that occasion Colonel Lewis said that Mr. Roosevelt "returned from the Spanish-American war with a brilliant reputation, and I with a brilliant uniform. We both became candidates for vice president. He, the president, won, and I, as my habit, got beat. The president, however, met me later, and in the presence of mutual friends, consoled me for my defeat, saying: 'Never mind; Lewis; that I won and that you lost only indicated that the people knew your fitness for vice president. They knew us both. They knew that I could represent the president part and you could represent the vice.'"

ACCORDING to the *Washington Post*, Mr. Roosevelt, at a meeting of the Japanese and Russian peace commissioners, said something on the subject of American humor as distinguished from Oriental wit. He proceeded to illustrate American humor by repeating that portion of Colonel Lewis' speech as quoted above. The *Post* says: "As the president repeated that conversation the Japanese commissioner inquired: 'Why did the people laugh when he said he came back with a brilliant uniform? Did they think it funny that Colonel Lewis should keep away from the firing line, just to keep from soiling his uniform?' And then the Russian at once added his appreciation of what was being said by observing, 'And is it true that that gentleman who was toastmaster, as he said, was put upon a presidential ticket to represent the vice? We hear in our country that you must nominate men on your tickets to represent certain foreign elements, in order to get their votes, but we did not know that in naming your presidential ticket there must be one named to represent the vice to get vote.' At this point the president despaired of conveying to his distinguished guests a definition of American humor, particularly of the subtle kind perpetrated by James Hamilton Lewis, corporation counsel for Chicago."

AN ARTICLE printed in *The Nation* and crediting the seedless apple to Luther Burbank, was reproduced in a recent issue of *The Commoner*. The following letter from Mr. Burbank explains itself: "I beg to inform you that the seedless apple mentioned in the enclosed slip is not one of Mr. Burbank's productions, though a number of the papers are trying to make out that such is the case. The truth of the matter is that Mr. Burbank has known of the seedless apple for fifty years, but has had nothing whatever to do with the late booming of it."

A NEW WAY in which animals may benefit the human race is suggested, according to the *Chicago Chronicle*, by a letter recently received by the secretary of a rural English society. The letter follows: "Sir—I partickly wish the satiety to be called to consider the case what

follows, as I think it mite be maid Tranxtionable in the next Reports. My wif had a Tomb Cat that dyd. Being a torture shell and a grate favrit, we had Him berried in the Guardian and for the sake of the enrichment of the mould I had the carks deposited under the roots of a Gotsberry Bush (The Frute being up till then of a smooth kind). But the next Sasons Frute, after the Cat was berried, the Gosberries was all hairy, and more remarkable the Catpillers of the same Bush was Al of the same Hairy Description."

LAWRENCE Y. SHERMAN of Chicago in a recent interview said that the contest for the senatorship between Shelby M. Cullom, present senator, and Richard Yates, former governor, would be "a fight between an antique and a dub." A Chicago dispatch says that friends of Messrs. Cullom and Yates have been investigating the meaning of the words "antique" and "dub." This dispatch explains: "Scott Cowan, grain inspector, and A. L. French and James Neville, railroad and warehouse commissioners, got a dictionary and found 'antique' to mean 'old, ancient, of genuine antiquity.' This, they thought, did well enough for Cullom, but they could not place the exact meaning of 'dub.' 'I am afraid it means 'chump,' said Cowan. The best he could find was a verb—'Dub: To invest with any dignity or new character.' From this he created a noun—'Dub: A man invested with dignity.' From this they have figured out that the contest between Cullom and Yates would be a contest between a 'person of genuine antiquity,' and 'a man invested with dignity.'"

THE widow of an American literary man whose name, we are told, was known to English speaking people everywhere, writing to the editor of the *New York World* says: "To help on the insurance agitation which *The World* is waging I wish to give to the public my experience with the Mutual Insurance company of New York. In 1883 my husband took out a policy in this company for \$15,000, paying a yearly premium of \$500. There was a rebate each year of from \$50 to \$75, which could be allowed or not according to the disposition of the owner of the policy. If the full \$500 was paid the rebate with accrued interest was supposed to be added to the amount of the policy when it fell due. Some years advantage was taken of this, when it was more than ordinarily difficult to meet this premium, but for more than half the time the full amount was paid and the policy was carried for twenty-two years. Thus more than \$10,000 was paid on it. I remember distinctly the glowing terms put before him by the agent who induced my husband to take out this policy; that is, if it were carried for twenty years it would be worth \$20,000 at the very least—very probably \$25,000. At my husband's death, after satisfying the numerous requirements of the company as to proofs of death and my right under this policy, I am tendered a receipt to sign 'in full of all claims' under policy No. — of \$15,012.85!—that the 'mutual benefit' so highly extolled of the company's investment of \$10,000 paid them in premiums during twenty-two years amounts to the magnificent sum of \$25.70—supposing they pretend to make an equal division. I suppose this may be but one of many cases in which his life insurance was all the husband and father left for the support of his family after he had left them—who was led to invest his small yearly surplus in life insurance rather than in some other form of investment because of its supposed highly beneficent and sure character."

