

## Current Topics.

The town of Herkimer, N. Y., enjoys the distinction of having a clergyman for president of its board of trade. Rev. James H. Halpin, a Catholic priest, engaged so actively and effectively in behalf of the business interests of Herkimer, securing by his own efforts many new industries for the town, that he was chosen president of Herkimer's board of trade. Father Halpin has been a priest for the last twenty years and for seventeen years has resided at Herkimer.

"Cast your bread upon the waters and it will return in many days," is a quotation that is quite familiar to the people of Cleveland, O., these days. In 1896, the name of Andrew Carnegie was presented for membership in the Cleveland chamber of commerce. Mr. Carnegie was black-balled. The people of Cleveland are very anxious to have a public library and when it was proposed to ask Mr. Carnegie to establish one of his libraries in that town, the members of the library board received from an authoritative source the hint that Cleveland need expect no favors from Mr. Carnegie, and now it is proposed by some Cleveland citizens that John D. Rockefeller be appealed to. Cleveland is a large and progressive city. Is it not possible that that growing town could erect a library building and stock it without the aid or assistance of any of the multi-millionaires? Other towns have done this. Why not Cleveland?

Clarence B. Gillette, a citizen of Winsted, Conn., has invented a torpedo boat which he claims is superior to the Holland boat. In an interview with a correspondent of the New York World, Mr. Gillette said:

"Several trials of my sub-marine boat demonstrated beyond a doubt that the different points I claim for it—speed, ease of control and safety—are far superior to similar craft now used. I will say that it differs from the Holland boat in many ways, being an improvement upon that in almost all the main features. My boat is constructed to fire the Whitehead torpedoes, and it is not necessary to come to the surface to sight. It is designed to remain under water for fifteen hours and longer if desired."

An organization has been formed in Evanston, Ill., to be known as the Evanston Outing club. The more popular name among the members of this organization is "The Kiss Shunners." A number of men and women have joined this organization and their purpose is described in the following resolution: "Realizing that kissing is demoralizing and detrimental, we, the undersigned students of Northwestern university, solemnly swear that we will refrain from all kissing and that we will try to persuade others to likewise refrain." The members of the Evanston Outing club may imagine that they have undertaken a necessary reform, but there are in this world today many people, old and young, who can tell them that, in the parlance of the street, "They have a long and rocky road before them."

Mabel Ward, a nineteen-year-old girl of Milford, Mass., wagered a box of candy that she would dare to make a balloon ascension. The young woman's friends endeavored to dissuade her from her foolish purpose, but she persisted in it, and on July 4 undertook to win the wager. At a height of about 200 feet, the girl's courage forsook her, and she fell to the ground, and according to a dispatch to the New York World, "She broke both arms, both legs, a collar bone, and her jawbone, and received internal injuries." "Experience keeps a hard school, but fools will learn in no other."

Mr. L. Benson of Syracuse, N. Y., writing to the New York Times, recalls a bit of generally forgotten history when he says: "Several accounts of the so-called 'water cure' have attributed the diabolical custom to the Spaniards, who, it is said, first tried it on the Filipinos, from whom, in turn, American soldiers learned it. But the custom was employed in France also about the middle of the eighteenth century, as set forth by Lord Macaulay in his 'Critical and Historical Essays,' and subsequently noticed by Alexander A. Knox in 'The Nineteenth Century' (Vol. IV., No. 29). We read therein of certain religious persecutions that were marked with peculiar cruelties. In one instance, that of Jean Calas, a small shopkeeper of Toulouse, 'the poor old man was stretched till his limbs were torn out of the sockets. He was then submitted to the question

extraordinaire. This consisted in pouring water into his mouth from a horn till his body was swollen to twice its natural size. The man had been drowned a hundred times over,' etc. As Mr. Knox says: 'When one reads such stories, even at this distance of time, he understands the French revolution.' Indeed, the tortures inflicted upon the Filipinos could not with impunity be employed (and overlooked) on the continent of North America. That fact clearly exposes the cowardliness of the torture schemes which even the war department and the majority in congress can scarcely afford to condone and reward."

The British victory in South Africa has materially changed the status of Joseph Chamberlain before the English people. Mr. Chamberlain was always popular with a certain element, but during the dark days when it seemed that it was impossible for the British to win a final victory over the Boers, there were mutterings in England concerning Mr. Chamberlain's policies. Since peace has been declared, however, Joseph Chamberlain has gone to the front rapidly, and there are those who now speak seriously of Joseph Chamberlain as premier. A writer in the Fortnightly declares:

"If ever a minister not at the head of an administration had established a claim to be placed at the head of his party and of his colleagues that man is Mr. Chamberlain. The cabinet owes its continued existence to the colonial secretary alone. The vast majority of the empire throughout the war has regarded him as its representative. Without him the government would have been overthrown, Lord Milner's position would have been untenable, and the settlement which has been reached would in all probability have been prevented by the disaster of a patched-up peace. When Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener receive recognition, how are Mr. Chamberlain's services to be recognized? The premiership would be his only fit and, indeed, his only possible reward. It hardly admits of argument that a Chamberlain cabinet would be the most efficient cabinet possible, since it would be the only combination in which the real ascendancy would belong to the nominal head."

