

CURRENT TOPICS

LIGHT on a long forgotten tragedy is thrown by a London Times writer who says: "There has just returned to Berlin Dr. A. von Le Coq, the head of the small scientific party despatched by order of the German Emperor to Chinese Turkestan in September, 1904, to carry on the work of excavation in and around the town of Turfan. For the most part these discoveries consist of MSS. in at least ten different languages and paintings on hardened mud, plaster and wood. There are several in a tongue that is declared to be utterly unknown. These last will probably attract the notice and interest of ethnologists throughout the world. Apparently this language is a variation of Syriac. Although most of these manuscripts must date back to the eighth and ninth centuries, if not even earlier, there is no papyrus among them, all being written on parchment, two or three kinds of Chinese paper or leather. Other discoveries made by this expedition were of a more gruesome nature. In one temple unearthed from the sands that had long covered it Dr. von Le Coq found some hundreds of dead bodies of Buddhist monks. The place was crowded with these to the very doors, and evidence was forthcoming of these having been driven into the temple by the Mongol followers of Confucius and then so fastened in that escape was impossible and death from suffocation was only a matter of time. Probably this massacre took place ten or twelve centuries ago, but when the temple was opened the bodies were found to be in a remarkable state of preservation."

THE NEW YORK Evening Post recently said: "If Berlin annexed all its suburbs, after the fashion of Paris, it would have about 3,000,000 inhabitants, and would be the second city in size in Europe." Referring to this statement a writer in the Post says: "The fact is, of course, exactly the contrary. Berlin is a big, overgrown, sprawling place, in territorial extent; as related to population, very much resembling Chicago. Its population, according to a census taken within a few months, is 2,033,900. That figure having been, as it seems, something of a disappointment, a proposition has recently been made to annex some suburbs so as to crowd the population up to about 3,000,000. On the other hand, Paris is the most confined and compact city in the world. Its density of population is about ten times that of London and between seven and eight times that of New York. The entire city is included within the fortifications; the area is less than thirty-one square miles, and no proposition is put forward to annex any suburbs. Its population on its thirty-one square miles, by the census of 1901, was 2,714,068. If the city limits were extended so as to make Paris continuous with the Department of the Seine, the area would be 184 square miles, and the population 3,639,764, according to the census of 1901. Should the area be further increased so as to make Paris equal in superficial extent to Greater New York (327 square miles), the population would be about 4,200,000. If it were again stretched out to make it cover as much ground as London (700 square miles), the population would be about 5,000,000. There is, however, in Paris no disposition to be big merely for bigness' sake, nor any tendency to increase the area in order to increase the population. Nevertheless, in fact, it is certainly the third, and probably the second, center of population on the earth, surpassed only by London, and possibly by New York, including the New Jersey suburbs; and aside from these two great cities, no other city seriously rivals it in population."

THE CONGRESSIONAL postal committee bill is described by the New York World as "a bill to set the postal department to editing all the newspapers, magazines and weekly periodicals in the country." That this is not an extreme statement of the purpose of the measure The World cites the words of the committee report accompanying the bill as follows: "Another consequence of the expansive power of fiction is found in the confusion of the newspaper and magazine types and the unhealthy exaggeration of the modern newspaper, as shown especially in its Sunday edition. The newspaper is rapidly being extended into the magazine field at the sacrifice both of the postal revenue and the true mission of the newspaper. The miscellaneous matter contained in the

Sunday issue of a newspaper must of necessity lack the quality to make it socially and educationally valuable." The World says: "The committees are properly charged with recommending postal rates on mail matter; no publisher objects to their doing so. But when their members try to distinguish between the 'magazine type' of printed matter and the 'newspaper type' and to determine just what the 'magazine field' is, they do what no editor has ever yet been wise enough to accomplish and what no government official should be permitted to attempt."

ALMOST incredible in the opinion of the World are the means proposed to check the "unhealthy exaggeration" of the newspapers thus: "No newspaper or part or section of a newspaper or other periodical must consist wholly or substantially of fiction." The World adds: "This provision would bar 'fiction supplements' from the Sunday newspapers. It would kill several excellent magazines devoted entirely to fiction. Under its provisions Mr. Gilder, of the Century, or Mr. Alden, of Harper's Magazine, would be unable to issue a 'midsummer fiction number' and send it through the mails." Again, it is provided that: "No newspaper or part or section of a newspaper must have advertising to a greater extent than 50 per cent of its superficial area." This would not only prevent the arrangement of advertisements into sections, which are so convenient for those seeking employment or employees, but it would exclude from the mails any edition of a newspaper in which a rush of late advertising happened to exceed 50 per cent of the total space. Again: "Each part or section of a newspaper must be of the same size, form and weight of paper." What conceivable purpose this provision has, except to prevent supplement illustrations from being printed upon better paper than the hurried main sheet, Mr. Penrose can perhaps explain. Federal regulation of the arts and industries is just now fashionable, but it has its danger limits. If the postoffice department may edit fiction out of newspapers and magazines, prescribe their size and shape and determine the percentage of advertisements, how long will it be before the blue pencils of Washington censors may be turned upon the editorial criticism of public measures which is essential in a free republic?"