NEW JERSEY'S primary election law has taken effect and on September 12, primary elections for all parties in that state were conducted with the formality of regular elections. Referring to this law the Philadelphia Public Ledger says: "The New Jersey primaries will be managed much as the general elections are, with official ballots, ballotboxes registry lists and polling books. Two members of each political party will conduct the election, have charge of the ballot boxes and have the right to challenge voters offering to vote their respective tickets. Only registered voters and those who have the right to vote at general or local elections have the right to vote at the primary. The object of the

primary is to elect delegates to party conventions to nominate candidates to be voted for in more than one ward or township, and to elect party candidates directly, and without convention, when they shall be voted for in but one ward or township. The official primary ballot contains the names of candidates for the position of delegates whose candidacy has been previously endorsed by ten or more voters, as appears of record in the office of the municipal or township clerk. Each voter on entering the room receives the official ballot he desires to vote, returns to the booth, prepares his ballot and deposits it in the ballot box of his party. The formality of the proceeding dignifies it, and the penalties attaching to the infraction of the law by the election officers or others insure, so far as legal provisions can, a fair election, and will diminish the number of contests for delegates' seats in the nominating conventions, which are so much in evidence when delegates are elected by loose methods. The regulations of New Jersey primaries are not more complicated than those governing general elections, and can be readily understood by intelligent voters."

THE final report of the World's Fair National Commission was filed September 4. The receipts on account of admissions amounted to more than \$6,000,000 and the total receipts amounted to more than \$10,000,000. The disbursements exceeded \$9,000,000, leaving a cash balance somewhat in excess of \$800,000. Experts appointed to investigate the records, report that many vouchers are missing and that in some departments, discrepancies exist, although the loss through shortage will be small.

FOR the movement of the crops of 1905, 1,500,000 freight cars will be necessary. The Chicago correspondent for the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* says: "Measuring the prosperity of the American farmer this year in units of freight cars, railroad statisticians have figured out that the grain traffic for this crop year will aggregate 1,500,000 car loads. If all this grain could be marketed simultaneously and hauled in a single solid train of freight cars, the train would be 11,931 miles long, exclusive of the locomotives that would be necessary to move it. Dividing this huge train into smaller ones of forty cars each, there would be required 37,500 locomotives, or 355 miles of draft machinery. Adding this 355 miles to the 11,931 miles of cars, there is a total of 12,286 miles. To hold the cars and engines it would require nearly every foot of four tracks extending from New York to San Francisco. The necessary single track would measure half the circumference of the globe."

IMPRESSIVE as these figures are, this correspondent says that they do not begin to tell the vastness of the wealth which the American farmer has taken from his soil in corn, oats, wheat, barley and rye in the year 1905. This correspondent says: "Railroad men's estimates are confined to the grain which will be moved to market centers on the steam roads. Probably not over one-third of the grain produced will ever see a freight car. The other two-thirds will be hauled to local mills in wagons, or will be consumed by live stock on the farms. To hold the entire corn crop alone would call for a train and engines 21,000 miles in length, the equivalent of six golden zones reaching from Hell Gate to the Golden Gate. In this story of agricultural treasure lies the reason for the unparalleled preparations of the western railroads for traffic this season. If the farmer were not already well supplied with ready money and were forced to rush his grain to market, as he has done in past years, it is reasonable to suppose the railroads would be utterly swamped with grain traffic."

ACCORDING to the same authority railroad statisticians estimate the wheat and oats crop of Minnesota and the Dakotas at 326,000,000 bushels, of which 190,000,000 bushels will be marketed on steam roads. They place the total yield of corn at 2,566,000,000 bushels, and expect that 756,000,000 bushels will be hauled on freight trains greater or less distances. Granting that these figures are correct, there will be 173,000 car loads of wheat and oats from the three states men-