

## Topics of Interest

REASON'S advantages over violence are suggested by a writer in the Denver News who says: The difference between militancy as a weapon of achievement in the cause of woman suffrage in England and reasoning and diplomacy in this country is well exemplified by the figures showing its present status. In 1909 four states, with a population of 1,644,034, had voted the franchise. This year there are ten with a combined population of 13,370,232, or double the number of states, and an increase of about 800 per cent in population. In 1909 the English house of commons passed the suffrage bill by a majority of 13, in 1910 by a majority of 110, and in 1911 by 167, the high water mark of favor. But last year this was reversed when the bill was beaten by 14 votes and this year by 47. This notwithstanding the militants continue to burn and disfigure and destroy and make themselves obnoxious generally to the conservative sentiment of the British masses. They ought to take a lesson from the masterly and womanly campaigns of the American suffragettes. The American woman is winning steadily and rightfully because of the innate justice of her demands. She doesn't have to resort to the dynamite bomb or the torch to convince the American man that she is capable of exercising the right of franchise and that her influence in the affairs of government is desirable and uplifting. Neither does she have to lower her dignity as mother, wife, sister or daughter to impress the fact that she must be recognized, whether other people like it or not. In other words, the American woman in asserting her rights adopts a sane, sensible and convincing attitude, and, as the figures show, with fine results. English militancy is a failure to date. The leaders of the movement abroad will be well advised if they take heed of the American style of campaigning. They will then be spared the humiliation they are forced to meet daily and be in no worse position than they are now, after years of striving for what they ought to have as a matter of right.

WRITING in the Review of Reviews, Ferdinand C. Ingelhart says: It is generally thought that Germany drinks more beer than any other nation in the world. This is a mistake. Germany comes second. The United States consumes 1,851,000 gallons of beer each year, which is 100,000,000 gallons more than Germany's consumption. Russia leads the world in its use of distilled liquors, and the United States comes second with its consumption of 133,000,000 gallons. Although the United States is first as a beer-drinking nation and second as a consumer of distilled spirits among the nations of the world, the liquor dealers of America are having a desperate fight for the life of their traffic. The saloon has been expelled from one-half of the population and from two-thirds of the geographical area of the country. In 1868 there were 3,500,000 people living in territory where the drink traffic has been outlawed; in 1900 the number had increased to 18,000,000; in 1908, or only eight years after, the number had doubled to 36,000,000, and today there are 46,029,750 persons, or a fraction over one-half of the population of the country, living in no-license territory. In the last five years the no-license population has increased a little over 10,000,000, which is more than 10 per cent of the total population of the nation and 30 per cent increase in the number living in "dry" districts. Since 1868 the population of the country has doubled, while the number of inhabitants of "dry" territory has increased over thirteenfold.

THE American commission, which has recently returned from Europe where it had gone to study agricultural conditions, visited while in Berlin the headquarters of the German alcohol trust, where they were told at length of the important role the potato plays in German agriculture. The acreage in potatoes in Germany is very large, the total production being about 1,160,000,000 bushels. The alcohol industry absorbs 100,000,000 bushels, which produces 80,000,000 gallons of alcohol. From 80 to 85 per cent of this total production is in the hands of the trust, which is composed of two separate organizations, one of the distillers and one of the rectifiers. The trust fixes prices for both crude and refined alcohol, markets the

product and divides the profits. It has also devoted much attention to increasing the use of alcohol as a fuel and for industrial purposes. It has made a specialty of developing lamps and stoves suited to burning alcohol, and in this way it has succeeded in doubling the fuel consumption in the last fourteen years.

SPEAKING of "Jim the Penman," a writer in the London Chronicle says: The real "Jim the Penman" was James Townsend Sward, a barrister of the Inner Temple, who was tried in 1857 for forging and uttering a bank check. This was only one of a series of frauds committed by the gang of which he was made chief, owing to his extraordinary skill with the pen. Bills of exchange as well as checks were dealt with to such an extent that the conspiracy was beginning to affect the security of the entire mercantile community. Lawyers were repeatedly victims, a copy of their signature being obtained by one of the gang employing the victim to recover a debt from another. At last, by a combination of detective work and accident, they were all captured, and Sward was sentenced to transportation for life.

THE genesis of the "men of straw" is told by a writer in Harper's Weekly in this way: Mr. Engelbach, an English author, in a new volume on humors of the law, relates the following queer bit of history: "Some years ago men used to walk about openly in Westminster hall with a piece of straw in their boot. By this sign attorneys knew that such persons were in want of employment as false witnesses, and would give any evidence required for money. For instance, if an advocate wanted an obliging witness he would go to one of these men and show him a fee, which if not sufficient, the witness would not take any notice of it. The fee was then increased until its weight recalled the power of memory to a sufficient extent. By this they derived their name, 'Men of Straw,'"

### SPREADING DEMOCRATIC DOCTRINE

Mr. John Johnson of Fredericktown, Mo., writes: "Herewith find money order for 16 new subscribers and one renewal subscription to The Commoner. The writer solicited 17 leading democrats and business men of our town, sixteen of whom subscribed.