JOHAN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR., received a shock recently at the meeting of his Bible class. The New York World says that Mr. Rockefeller invited a free discussion on why young men do not go to church more. The last of the story is told by The World in this way: "A young man named Smythe, who has been a member of the class for several months and who is known to hold socialistic views, was immediately on his feet. Addressing Mr. Rockefeller, he said: 'I want to warn you in advance, Mr. Rockefeller, that I am an outspoken man, and may say things to offend some people here. The church has not outgrown its usefulness, and the reason why young men do not go to church is because the churches of this city are too fashionable and the young man is expected to pay a certain sum each Sunday, and if the young man is poorly dressed he feels that he is looked down upon. If the church was run on the old-time idea of one person being as good as another in God's house you would get the young men. We all have some pride, and if a man is forced to wear a seedy suit of clothes he knows that his better dressed brother would not sit on the bench beside him in Sunday-school or church. This is one solid reason. A hardworking man who has little money cannot stand being preached to on an empty stomach. If you fill his stomach before you preach to him he'll be more likely to listen to you and will come again. It is all very well to tell about the glory of the future life, but if you help him to get comfort and happiness in this world he'll appreciate it more than your promising happiness in the world to come.'"

OTHERS of the class, according to this report, looked astonished. All eyes were turned upon Mr. Rockefeller, who simply said: "That's one way of looking at the matter. Is there anybody else?" A tall young man arose and said this was his first appearance at the Bible class. He was a stranger in the city, and had "dropped

in." He said he was greeted at the door by two young members of the class, who, of course, did not know him, and who grasped him by the hand and escorted him in. "I don't agree with the last speaker," said the newcomer. "I don't think it is necessary to have good clothes to be a church member. I do think that work such as Mr. Rockefeller is doing will bring more men to church than anything else. Give the young men more handshakes, like those I got, and you'll have them in church." Mr. Rockefeller's face brightened. When the stranger had finished he said: "That is a very interesting view of the question, my friend." Mr. Rockefeller then took the floor. He said it was a deplorable fact that few leading young men, these days, enter the ministry. "Why is this?" he asked. "Perhaps it is because there are so many other lines of Christian service open to a young man where he can do religious work while in the ranks of the laymen."

THE WITHDRAWAL of Senator John F. Dryden from the senatorial contest in New Jersey was a general surprise. Senator Dryden's friends say that the action was taken on the advice of the senator's physicians, who insisted that he could not stand the long severe strain. Mr. Dryden's friends favored Mr. Briggs, chairman of the republican state committee, and he was nominated by the republican caucus and elected. Senator Dryden went before the republican voters of New Jersey last fall in the primary election, was a candidate for senator, and carried every county in the state. A number of republican members, however, refused to vote for him.

SENATOR RICHARD W. MORGAN of Boulder county, Colorado, was expelled from the Colorado state senate February 6 by a vote of twenty-nine to one. An Associated Press dispatch says: "Morgan's expulsion was recommended by a majority of a special committee of the senate which found him guilty of having accepted a bribe. This finding was based on the statement made to the senate in March, 1905, by Morgan himself, who handed to the secretary of the senate \$750, which, he declared, had been given him by James M. Herbert and Daniel Sullivan in consideration of his promise to vote for Alva Adams, democrat, for governor in the Peabody-Adams contest. When the vote on the contest was taken Morgan voted for Peabody. Morgan failed to appear before the investigation committee when summoned and was not in the senate today when his expulsion was decided upon."

WHAT is the secret of longevity of London cabmen? A writer in the London Chronicle says: "One of them surprised the Westminster magistrate by declaring that he had been picking up fares for the past half century in the metropolitan streets. A dip into an official return showed that there are 1,204 London cabmen between the ages of sixty and seventy, 249 between the ages of seventy and eighty, while seven return their age between eighty and ninety! One almost suspects these seven old patriarchs of having carried sedan chairs in the pre-growth days. At all events they are a living advertisement of London as a health resort, with beefsteak, overcoat and muffler."

WILLIAM J. OLIVER of Knoxville, Ten., will probably be the Panama canal contractor. New York newspapers say that Thomas F. Ryan has organized a syndicate for the purpose of backing Oliver. Referring to these arrangements The New York World says: "P. Y. Walsh, of Davenport, Ia., said to be the largest railroad contractor in the west, is to do the excavating. P. J. Brennan, the asphalt paving contractor, of Washington, is to have a share of the canal construction. Robert Russell, a partner of Oliver, and an expert in steam shovel operations, will handle that part of the contract, including the operations at Culebra Cut. He will also look after the men. W. H. Sayre, of the International Construction company, of this city, and John H. Gerrish, of the Eastern Dredging company, of Boston, will do the dredging, which will be principally at the Atlantic and Pacific ends of the proposed waterway. Vice-president of the Southern Railway, also an ally of