

## Current Topics.

**NEWS OF THE DEATH OF DR. EDWARD Eggleston** will be received with universal regret. His charming novels have cheered many a lonely hour, and his homely wit and intimate knowledge of character made his books welcome visitors in thousands of homes. Dr. Eggleston was a Methodist minister, and what is generally conceded to be his best book, "The Circuit Rider," was based on his own experiences while riding the circuit in Indiana. "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," "The End of the World" and "The Mystery of Metropolisville" were hailed with delight, and were in many respects the advance heralds of an American literature that has since become universally popular. Of late years Dr. Eggleston lived in retirement and a majority of those who had read his books did not, perhaps, know that he was still among the living.

**THE NEBRASKA STATE FAIR JUST CLOSED** was the most successful in its history. The agricultural and live stock display has never been equalled in the west, and the attendance was larger than ever before. The Nebraska state fair has been permanently located in Lincoln, and it is believed that permanency will add much to the growth and development of the fair. Secretary Furnas is one of the best fair managers in the country, and to him and his corps of able assistants is due the credit for the magnificent success just scored. Secretary Furnas has put into operation one scheme that is calculated to work great good to the fair. "Complimentary" tickets are no longer issued to the press. In their place is a book of tickets "good any day or all on one day," good attached or detached, transferrable, and the cover is indorsed, "No strings attached." Secretary Furnas says: "The newspaper men earn these tickets a dozen times over, and it is only right that they should be allowed to use them as they see fit. They are not complimentaries. They have been bought with a price." Other fair managers might profit by Secretary Furnas' example.

**MR. BRISTOW, THE FOURTH ASSISTANT** postmaster general, is having trouble with the administration. The Washington correspondent of the New York World describes Mr. Bristow's sins in this way: "He offended Mr. Hanna in ferreting out the Rathbone frauds; he has opposed the removal of small postmasters for political causes; he has discovered flaws in the record of 'Scott's man' for a West Virginia 'place.'" Mr. Bristow is indeed a guilty man. If memory is not at fault, this is not the first time a faithful public servant by the name of Bristow has had serious trouble with a republican administration.

**RECENTLY IT WAS MADE THE DUTY** of the interstate commerce commission to prepare bulletins every three months, showing the number of railroad accidents. A bulletin covering the first three months of 1902 is summarized by the New York Sun in this way: "The number of persons killed in railroad accidents during the first quarter of the present year was 212, and the number injured was 2,111. Accidents of other kinds, including those met with by employes while on duty and by passengers in getting on or off cars, bring the total number of casualties up to 10,225. The total number of persons killed was 665. The interstate commerce commission has printed an analysis of these casualties which shows that of the dead, 26 passengers, 95 trainmen, 1 yardman, 2 switchmen, and 6 general employes were killed in collisions; 15 passengers and 53 employes in derailments; 1 passenger and 21 employes by being struck by bridges or side structures while on moving trains; and 8 passengers and 124 employes by falling from cars or engines while getting on or off.

**THE TOTAL NUMBER OF COLLISIONS DURING** the three months was 1,220 of which 194 were caused by trains separating. There were 838 derailments from the following causes: 143 from defects of roadway; 369 from defects in equipment; 55 from negligence; the same number from accidents and unknown causes; 10 from malicious obstruction of tracks, and 206 from miscellaneous causes. Two hundred and twenty-one of the collisions and 84 of the derailments affected passenger trains and the total loss to the railroad companies from both causes in three months was \$1,914,258. Of this amount the loss by collisions was \$1,005,024 and by derailments \$909,234. The railroad casualties during the last three months of last year were even more numerous than those of the first quarter of the present year. They

numbered 11,048 and 813 persons were killed. The preceding quarter, July, August, September, 1901, had a still greater list.

**THE PUBLIC HAS FREQUENTLY BEEN** treated to unique statistics, but it is safe to say that nothing in this line is more interesting than that given by an expert mathematician who undertakes to describe the dimensions of heaven. This genius takes as a basis for his calculations the verse, "And he measured the city with the reeds twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." The results of this mathematician's work are described by a writer in the Chicago Tribune as follows: "The entire space represents 469,783,088,000,000,000,000 cubic feet. He generously concedes half of this space for the throne and the court of heaven and half its remainder for streets, which would still leave, 124,198,272,000,000,000 cubic feet. Dividing up this space he gets 30,321,843,750,000,000 rooms sixteen feet square. Figuring in a like airy way upon the population of the earth he finds that if 100 worlds containing the same number of people as this should send all their inhabitants for a thousand centuries to come to heaven there would be more than 100 of the sixteen-foot square rooms for each person."

**THE CASE OF WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE** Plous Fund claim is on trial before an international court. This court consists of five judges, two of whom have been chosen by Mexico and two have been chosen by the United States, while the four are to choose the fifth member of the court. Sir Edward Fry, formerly chief justice of the English court of appeals, and Dr. F. Martens of Russia were chosen by the United States. Mexico selected Senor Chelli of Italy and Dr. Lohman of Holland. The cause to be determined by this court involves a claim made against the United States by the Catholic archbishop of California, which claim was made through the Mexican government. The archbishop seeks to recover a sum of money now in the United States treasury, the title to which the United States authorities have not been able to determine to their satisfaction.

