



EDITORIALS



OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

THE HUMAN FACTOR.

It is a very good sign that the railroad officers and managers themselves are much exercised over the Interstate Commerce Commission's appalling showing of railroad accidents for the past fiscal year. It is a still further good sign that, in discussing the matter, the railroad men are very generally admitting that the fault is the railroads', and not that of the public itself, or of Divine Providence, or the infernal powers.

Lucius Tuttle, president of the Boston and Maine Railroad, makes the mileage system, which puts undue pressure upon the men, primarily responsible. And in an interview with an Evening Mail reporter W. C. Brown, third vice president of the New York Central, said yesterday that in almost every case included in the report of the Interstate Commission the accident was the result of carelessness or forgetfulness on the part of one or more employees.

Mr. Brown apparently thinks that mechanical safety appliances have gone almost as far as they can go. Electrically locked switches may render the operation of fast passenger trains safer; but the rest depends on the employees. He wants the extreme care exercised to get "only men of natural intelligence and fairly educated" for this responsible and most exacting service.

Railroad men should certainly be intelligent and fairly educated. But the most intelligent man cannot be altogether depended on if he understands that speed is the first requirement and safety only a secondary one, or if his faculties are so strained by long hours or by intense pressure that his impressions become confused and his perceptions dulled.

Rails sometimes spread and wreck trains under an unusual strain. The human brain is liable to a similar collapse under similar conditions. It is to be noted that, according to the Interstate Commission's accident bulletin, the gravest disasters reported in the last year were the results of blunders of "experienced men."—New York Mail.

Peary's Latest Plan.

COMMODORE PEARY, in his speech at New York, before the International Geographical Congress, outlined the one most rational attack upon the pole yet proposed.

Now that the narrow circle still sealed about the North Pole has been approached from all quarters it has grown clear that the final achievement of reaching the North Pole will turn upon one of three methods: a vessel strong enough to stand drift, a vessel powerful enough to breast the ice, and a dash with sledges across the pack. Commodore Peary proposes to unite all three. His new vessel, about the size of the English Antarctic Discovery, will be built upon the lines and have all the strength of Nansen's craft, which survived the long pressure of moving ice through the Arctic night.

Instead of being, like that vessel, the mere sport of the elements, it will be strong enough to push its way through moving ice. For this purpose it will be provided with the heaviest engines which have ever been sent north of the Arctic circle. Its screw will be calculated for pressure rather than for speed. Its structure will be made, not for mere ramming, but for that steady, continuous pushing, which, applied to the largest ice floe weighing millions of tons, will gradually move it, as the experience of whalers in warping during the Melville pack demonstrated years ago. The fashion in which one of these vessels, by the steady pressure of windlass, would gradually thread its way through an ice floe square miles in extent, which gradually yielded to steady, continuous pressure applied along its leads, can scarcely be believed. Lastly, having these two requisites of a vessel both strong and powerful, Commodore Peary proposes at the last stage of his campaign to use the ice sledge and a dash across the pack from a base as far north as can be secured.

A northern base, Eskimo helpers and a mingling of all the various tools which other explorers have employed are three factors by which Commodore Peary proposes to resolve that geographical riddle, the North Pole. The open door toward the greatest nothing for his base is Smith

Sound and the waterway which runs west of Greenland. The winter through, and much more in summer, this channel is full of moving ice, through which a vessel such as Commodore Peary now proposes can be forced to a point north of Greenland, probably a very considerable distance if the season chances to be open over the water which separates the most northern part of Greenland from the pole.—Philadelphia Press.

Enormous Loss by Fire.

EVERY now and then writers on economic subjects direct attention to the terrible losses caused by fire. One of the most vigorous summaries of this vast modern waste is offered by the Wisconsin State Insurance Department, which remarks that the waste by fire in the United States during the twenty-five years ended Dec. 31 last has averaged \$130,000,000 a year. If conditions remain normal during the fraction of 1904 yet remaining—that is to say, if no other serious conflagration occurs—the fire bill for this year cannot be less than \$300,000,000, a tax rate equal to 3-100 of the national wealth. When it is remembered that this immense sum is absolutely wiped out of existence, eternally removed from the use of mankind, the seriousness of the problem which confronts us may be appreciated.