The suggestion of Chamberlain as premier is a most interesting one, and something of a hint of what we may expect under the Chamberlain regime is provided by this same writer when he says:

"Were Mr. Chamberlain to become prime minister the government, dominated by the spirit of Highbury instead of that of Hatfield, would be for all practical purposes as completely a new government as if parties had crossed the floor of the house. Such a ministry would be at least vital and interesting. With the clearest mind, the most signal executive ability in England at its head, and with the premiership restored to immediate contact with the house of commons, there would be a considerably greater likelihood of efficiency being exacted and secured than under any other combination. It is no doubt a serious question whether the unionist party, under any circumstances or under any leadership, ought to be returned for a third consecutive period of office. But a Chamberlain cabinet would be so certain to brace up our whole political system, to attempt large tasks, to divide men upon clear-cut issues, and to excite such genuine antagonisms of personality and principle, that men who care nothing for party in itself would be strongly tempted to vote for the colonial secretary as premier."

In a newspaper interview, General Fitzhugh Lee, former consul general to Havana, declares that unless relief is afforded to the Cubans, the worst results may be anticipated. General Lee declares that "idleness, accompanied by extreme poverty, already exists, and this can only lead, in the present unsettled state of the government, to disorder, developing into anarchy, and the entire failure of the experiment which the United States has made in the establishment of the Cuban republic."

The Kansas City Journal prints an interesting story concerning a New York man who is a member of at least forty-three corporations, and is owner of some fifty million dollars which, the Journal says, "he made by the sweat of his brow." The Journal also volunteers the information concerning this man that "everything he touches turns to diamonds," and "he never made a mistake." What a remarkable man this multi-millionaire must be. The man who never made a mistake and could make \$50,000,000 by the sweat of his brow is indeed a curiosity.

French statesmen are just now engaged in the discussion of an interesting bill which provides

for reducing the compulsory military service from three to two years. The administration supports the bill on the ground that two years is sufficient and that a republic should be inclined to minimize the term of compulsory military service. The opponents of the bill insist that two years are insufficient for the soldier to imbibe the "proper military spirit," and a cablegram to the New York World sets forth that one opponent of the measure cited recent instances where soldiers of even three years' service "refused to fire upon strikers." Another reform measure for which the administration stands, according to the World's cablegram, is the abolition of military justice in time of peace. Premier Combes is of the opinion that special military courts tend to breed the idea that the army and navy departments are superior to ordinary law. The common law, he said, if good enough for the postmaster and the school teacher should also suffice for the soldier.

A St. Petersburg cablegram to the New York World provides the information that steps are being taken by the Russian government to divert from the United States to Eastern Siberia Russia, and particularly Polish, emigration. It is said that extraordinarily favorable terms are offered to those who choose to go to Siberia, including a free grant of land, a house free, traveling expenses for families and other encouragement and assistance. Then the cost of a passport to leave the Russian dominions has been increased from \$4 to \$22 a person, a rate absolutely prohibitive except for well-to-do families.

An interesting story as to the fate of Explorer Andre who undertook a tour toward the North Pole by means of a balloon some years ago, comes from Chicago under date of July 5. A special to the Record-Herald from Winnipeg says:

Rev. Dr. Ferlies, a Church of England clergyman, arrived from York Factory, N. W. T., today, and brings authentic information of the fate of explorer Andre and his companions. Two years ago, 1,800 miles north of York, a party of Eskimos under the leadership of "Old Huskie," saw the Andre balloon alight on a plain of snow in that vicinity which is about two miles north of Fort Churchill. Three men emerged from the balloon and some of "Huskie's" people approached them out of curiosity.

As they did so one of Andre's companions fired off a gun. This is a signal to uncivilized natives for battle. It was regarded as a challenge and almost instantly the natives fell upon the three explorers and massacred them. Everything pertaining to their outfit was carried to the homes of the natives on the borders of the Arctic region. "Old Huskie" himself gave this information to Ralph Alstine, agent for the Hudson Bay Co., and the story after being investigated by Dr. Ferlies was told by him today.

He says there is little room for doubt, as separate reports have come of the strange implements which the north natives have in their possession, the telescope particularly described. The Hudson Bay company has recently offered a reward for the recovery of any portion of the outfit belonging to Andre and though natives have gone on the search for them they have never returned, believing, as Rev. Dr. Ferlies says, that they will in some way be punished.

At a medical congress held in London, Dr. Koch declared that consumption could not be transmitted from a cow to a human being. A Paris cablegram to the New York World says that Dr. Gavrault, a Frenchman, has undertaken an experiment on this line. He has tried the experiment on himself. He has inoculated himself with the bacilli of a consumptive cow in order to see if the germs would take in his body. As yet there has not sufficient time elapsed to test the success or lack of success of the experiment. One of the principal effects of the falsity of Dr. Koch's statement would be to cause a more strict surveillance of the cow's milk given to babies.

Extensive repairs are being made upon the Executive Mansion, and when the work is completed there will remain but small remainder of the old-time appearance of the famous structure. The Washington correspondent of the New York World describes the contemplated changes in this way:

"It may be decided that the colonnades connecting the two wings to be added to the White House shall be enclosed in glass and decorated with plants and turned into an art gallery for the preservation of pictures of the presidents and members of their families, for which the old White House affords no room. The basement will be transformed into a series of dressing and reception rooms. From the centre a marble stairway will rise to the drawing room floor of the White