**AN INTERESTING MEASURE IS PENDING** in the parliament of Italy. It is called the "Journals Contract Law." This bill was introduced by the government at the instance of the newspaper men, and it is designed to protect the rights of the profession. According to a writer in the Chicago Record-Herald this measure provides that after two months' of satisfactory service an editor, reporter or correspondent or other employe of a newspaper in a literary capacity shall be entitled to continuous employment for not less than two years, and that either the employer or the employed may have the right to demand a contract to that effect in writing. If there is no contract, however, the equities are the same. The mere act of retaining a man after a trial of two months, or of his remaining at his post for that term, is to be considered equivalent to a two years' contract. If during the term either party should become dissatisfied and desire release from the obligations, it may be arranged by mutual agreement. If that is impossible, the matter shall be settled by arbitration in the usual manner, but at least one of the arbitrators shall be a journalist and at least one shall be engaged in some other occupation. In the event that a newspaper shall change its politics and any of the editors shall decline to support its new policy with his pen, he may be released from his obligations, but shall be entitled to indemnity to one-half of the salary he would draw if he remained until the end of his two years. If a newspaper becomes bankrupt the editorial force has the first lien upon the property for its salaries. The Italian government is very generous toward the newspapers of the country and gives them greater freedom of discussion and more privileges than are enjoyed by the profession elsewhere in Europe outside of France. The parliament is especially careful to cultivate the correspondents who reside at Rome. They have free transportation over the government railways, free use of the government telegraph and telephone lines, and a room is set apart for their use at the general postoffice building, with free stationery, messengers to do their errands, files of all the principal papers and books of reference for their use. The press club of Rome is furnished sumptuous quarters in one of the old palaces free of charge, and receives a subsidy of 10,000 lire from the public treasury to assist in the payment of its expenses.

**AN INTERESTING AND INTRICATE CASE** involving American property valued at five million dollars is now in process of adjudication before the United States consul at Prague, who is aided by a large number of American and Bohemian

lawyers. A Vienna writer to the New York Journal says: "An Austrian named Johann Muller died two years ago in Minnesota, the possessor of a big tract of marsh land. This was claimed by a person named Kosmerl in payment for a debt of \$300. Ten minutes before the expiration of the one year's grace allowed by the American law, the official administrator, named Bates, paid the debt, the reason being that Muller's marsh land was found to be rich in mineral ore worth five million dollars. Heirs appeared forthwith. A Detroit woman with several children declares she is Muller's deserted wife. Ira Geisl, of Vienna, claims one-third of the estate which was ceded to her by Kosmerl, who is endeavoring to prove that his debt was paid the day after the expiration of the period of grace. The Bohemian Falzna institute, in Wlaschin, also claims a big sum, on the ground of having been defrauded thirty years ago by Johann Muller of a large sum. Finally, all the Mullers of Bohemia are eager for a slice."

**A LONDON CLERGYMAN, REV. FORBES** Phillips, Vicar of Garleston, has created considerable discussion in London because of a plea he made for a close union between the church and the stage. Mr. Phillips suggests that each parish maintain a theatre under the management of the church, presenting such plays as will awaken an interest in religious affairs. In support of his proposition Mr. Phillips says: "Clergymen overdo the religious side of life, thereby ruining the spiritual liver like that of overfed Strasburg geese."

**ACCORDING TO LONDON DISPATCHES** Lord Roseberry is preparing for a vigorous campaign in behalf of the liberal league. It is claimed that the league has recently made some notable accessions and a number of speakers have already been assigned to deliver addresses. The grain tax and the education bill will be the chief subjects for discussion.

**RECENT STATISTICS ISSUED IN LONDON** show a marked decline in the English birth rate. In London the decrease since 1881 is from 27.4 to 20.6 per 100 of married women under the age of forty-five. It is reported that in the slum areas there has been neither decrease nor increase, but that the decline is largely in the fashionable quarters. In territory outside of London where the rate was 25.8 in 1881 it is now 30.3.

**THE ENGLISH PAPERS ARE HAVING CONSIDERABLE** to say concerning the Atlantic ship combine. Balfour is to make a statement on this subject on the reassembling of parliament and it is urged by some financiers that a ship subsidy will provide the proper solution for the problem with which England is confronted by this proposed combine. The London correspondent of the Chicago Tribune reports a leading ship owner and a close friend of Joseph Chamberlain as saying: "America must not think the imperial government is going to leave the colonies at the mercy of the shipping or any other trust. The discontent is acute enough now in many quarters of the empire. While Great Britain does not want a commercial war with the United States, she will not stand indefinitely being shut out by the American tariff wall while keeping open house for American traders in the United Kingdom. The question of retaliatory duties is not so improbable as many people imagine. There is no reason why the British colonial markets should not be opened to British goods on a preferential basis."

**THE INTERESTING FACT THAT 25 PER** cent of the entire tax revenue of the French government is contributed by Paris is made known by the Paris correspondent of the Chicago Tribune. It is said that a large deficit confronts the Parisians in the city budget and that more taxes will be imposed on the already overburdened inhabitants. To fill up the enormous hole made in the city's treasury it is proposed to increase the tax on food, such as chickens, eggs, butter, etc. A storm of protest has been raised, but the measure probably will be passed, as an increase of taxation is the city's only resource. The Paris taxes have doubled within a few years, and both the government and the city tax collectors impose new taxes with reckless frequency.

**CANADIAN CAPITALISTS ARE PUSHING TO** the front with offers to provide the money necessary for the establishment of trading companies that will seek to take advantage of the opportunities of the enormous market provided by France. Sir Wilfred Laurier is engaged in negotiation for the purpose of effecting commercial arrangements between France and Canada. These involve certain reciprocal tariff arrangements, which it is said will not only be an immense ad-