Insurance Engineering has been considering the same subject, and it attributes the waste largely to the over-prevalence of wooden buildings. It is said that in Chicago more than half of the buildings are of frame construction. In Newark, a town with a population of a quarter of a million, two-thirds of the buildings are frame. Even in Boston the frame buildings are more than two-thirds of the whole. In San Francisco more than nine-tenths are frame. Insurance Engineering gives a list of about seventy towns in which frame construction predominates so greatly that, to use its words, they have a "kindling wood outlook." The same remark the New York Sun thinks might be made of about all the 435 towns enumerated in the census bureau's computation of the urban population.

The next era in our material progress should be known as the fire-proof age.—Pittsburg Press.

The Cost of War.

RUSSIA, as well as Japan, is beginning to count the cost of a long war. Count Okuma, as we have seen, reckons Japan's military expenses at half a billion dollars a year. The financial agent attached to the Russian embassy at Washington estimates the war expenditure of Russia up to the end of the year at nearly the same sum—650,000,000 rubles being equivalent to a little over \$500,000,000. It is not likely that either estimate is too high. Think what a billion dollars might have done for the peaceful development of Manchuria. And these figures do not include the loss to the country that is fought over.

Russia, of course, has vastly greater resources than Japan. While the remoteness of the war is a military disadvantage, it leaves the country itself practically undisturbed, and the drafts for military service make little impression upon the enormous population of the empire. Japan, on the contrary, must be sending an appreciable proportion of her productive hands into the war, and the burden of her support falls on a relatively limited territory.

Russia has a particular advantage at this time also in the great hoard of gold that has been accumulated in the country as the basis of an excellent currency system, which has thus far suffered no disturbance. Japan has likewise managed her currency issues successfully as yet, but they are on a small scale, and when the public outlay rises in the hundreds of millions it is questionable if the system is adequate to stand the strain.

In the shock of battle, victory is likely to rest with the strongest battalions. In the wear and tear of a long war, the advantage is with the largest exchequer. Japan's best hope is in an early and decisive success. Russia's reliance is still in her unlimited powers of endurance. But the wanton waste of a billion dollars a year is the least part of the awful cost of war.—Philadelphia Ledger.

A CREW BEAR HUNT.

The Wood Crees of the Far North have a great respect for their "little brother," makwa, the bear, and the braves array themselves for a bear hunt in their finest dress of ceremony. In "The Silent Places," Stewart Edward White describes an attack on a bear by a party of Indians, as witnessed by two woodsmen.

Dick and Sam perceived a sudden excitement in the leading canoes. Haukemah stopped, then cautiously backed until well behind the screen of the point.

"It's a bear," said Sam, quietly. "They've gone to get their war paint on."

In a short time the Indian canoes reappeared. The Indians had intercepted their women, unpacked their baggage, and arrayed themselves in buckskin, elaborately embroidered with beads and silks in the flower pattern. Ornaments of brass and silver, sacred skins of the beaver, broad dashes of ochre and vermilion on the naked skin, twisted streamers of colored wool all added to the barbaric gorgeousness.

Phantom-like, without apparently the slightest directing motion, the bows of the canoes swung like wind-vanes to point toward a little heap of drift logs under the shadow of an elder bush. The bear was wallowing in the cool wet sand.

Now old Haukemah rose to his height in the bow of his canoe, and began to speak rapidly in a low voice, in the soft Cree tongue.

"O makwa, our little brother," he said, "we come to you not in anger, nor in disrespect. We come to do you

a kindness. Here are hunger and cold and enemies. In the Afterland is only happiness. So if we shoot you, O makwa, our little brother, be not angry with us."

With the shock of a dozen little bullets the bear went down, but was immediately afoot again. He was badly wounded and thoroughly enraged. Before the astonished Indians could back water, he had dashed into the shallows and planted his paws on the bow of old Haukemah's canoe.

Haukemah stood valiantly to the defense, but was promptly upset and pounced upon by the enraged animal. Dick Herron rose suddenly to his feet and shot. The bear collapsed into the muddied water.

Haukemah and his steersman rose dripping. The Indians gathered to examine in respectful admiration. Dick's bullet had passed from ear to ear.

CARAVAN ROAD 5,000 YEARS.

Scenes Along One of the Most Ancient Highways in the World. The road from Homs to Hama runs almost due north, a straight white line cutting across the green fields. It is one of the oldest routes in the world. Caravans have been passing along it for at least five thousand years, just as we saw them—long strings of slow-moving camels, with their bright-colored bags of wheat.