"The writer, an old soldier of the Blue, and one who can testify to the valor of the boy who wore the Gray, inherited nothing democratic. On the contrary was reared as a republican of the N. E. Ohio brand, said to be immune to democratic tendencies, through business changes located at Carlyle, Illinois in 1892, among the many friends of that grand old man, Judge Bryan, father of our William Jennings Bryan, for whom I cast my first democratic vote in 1896, and whose splendid courage and leadership through sixteen years of struggle with graft and corruption in high places, has given our nation a new birth, and with Woodrow Wilson, our great president, at the helm, great is the victory for righteousness."

Here is an example of the good that is being done by many faithful democrats in the work of spreading democratic doctrine in their home community. The year 1914 will be an important one in the political history of this nation. The democratic party will appeal to the people of the country to sustain them in the work of the great reforms they have undertaken in their behalf, and it behooves every earnest democrat to do his part in keeping before the people of his community a medium that will keep them in touch with the work of the present democratic administration. The Commoner for 1914 will be found indispensable to every one who wants to keep posted on what is going on at Washington, who wants to know the truth about public questions and public men. Will you join in the effort to extend The Commoner's circulation in your community for the year 1914? A special rate is made for the purpose of forming clubs to circulate The Commoner for educational purposes. Who'll be the next to take up this good work?

Secretary Houston is of the opinion that there isn't any reason why the farmers, with their excellent land security, should not have cheaper rates of interest. The only reason that has heretofore existed has been that the surplus capital of their section, which should have been available for them, was down in New York working for the stock speculators. The president's currency bill aims to cut off this money siphon.

### GRADY'S STRIKING PICTURE

The following striking picture was drawn by the south's great orator, the late Henry W. Grady:

"Let me picture to you the footsore confederate soldier, as buttoning up in his faded gray jacket the parole which was to bear testimony to his children of his fidelity and faith, he turned his face southward from Appomattox in April, 1865. Think of him as ragged, half starved, heavy-hearted, enfeebled by want and wounds, having fought to exhaustion, he surrenders his gun, wrings the hands of comrades in silence, and lifting his tear-stained and pallid face for the last time to the graves that dot old Virginia hills, pulls his gray cap over his brow and begins the slow and painful journey. What does he find—let me ask you who went to your homes eager to find in the welcome you had justly earned, full payment for your four years' sacrifice—what does he find when, having followed the battle-stained cross against overwhelming odds, dreading death not half so much as surrender, he reaches the home he left so prosperous and beautiful? He finds his house in ruins, his farm devastated, his slaves free, his stock killed, his barns empty, his trade destroyed, his money worthless, his social system, feudal in its magnificence, swept away; his people without law or legal status; his comrades slain, and the burdens of others heavy on his shoulders. Crushed by defeat, his very traditions are gone. Without money, credit, employment, material, or training; and besides all this, confronted with the greatest problem that ever met human intelligence—the establishing of a status for the vast body of his liberated slaves. What does he do—this hero in gray with a heart of gold? Does he sit down in sullenness and despair? Not for a day. Surely God, who has stripped him of his prosperity, inspired him in his adversity. As ruin was never so overwhelming, never was restoration swifter. The soldier stepped from the trenches into the furrow, and fields that ran red with blood in April were green with harvest in June; women reared in luxury cut up their dresses and made breeches for their husbands, and, with a patience and heroism that fit women always as a garment, gave their hands to work.

"I see a south, the home of fifty millions of people, who rise up every day to call from blessed cities, vast hives of industry and thrift; her country-side the treasury from which her resources are drawn; her streams vocal with whirring spindles; her valleys trampled in the white and gold of the harvest; her mountains showering down the music of bells as her slow-moving flocks and herds go forth from their folds; her rulers honest and her people loving, and her homes happy and their hearthstones bright and their waters still, and their pastures green, and her conscience clear; her wealth diffused and poor-houses empty; her churches earnest and all creeds lost in the gospel. Peace and sobriety walking hand in hand through her borders; honor in her homes; uprightness in her midst; plenty in her fields; straight and simple faith in the hearts of her sons and daughters; her two races walking together in peace and contentment; sunshine everywhere and all the time, and night falling on her gently as from the wings of the unseen dove."

### "NEVER MIND"

When childish cares assailed his heart  
Her voice was always kind,  
As lovingly she took his part  
And said: "There, never mind."

The boy who once had boyish cares  
And wept o'er little woes  
Now dabbles in the world's affairs  
And faces heartless foes.

But when the skies are dark today  
He may not turn to find  
Her comfort, and to hear her say:  
"Ah, well, dear; never mind."

The grieving boy had need of cheer,  
What of the man who frets  
When he is crowded to the rear  
Or plagued by vain regrets?

Relieved of care, she sleeps away,  
The man remains behind,  
And there is no one left to say:  
"Ah, well, dear; never mind."

—S. E. Kiser in Chicago Record-Herald.