One could almost imagine that Pharaoh was again calling down the corn of Hamath to fill his garments against the seven years of famine. But even here the old things are passing. Just beyond the long line of camels was a longer line of fellah women, their dirty blue robes kilted above their knees, carrying upon their shoulders baskets of earth and stone for the roadbed of the new French

railway. The carriage road is French, too; and a very good road it is. Some men were repairing it with a most ingenious roller. It was a great round stone, drawn by two oxen, and having its axle prolonged by a twenty-foot pole, at the end of which a bare-legged Arab was fastened to balance the whole affair. If the stone had toppled over the picture of the Arab dangling at the top of the slender flag-staff would have been worth watching.

All along the ride we were reminded of the past. It is a fertile soil, but the very wheat fields are different from ours. Only a few yards in width, they are often of tremendous length. I hesitate to commit myself to figures; but it is certain that the thin, green fields would stretch away in the distance until lost over some little elevation. At one place the road was cut through a hill honeycombed with rock tombs, which the haj said were Jewish. Every now and then we passed a tall, or great hemispherical mound, built up of the rubbish of a dozen ruined towns; for even as late as Roman times this was a well cultivated and populous country. There is now no lumber available for building purposes, and in a number of villages the houses are all built with conical roofs of stone. Where the rock happens to be of a reddish tinge the houses remind one of nothing so much as a collection of Indian wigwags: where the stone is white, as at Tell el-Bisheh, it glitters and sparkles like a fairy city cut out of loaf sugar.—Scribner's Magazine.

And Yet It Is Never Advertised. Wiggles—What is your favorite breakfast food? Waggles—Ham and eggs.—Somerville Journal.

OLD FAVORITES

Bingen on the Rhine. A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algeria:

There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of woman's tears;

But a comrade stood beside him, while his life-blood ebbed away, And bent with pitying glance to hear what he might say.

The dying soldier faltered as he took that comrade's hand, And he said: "I never more shall see my own, my native land.

Take a message and a token to some distant friends of mine; For I was born at Bingen—at Bingen on the Rhine!

"Tell my brothers and companions, when they meet and crowd around To hear my mournful story, in the pleasant vineyard ground,

That we fought the battle bravely; and when the day was done Full many a corpse lay ghastly pale beneath the setting sun.

And 'midst the dead and dying were some grown old in war, The death-wounds on their gallant breasts the last of many scars;

But some were young, and suddenly beheld life's morn decline; And one had come from Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine!

"Tell my mother that her other sons shall comfort her old age, For I was still a truant bird that thought his home a cage;

For my father was a soldier, and even as a child My heart leaped forth to hear him tell of struggles fierce and wild;

And when he died, and left us to divide his scanty hoard, I let them take what'er they would—but kept my father's sword;

And with boyish love I hung it where the bright light used to shine On the cottage wall at Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine!

"Tell my sister not to weep for me, and sob with drooping head, When the troops come marching home again with glad and gleaming tread;

But to look upon them proudly, with a calm and steadfast eye, For her brother was a soldier, too, and not afraid to die;

And if a comrade seek her love, I ask her in my name To listen to him frankly, without regret or shame,

And to hang the old sword in its place, my father's sword and mine, For the honor of old Bingen—dear Bingen on the Rhine!

"There's another, not a sister; in the happy days gone by You'd have known her by the merriment that sparkled in her eye;

Too innocent for coquetry, too fond for idle scolding; O friend, I fear the lightest heart makes sometimes heaviest morn'g.

Tell her the last night of my life (for ere this moon be risen My body will be out of pain, my soul be out of prison),

I dreamed I stood with her, and saw the yellow sunlight shine On the vine-clad hills of Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine!

"I saw the blue Rhine sweep along; I heard, or seemed to hear, The German songs we used to sing, in chorus sweet and clear;

And down the pleasant river, and up the slanting hill, The echoing chorus sounded through the evening calm and still;

And her glad blue eyes were on me as we passed, with friendly talk, Down many a path beloved of yore, and well-remembered walk,

And her little hand lay lightly, confidently in mine; But we'll meet no more at Bingen—loved Bingen on the Rhine!"

His voice grew faint and hoarse—his grasp was childish weak; His eyes put on a dying look—he sighed, and ceased to speak;

His comrade bent to lift him, but the spark of life had fled; The soldier of the Legion in a foreign land was dead!

And the soft moon rose up slowly, and calmly she looked down On the red sand of the battlefield, with bloody corpses strewn.

Yes, calmly on that dreadful scene her pale light seemed to shine, As it shone on distant Bingen—fair Bingen on the Rhine!

—Caroline E. Norton.

DIGS CYCLONE CELLAR.

Difference Between the Habits of a Hare and a Rabbit.

The difference between a hare and a rabbit is, the former lives on the surface of the ground, while the latter digs a cyclone cellar and uses it as a reception room, writes Thomas A. Herndon in the Washington Post.

There are about 30 species of rabbits and hares in the world, and all countries except Australia originally possessed some specimens, but even Australia cannot now complain that she is without representatives of a species that make themselves a power in the earth.

The polar hare, the Eskimo of its species, dwells amid the snow and ice of that desolate region, and nature has so arranged that the color of his clothes

harmonizes with his surroundings. South America is poorest in having but one species.

Lepus callotis is the name which science gives to a species of this wonderful animal, that when danger threatens knows so well what to do with its feet, but in common vernacular, and for business purposes, he is known as the jackass rabbit, or jack rabbit. He derives his euphonious name from our great American mocking bird, the jackass, from the supposed resemblance of their long ears, and the jack rabbit as far exceeds all of his species in speed as his namesake does in strenuous song.

Jack rabbits are the largest of all the hares, being 25 inches in length, while the ordinary rabbit, or cottontail, is 17 inches. The hind legs and ears are long, color above yellowish-gray, sides and back of neck lighter, below white, tail sometimes black, but in the north entirely white. Like all hares, they do not burrow, but build a nest on the top of the ground.

In northern climates the rabbit turns pure white in winter, while farther south the change is partial, or does not occur at all. Their home is in the boundless west, from Texas to Minnesota and westward to California. The two big front teeth of the upper jaw are the sign of the rodent, but behind these are two little teeth, which do not reach far enough down to aid in the gnawing, and scientists have agreed that these little teeth are to the rabbit what the appendix is to a man—a perfectly useless piece of furniture, a grandfather's clock, so to speak, once useful to his ancestors, but now outlawed by more recent discoveries and inventions. But these little teeth prove that the rabbit's ancestors had four instead of two large teeth, as at present.

On account of the peculiar anatomical structure and arrangement of the bones of the forelegs, a rabbit cannot turn them inwardly and use them as hands, as can the squirrel and other rodents when feeding; but the forelegs seem designed to be used in running or the curious stamping in which rabbits indulge when angry or excited.

Jack rabbits are not believers in or exponents of race suicide, and at the close of each season they can point with pride to the increase in the number of their family. Unlike kittens, the young rabbits come into this sinful world with their eyes wide open, and when a week old they are active and well able to take care of themselves and look after their own safety. At the end of a month or two they are weaned and are soon ready to set up housekeeping for themselves.

In a natural state their increase is held in check by the scarcity of food, but when the farmer produces enough food suited to their taste they feel it is their moral duty to produce enough young rabbits to eat it. The eagle and hawk frequently kill jack rabbits, especially the young, but their most destructive foes, next to the great assassin, man, are the wolves and foxes. The coyote is said to be an expert on the subject of rabbit hunting, and he considers it an unlucky day when he does not carry in his inside pocket the left hind foot of a rabbit. During the autumn and winter jack rabbits are hunted and killed in great numbers. The most popular method is shooting them from wagons or buckboards, with the assistance of dogs, who start the jacks from their cover.

One man will sometimes kill dozens of the rabbits in a day. But the greatest number, however, are killed in drives. An area of several miles in extent is beaten over by men on horseback and on foot, who close in as they advance, driving the game before them into some kind of an inclosure or corral, from which there is no escape. The number of rabbits taken in this manner runs from a few hundred to several thousand.

The most sportsmanlike way of hunting the jack rabbit is by coursing with greyhounds, after the manner in ancient hunts in Europe, and the speed of the rabbit does not allow any loafing on the part of the greyhound, and if the rabbit is not off his training he will give the greyhound his money's worth in the preliminary spin.

If the jack rabbit has a fair start in the race he can outdistance the greyhound and does not turn or double unless closely pressed, but then he takes advantage of every trick or turn which he has learned in the school of experience, and the greyhound that beats him fairly must not be a "tenderfoot," but to the manner born.

Made an Impression.

First Bee—I don't believe that small boy will bother us any more.

Second Bee—Do you think he understands that his presence is not wanted?

First Bee—Well, I gave him a strong pointer to that effect.—Detroit Free Press.

Insinuating.

"There's no use trying to do good things in this world. They aren't appreciated."

"How do you know?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Old age can dye its whiskers, but old age can't look young.